

## Labelling Plants

By M. E. BLACKLOCK

WITH the influx of new plants, of which everyone gets a few each spring, and some a great number, the old question of how to label them comes up, so that their identity may not be lost. The small wooden label, or paper tag, soon succumbs to the weather, so it behooves to get something permanent as soon as possible. To have a plant and not know its name is rather stupid; don't you think so? Certainly it is extremely aggravating to anyone asking for so simple a bit of information to be told that the label is lost, and the owner does not know what it is; there is little real excuse for this except laziness or indifference. For permanent labels for herbaceous borders

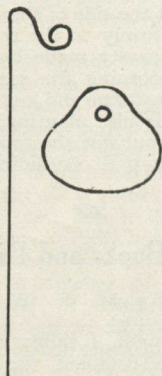


Illustration No. 1—Zinc label to attach to wire. The label used at the Agricultural College, Guelph. Use galvanized wire at least 3-16 of an inch thick, and allow 2 feet to a label; the tags are 2½ inches wide by 2¼ inches deep.

there is nothing like zinc. In "The Book of the Iris," by Mr. R. Irwin Lynch, he gives excellent directions for label making. He says: "A good label is made with wood with wire legs, but for a cheap and durable label, not too obtrusive, I recommend zinc, written upon with a suitable ink. A label that costs little, and will preserve the writing easily legible for twenty-five years is not to be despised. Labels of zinc will do this if written upon with a solution of bi-chloride of platinum, 16 grains to the ounce of distilled water. In this ink put a few drops of hydrochloric acid and any ordinary film of tarnish or dirt will be eaten through as the writing goes

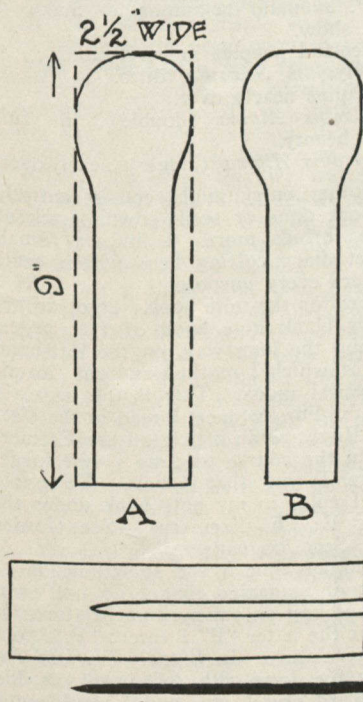


Illustration No. 2—Block of wood and nail to make the groove. A shows the label marked out on a strip of zinc. B shows the label finished with groove in the shank.

on. The color of the ink is orange, but when it touches the zinc a deep, dead black should appear. Use the best brand of zinc, and insist upon its being delivered in paper to avoid all the tarnish possible. A quill pen should be used to write with. As soon as the ink is dry a thin coat of the very best carriage varnish may be laid on by the finger, and when this is dry, the label is ready for use. The one drawback is that if the coat of varnish disappears and is not renewed, it may be necessary to wet the label in order to read the name." I have tried this plan and found it work splendidly—labels made five years ago are just as good as when put in, and bid fair to last the other twenty years. The platinum ink is an expensive little luxury, and is not very easily procurable, but it is worth getting, notwithstanding the cost of 75 cents for half the receipt, for even this small quantity will write far more labels than most people require, and if tightly corked will last for years. Mr. Lynch says nothing about the effects of bad varnish, one lot of which rendered about fifty labels useless for me, until it was removed, as it covered the writing, after very short exposure to the weather, with an opaque film, but with the very best carriage varnish it is a decided success, and ever since using it I have showered blessings on Mr. Lynch's unconscious head for the suggestion. For tall plants, such as peonies, the wire stake with the swan neck, on which swings the label, such as they use at the Agricultural College at Guelph, is the most useful (see illustration No. 1), but it is rather expensive when you use labels by the hundreds, as unless you get galvanized wire the rust from it falls down the face of the label and renders it illegible, and galvanized wire thick enough to be firm is not very cheap. So for most of the smaller plants I use a label made after Mr. Lynch's pattern (see illustration No. 2). To make these get a sheet of strong zinc—a piece four feet by three feet costs 50 cents in Toronto, and this will cut into three strips nine inches wide by 48 inches long—by ruling a line from side to side the zinc is easy to cut straight with a pair of tinsmith's "snips" (a useful tool that no house is complete without). The next step is to cut these long strips up into small ones 2 by 2½ inches wide, ruling these also to get them straight; this will give you eighteen pieces 2x½x9 inches, and one three inches wide—nineteen labels each of the three strips, 57 in all, and costing rather less than one cent each. Next make a cardboard model (the shape of the label in illustration No. 2) to mark round each one, so that the curves may be even and cut out carefully with the snips, being careful to leave no rough edges. The next part is to strengthen the shank of the label by making a groove in it; for this you need to cut a groove in a piece of thick wood, as long as the shank of your label, lay the label on the wood and lay a long nail about the thickness and length of a lead pencil on the zinc and hammer it until it makes the desired groove in the zinc. In writing labels I put the name of the plant, the date and year, and from whom purchased. In this way you can easily find out whose plants are the most satisfactory, otherwise where one buys a thing is often forgotten—when there is room on the label I often add a brief description; this helps one to ascertain if it is true to name.

Woodstock, May 6th, 1911.

The Editors,  
"In My Lady's Garden,"  
CANADIAN HOME JOURNAL,  
Toronto, Ont.

Dear Editors:—I was very much interested in the Spring Garden Number of the JOURNAL, and because I have only recently become the proud possessor of seven rose bushes, particularly pleased with the article on roses by Mr. MacKendrick. Seven hundred roses! Think of it! And I have only seven. I was rather gratified, however, to note that out of the seven, four are among the twelve mentioned by Mr. MacKendrick as being the best among his seven hundred. A few days ago along came a man who gave it as his opinion that my roses would not do well on account of their situation.

At the back of my lawn there is a board fence running north and south. On the east side are the roses, two Ramblers, close against the fence. About two feet out from the fence are the Duke of Teck, General Jacqueminot, John Hopper and Mrs. John Laing. Besides, I have two on the south side of the veranda, a crimson Rambler and a Dorothy Perkins. Can you tell me whether the roses on the east side of the fence are likely to be a failure on account of their situation? The soil is good and they will have every attention.

Yours truly—

I see no reason why your roses should not be a success. The Ramblers might grow better if they were grown on a trellis to give them air space between the bushes and the fence.—Editor.

A clustered group of the globe artichoke, at each end of the recess, by the wall, makes a handsome decorative effect. The leaf is slenderly long, deeply lobed, of a beautiful texture and color. It is ever so much handsomer than a group of cannas.

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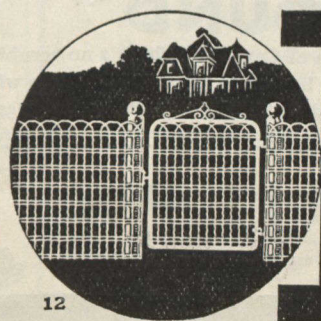
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