

# RURAL AND SUBURBAN

### ROSE PRUNING

By Edw. Alex. Wallace.

Some Sundays ago an article, written by James Simpson, advocating the January pruning of roses, appeared in these pages. So many people have asked me to reply to it that I feel called upon to give a few reasons why such a practice should not be followed. In the first place, the climate of the east coast of Scotland is very different to that enjoyed by Victoria, and what may be right there is consequently all wrong here. Let us reason together, reader. Look at your rose bushes. They are already starting into growth. What will happen if you prune in January? The lower dormant eyes—the very ones which you should endeavor to keep dormant—will have to start into growth. And with what result? The young, tender shoots will be caught and nipped by the cruel frosts which we invariably get in March, and the young buds will suffer, and your first crop of roses will be crippled. As a boy I once asked Ben Caut, the farmer of rose growing in England, the proper time to prune roses. He put his hand on my shoulder, gave me a whimsical look, and replied, "Two weeks before the last frost, my boy." I say unhesitatingly that if you can manage to hit off this date you are right. The young shoots break readily and grow rapidly, and with no biting frost to mar their sweetness, will produce perfect blossoms. Prune from March 15 to April 15, according to the season and locality. Esquimalt roses can be pruned two weeks ahead of James Bay roses.

Anyone who has ever grown and studied roses here will bear me out in these remarks, and will not follow Mr. Simpson's advice; but there are many new-comers, and they may easily be misled. Any doubting Thomas can easily convince himself. Let him prune half his roses according to Mr. Simpson's date and half according to Ben Caut's rule, and then watch results.

### EASY-GOING HOUSE PLANTS.

A plant that is to be grown in the living rooms of the house, all the year round, which has to put up with the vicissitudes of erratic rises and falls of temperature, strong windy blasts at one time and stifling dry heat at another, needs indeed to have a remarkably elastic constitution. It is on these accounts that none of the most beautiful of the flowers of the greenhouse are fit subjects for every-day use in the dwelling. True, they may be grown to perfection by the florist and will endure (slowly dying) for a shorter or longer time according to their constitution; but it is merely a case of using the plants as their flush of beauty is passing off and being content to throw away the remains. Gardening with plants in an ordinary room is beset with difficulties peculiar to each case, and it is only those which have the most resistant natures that can be grown on from season to season. We are fortunate, however, in having a handful of really "tough characters" that will thrive under the least sort of attention, and will live under what very nearly amounts to neglect.

If you would try to determine for yourself whether a plant with which you have no acquaintance whatever is likely to survive the ordinary house conditions, look at its leaf. Get one that is thick and leathery. Usually they are dark green, too. A plant with such a leaf is suited to trials, because it will have enough reserve moisture within itself to battle against the sudden changes of moisture in the surround air, and also, because of its dark green color, it will be able to make use of every little ray of light that may come near it, and plants must have light to live.

I am often asked what is the best house plant. The inquirer usually wants something that is full of grace, with delicate, bright green foliage, producing in profusion and constantly, brilliant, large, fragrant flowers—a plant that is totally indifferent to temperature and irregularities of watering and other attentions. One day, perhaps, all these things may be combined, but not yet.

Without question the one most thoroughly satisfactory house plant for a minimum of attention is the aspidistra. As usually sold in small pots, it is not a thing of impressive beauty; but as it keeps developing new leaves and becomes in time a dense mass of green, it really takes on added charms, and not the least of these are those that come from long personal contact. The plant must be regarded merely for its greenery, and the variegated forms in which the leaves are irregularly striped with creamy white, are really quite bright. As a flowering plant it has no beauty; the bloom, which is produced on the ground, is of a dull brownish red color. But it is curiously interesting on account of the attraction it has to slugs, which aid in the fertilization. It has been said that no one ever saw a dead aspidistra, but I have had that distinction—plants that had been left outdoors and were frozen during the winter. It is a useful plant for filling in open fireplaces during the summer time, and for other dark situations.

Equal as a foliage plant, but of a more ornamental character because of the diversity of color, are some of the begonias of the Rex type. These, with their handsomely mottled and marbled leaves, are really beautiful objects and well suited for window gardens or for table pieces. They require light and plenty of it. Indeed, so fond are they of the sunshine that the plant can only be kept evenly balanced by being constantly turned around, as otherwise it becomes very much drawn.

A plant that might be well introduced into our windows, although it is very rarely seen, is Siebold's aralia (*Aralia Sieboldiana*). It is a sturdy growing plant, attaining a height of several feet, with large palmate, yellowish-green leaves—a sort of Hercules club in minia-

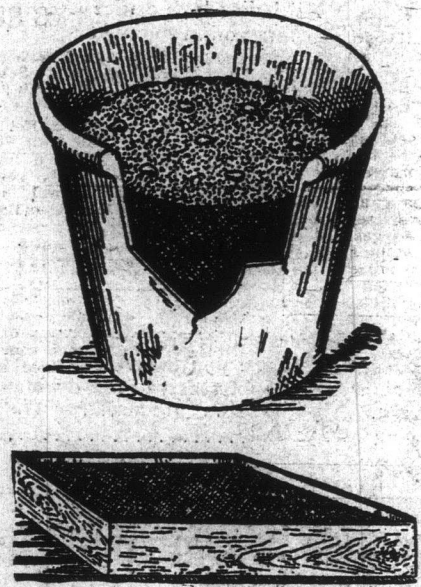
ture, except for its leaf formation. This, too, is extremely sensitive to the light, and for nature study work is one of the best illustrations because it responds so quickly that a matter of a single day will cause the leaves to twist around.

For real grace and decorative quality, nothing is superior to the old-time favorite, the thatch palm (*Kentia* or *Howea*). Of these palms there are two species in common cultivation very much alike. *Forsteriana* has a slightly more spreading habit than *Belmoricana*. If palms you must have, select these kinds; or the much comelier, foiled yellow stems, which requires constant warmth and light. These two palms will succeed where none others can be made to grow.

For flowering effects, and yet with evergreen foliage, the *Clivia* is hardly fully appreciated. On the continent of Europe it is one of the most popular of plants, and is known in a great number of named varieties. The flowers, born in a large umbel, are orange-yellow, varying to salmon-red. Really a greenhouse plant it will survive the ordinary house conditions if it is allowed to follow its own natural bent in making growth.

As a deciduous flowering plant for the house nothing equals the common popular Indian azalea, the characteristic plant of the Eastern season. It can be carried on from year to year very easily by putting outdoors in a cool, shaded place and watering abundantly after its flowering season, and then bringing indoors before the winter sets in. Then, given a moderately warm and well-lighted place, it is sure to flower again.

As to how to grow house plants, my answer is simply maintain as even a temperature as possible, water the plants freely when the weather is warm, do not attempt to force growth in winter when all nature is more or less quiescent, and, finally, do not fuss around the plants, disturbing their roots, except at the beginning of the growing season. In fact, the best policy for growing house plants is one of masterly inactivity. More specimens are killed annually by mistaken notions of kindness



Large seeds, such as tomato, cucumber, melon, etc., should be sown at certain distances apart, when the seedlings are not likely to smother one another. Be sure also that the soil is slightly warmed before the seeds are inserted. This is very important with cucumbers and melons, which will often rot in very cold earth. It is better that the soil should not quite reach the top of the pot or box.

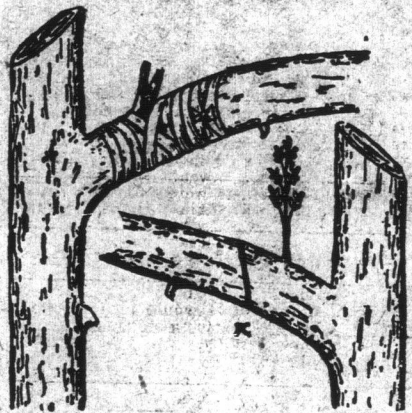
than by any other way. Fertilizers and artificial manures are best left alone. Rely rather upon a good soil compost in which there is plenty of available food, and do not resort to additions of strong chemicals or other foods, because the tendency is to overdose. Imagine what it means. Think of the small bulk of soil contained in a pot, and remember that a fertilizer, used at the rate of a hundred pounds to the acre, would mean only .037 ounce to the square foot in the open ground having all the depth and drainage below, and for a potted plant the quality should be reduced to at least one quarter of the indicated surface. The best tonic for house plants is water. If the soil is sour, use hot water, letting it drain through the ball until it comes through clear. I have restored to life more than one plant by this washing the roots when the case seemed almost hopeless. ever let your plants stand in water. If the pot is put into a container of some sort keep it off the bottom and drain off the surplus water each day. If plants are grown in a sunny window, the effect of the strong sunshine on the pot may be minimized by packing the space between the pot and container with sphagnum moss kept constantly moist but not wet.

### PREPARATION OF SOILS.

(By Donald McDonald, F.L.S., in the London Daily Telegraph.)

After becoming possessed of a plant, the first question for consideration is to know in what sort of soil or compost it is likely to live and thrive. With indigenous plants the collector can note soil and situation, and act accordingly; but when dealing with exotic plants information is more limited. It may be that the plants are taken from sites where the best conditions, both physical and atmospherically are not present, and consequently it requires some intelligent appreciation of direct and indirect bearings to arrive at safe conclusions. Soil has a wide significance when it is defined as "the primitive earths in a state of mixture with organized matter fit for the growth of

plants." Soil or composts, therefore, to be useful should be presented in something of their maiden form. There are three descriptions of earths to which I would make particular reference, and with these three gardeners may grow any plant requiring terrestrial treatment. There are certain plants that would live, but not enjoy life, in the most fibrous mixture of the three, but I do not propose to deal with these at present. The plants referred to are orchids—not epiphytanical orchids, which ab-



Briers that were budded last summer will soon show signs of swelling. The eye round the bud should be loosened. When it reaches a state of active growth the brier shoot may be cut away as marked above.

hor soils, but terrestrial orchids, which take to a certain kind of soil, but, notwithstanding, prefer unexhausted fibre, rid of its earthy particles, and sphagnum moss.

### Turfy Loam Sand

Firstly, I will describe an earth which is procured from a grass field in an exposed position, lying high and dry for preference. Many gardeners cannot collect this kind of soil locally; but it is a necessary help for the cultivation of certain plants. It should be cut out in the same way as sods are, when taken to cover a piece of lawn or for a grass edging. These sods are cut about 2 inches in thickness; or, one might say, for pot culture, take the three superficial inches measuring from the skin of grass downwards. This, as anyone knows who has seen the operation, brings with it the whole mass of grass roots, which are densely thick where there is good grazing. These turfs should be cut, if possible, during dry weather, and are then stacked so that the whole may gradually decay. It takes several months to bring them to first-rate condition for potting purposes. After that time the turfs should be nice and friable, so that when taken in the hand they break freely, and the particles will then have lost most of that cohesive tendency they possessed at first. In that sort of hazel or yellowish-looking soil, it is well to incorporate some gritty sand as a good means of keeping it porous, and for passing the water through without carrying away so much of the finer earth as would be the case if sand were absent. On the other hand, sand must not be used in too great a quantity, or it may fine down the fibrous soil to such a state of fineness as to prove damaging to the efficiency of the whole. Sand is just a secondary agent for fining down fibrous or cohesive soils. The kind of soil under consideration should be full of fibre, and the more enduring it is the better is the compost. These conditions attended to, the grower is in a fair way of achieving the highest success in the culture of a great many miscellaneous plants.

### A Useful Compost

The next prepared compost to be recommended is a portion of the first incorporated with certain additions of peat and decayed leaf soil with sand. This may be considered the generally useful soil for potting purposes. It is often obtained by getting sods from plantations where unexhausted fibre is present. To take the earth from common garden ground is of little use. Even so-called free earths, which moulder into dust when handled, are poverty-stricken earths, which have had the goodness—if ever they possessed any—taken out of them. Cultivating a field is an operation quite different from cultivating a plant in a pot. The one has the free, uninterrupted air, and supplies of rain on the surface, differing widely in their effects from the limited surroundings and continual supply from the watering pot of the other. As before stated, the field, or, better still, the wood, furnishes one of the principal elements that make up a



When minute seeds are scattered over a seed box or pan, they should be mixed with fine white sand and gently tipped out of a piece of paper as shown above, taking care to distribute them evenly.

good growing soil. A blackish earth is preferred by many; but color is not so important, for it is on the stability of the earth structure that the fertilizing value chiefly depends. Where there is a want of fibre in the soil it should be corrected by the introduction of crushed bones, wood ashes, or charcoal—anything that will keep the soil from adhering together in too large quantities. In combination with the soil, get, if possible, some decayed leaves. It is not good to use them just as

they are gathered, rather let them be buried in a mass, so that they may ferment and decay. With such a compost, leaf soil, and sand, growers may cultivate most plants, with the exception of the more rare ferns, azaleas, and some of the fine capillary rooting ericas, which prefer peat almost alone.

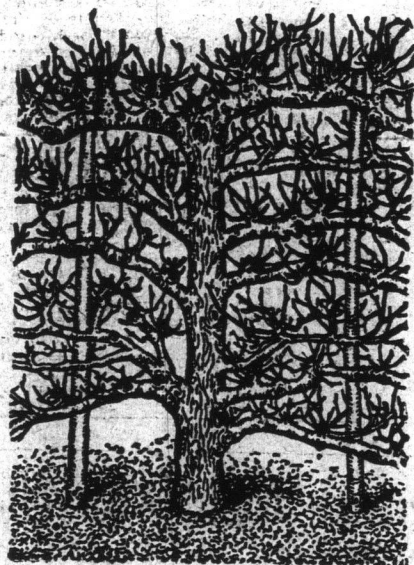
### Peat Soil

There is a great difference in peats; there is the peat of the bogs, which is used by many in the highlands of this country and in some other places as a medium for producing heat. The peat best qualified for maintaining plant life is that found growing on the top of white sandstone. It is more full of fibre than any earth. If it is not largely incorporated with sand, which acts as a pulveriser, the fibre will be in too great a proportion for the fine, wiry roots to master, and death, instead of life, might often be the issue to the plant destined to get its root food from it. Those who have no facilities for finding their own soils can purchase compost already prepared for potting purposes from the nurserymen.

### THE POULTRYMAN.

Many will contemplate starting into the raising of poultry, at this time of the year, both on a large and small scale. Those failing can in no way blame it to the poultry themselves, but to conditions that confronted them that were not seen. Poultry raising on a large scale is a business that must have careful planning. We have seen so many hatch chicks with no accommodation for them after they had reached the broiler age. One can hatch many chicks, but to keep them living and growing properly, the proper houses must be constructed, that the chicks receive no setback. Young chicks up to two weeks can be housed in a small space, but after they should have ample room. Overcrowding is the mistake that is indulged in more than any.

We have drawn away from small coops for growing chicks, so commonly used a few years back. As soon as the young chicks are old enough to leave the cold brooder, they are put in colony houses on free range. These houses are 8 by 10 feet 6 high in front, 4 feet at the



An espalier pear tree overburdened with spurs. This tree will probably be a sheet of bloom later on, but perhaps will only bring half a dozen fruits to maturity. The spurs need a good thinning, leaving only those sufficiently matured for bearing. As it now stands, the one interferes with the other, and a bad crop is the result.

back. One large window and door at the front makes them almost an open-front house. The success we have had with this style house had led us to discard all others. The chicks thrive from the start, and there is no setback until they are ready to go into winter quarters.

These houses accommodate 50 chicks to maturity without crowding; hence it is wise for the beginner to plan so that when the chicks are hatched ample accommodations are made that the chicks will have a chance to do their best. Every chick retards maturity, and a few checks during the growing season means a loss in dollars in the fall. We have had Wyandottes hatched in June laying at five and five and one-half months, and keep at it all winter. But these fowls had every condition favoring them—no overcrowding, good clean food and always pure cool water.

### Stock

In selecting stock, aim for vigor. Weak stock is the downfall of many beginners, and even after being in the business some years the craze for feather may be the cause for selecting those birds that score the highest which in vigor were the weakest. We never mate a male or female that have been sick a day in their lives, no matter what the value of the birds may be. There are many ailments that poultry are subject to, while they may recover and be apparently well, the danger of breeding maladies in the future is great, and, to be on the safe side, make the iron-clad rule to breed from only the strongest, and the future stock will be the kind that live and thrive.

### Poultry Housing

No matter how strong the parent stock, chicks will not grow nor thrive well if proper housing is not constructed to receive them. Any old thing won't do. Ample room must be given that when bad weather is on the chicks will have room to move about. Plenty of air is essential. Overcrowding is one cause of many failures to keep the chicks growing. There are in some seasons many times that the growing chicks should be confined to their

house. This cannot be done if grown in a dry goods box, or some other cheaply-constructed place that now and then some writer advises. Consider carefully the house to receive the chicks when full grown. Do not go half-cock on the open house. You may regret it. Remember that there are some things the expert poultry raiser can accomplish that would be folly for the beginner to try. The open-air front is one when winter eggs are to be obtained. There is a happy medium between the two. Feed clean feed; give a variety; keep the fowls working, and reasonable success will crown your first efforts.

### RAISING DUCKS

The secret of successfully raising young ducklings consists in providing them with plenty of water and a liberal supply of animal food in their diet. Water fountains which are easily cleaned and into which the ducks can thrust their heads, but not their bodies, are the kind needed. Notwithstanding they are an aquatic bird, their first down is hardly dense enough to shield them from the water, them, causing cramps. These fountains should be filled twice daily, and if clogged with dirt, cleansed at every feeding time. Three times daily at least should ducklings be fed, always having what they will eat at each feeding, but with nothing left over to get sour. If too much is given at a feeding, promptly remove the surplus. For holding the food, provide troughs made of a V-shape by nailing two narrow boards together and adding pieces at the ends for ends and supports. The food should be mixed daily and fed in a moist state. The following is a mixture that will answer the requirements of the young birds, and, for that matter, of adults too: Take equal parts by measure of corn meal and middlings and half to two-thirds the quantity of meal or ground beef scraps; add to this a liberal amount of fine grit and mix the whole thoroughly with cold water, in warm weather. In cold weather, warm or hot water can be used, but the mixture should be allowed to cool before feeding. In fact, never feed it hot.

Ducklings will always do better when confined than when permitted to roam, at least I think so. Hence it is that I advocate keeping them in small yards and in small flocks, and the yard be provided with a reasonable amount of shade. If large numbers are reared together, there is some danger to be apprehended from crowding, and though this may not result in all the ducklings being suffocated, it is certain to prevent some from perfect development.

The amount of meat scraps as given above certainly is too much to feed ducklings. They should always have some form of meat in their rations, but to use one-half to two-thirds meat scraps would be very expensive and would not produce any better results than a much less amount.

### ENEMIES OF CABBAGE

The malady known as "club root" is the greatest and most serious enemy to the cultivation of cabbage as well as to the culture of cauliflower. It is not many years since gardeners thought this abnormal development of the root and consequent loss of vitality in the plant was caused by insects. But this idea is no longer held, for the trouble is caused by a low form of fungus, and insects have nothing to do with "clubbing," although they are frequently found in the diseased parts or in close proximity. The maggot is especially likely to be found working in the affected roots.

There is no cure for club root. When the plants are once affected, the only safe course to pursue is to burn or destroy them. Effectual preventive measures may, however, be taken. The destruction after harvesting of all refuse, as leaves and stumps, is strongly recommended and proper systems of rotations should be followed. It is not safe to plant cabbage in too close succession in the same ground. Lime is considered an excellent preventive and is used extensively in the largest cabbage-producing districts. Some gardeners grow cabbage on the same ground every other year, but lime is used freely. The quantity applied varies from twenty-five on light land to seventy-five bushels per acre on heavy soil.

The green cabbage worm, which is the larva of the white butterfly, so familiar to every farmer, is the most troublesome of the insect pests attacking this crop. Various treatments are used and recommended, as Paris green, air-slaked lime, hot water, pyrethrum or Persian insect powder, and several patented insect destroyers. The powder known and sold by druggists as Slug Shot is inexpensive and entirely satisfactory. Applications are made by means of a bellows or powder gun.

The well known cabbage maggot is a serious enemy, sometimes. Serious, because if unchecked, the plants soon succumb, and if combated, considerable expense is involved. Prevention is the only practical course to pursue, and not knowing whether the pest will make its appearance or not, protection is not generally given until too late. One practical method of prevention is to place a disc of paper or cardboard about the stems of the plant. These discs should be about two inches in diameter, with a slit cut from the margin to the centre. After transplanting, the cardboard is placed about the plant, and this prevents the maggots, which are hatched from eggs deposited on or near the plant at the surface of the ground, from going down to the roots. These discs may be made by cutting them from cardboard, or building paper, either will answer the purpose, or they may be bought at a nominal price.

## BANK OFFICES

### Institution to Open Up Major Block on March Interest in Esquimalt

One of the Union Bank of Canada up a branch office in Esquimalt yesterday. The manager of the Esquimalt office in the McMechan Building, the superior of View and Broad streets, the superior of British Columbia branches of the bank in the city, and arrangements for security. He states that his immediate business here is the manager of the A. E. Christie, who formed the Union Bank's branch at Esquimalt.

Bank of Canada is one of financial institutions in its assets being over \$1,000,000, fully paid up capital \$2,000,000, while the surplus is over \$1,000,000. Banks at present secure a site here are the Bank of Hamilton, which have announced in opening up in Victoria. It is reported that a site was made yesterday for a corner by one of these the sum being \$120,000, raised by the owners.

Yesterday's sales in the local were some of an interesting. Attention is being turned to property, local investors that this district will be any new industries in the probable establishment of a naval base at that proposed remodelling of the Esquimalt plant, with a view to steel vessels, has been filled to the interest in especially along the waterfront in the past few days. The direction has been growing, and some important deals are being done.

Reports of the sale of a acreage at Esquimalt for \$2,000,000 in the Esquimalt district; property, composed of 100 Highland district, to a Vancouver; another piece comprising Duncan Bay to a local 150 acres in the Campbell district to a local man.

It is pointed out that a considerable amount of property in the neighborhood of Prospect Hill near Victoria, is being bought. There seems depression abroad, though that cannot be traced, are in the vicinity of Province, new provincial university. Other investors are in the district surrounding the of the Gorge, under the that this site is likely to be the choice of ground for university.

Small reports the sale of a acreage to a local buyer, of the City Block, near the lots on the Gorge road, Vancouver street.

The agent reports the city of many people to settle down here, or to rents in residential lots. A definite idea of returning to a future date.

### WILY CHINESE

ward of the Henrik Ibsen entrepreneur in the Captain's Room.

D. Ore, Feb. 11.—Goods to room of Capt. Smith, the Norwegian freighter, not shown on the manifest, which no mention had as being aboard, were found in the hold. In the hold 10 silk shirtwaists, 25 pairs of stockings, 25 pairs of trousers, 25 pairs of shoes, 25 pairs of gloves, 25 pairs of socks, 25 pairs of underwear, 25 pairs of handkerchiefs, 25 pairs of neckties, 25 pairs of shoes, 25 pairs of gloves, 25 pairs of socks, 25 pairs of underwear, 25 pairs of handkerchiefs, 25 pairs of neckties, 25 pairs of shoes, 25 pairs of gloves, 25 pairs of socks, 25 pairs of underwear, 25 pairs of handkerchiefs, 25 pairs of neckties.

### IN TOW

mer Strikers Rook in Bay and Gorge to Home port for Repairs.

Feb. 11.—The American fishing boat, arrived here morning, having in tow the mer San Juan. The San Juan, 9,000 pounds of halibut reported to the customs she struck a rock in 400 miles north of light-off under her own steam. Carter's bay, where the diver were secured, and since had been ascertained repairs were possible were not deemed advisable under her own steam. The steamer Welding was in port at the time, and she towed the disabled San Juan to the customs she cleared with the San Juan in tow, the San Juan was in the reef was not believed that she is damaged.

### Train Nearly Wrecked.

N.B., Feb. 11.—The Hall on the I.C.R. leaving St. Hilax at 11:30 last night, the engine and five cars were derailed near Anagnau east of St. John, about 8:30 morning. The train some hundreds of yards and roadbed, and was derailed without a car being or a passenger injured.