

fertilizer may be added to the water given them, and if used in small quantities will increase the rich color of the leaves or the size and beauty of the flowers; beside this a moderate supply of water will be all they need.

A few words as to watering plants will not be out of place in this connexion. First, when ever a plant is watered, the watering should be thorough; to put a little water on the surface daily is not right, it never soaks into the soil as it should, and, although the top may look moist, the bottom earth will be dry as dust, it is better to water plants once a week and do it thoroughly than to give them only a little dribblet each day.

A good way to test whether the plant has been receiving too much or too little water is to take it in the hand and estimate its weight, if it feels heavy you may rest assured that the roots are too fully saturated with water, and a more moderate supply must be given. If the plant feels light, give the pot a sharp blow with the knuckle and listen to the sound produced; if it is dull and low the plant has had enough water, if the sound is hollow, as from a drum, more water is needed.

Saucers are a necessary evil in a house to prevent surplus water from spoiling the carpet, but it would pay, after the overplus water has drained into the saucer to remove it, for if not, it will be re-absorbed by the soil and the lower part will never be dry, the plant therefore cannot thrive, its roots will decay and may suddenly die, because it will be just under the same disadvantage as a crop planted on undrained land.

I am frequently asked by novices, how often I water my plants? and my answer is: When they are thirsty. This can be ascertained by the means above stated, it is by study and observation that we learn and by putting our knowledge into practice that we succeed, and this is what makes the culture of house plants interesting and delightful.

The flowering plants recommended are the *Abutilons*, or flowering Maples, *Chrysanthemums* flower in the early winter only, *Geraniums* *Gloxinias*. These are beautiful plants with blooms the same shape as a foxglove, they require a good deal of heat and moisture and careful attention as to watering; nevertheless, some persons succeed well with them as house plants. *Fuchsias*, as a rule, are not very good as, with the exception of one or two varieties it is difficult to induce them to bloom in the winter.

The Chinese Primroses are admirable house plants. Roses are difficult to manage, they are liable to the attacks of insects and mildew, and require a more moist and equal temperature than a dwelling house affords it is true that some have succeeded in growing Chinese roses in the window, but most who attempt to do so are disappointed.

Bulbs are well suited for cultivation in the house. The *Narcissi*, *tulips*, *crocuses*, *hyacinths*, *lilies*, etc., can be potted early in the Autumn and buried in some sawdust or coal ashes in a cool dry place, where they will make roots, and when brought out and exposed to the light will give beautiful flowers during the winter months. A succession of these may be kept up by bringing out a small batch at intervals.

Plants require all the light and air they can get, and windows where the sun can shine on them the longest are the most suitable, a few pans of water set among them will be useful by evaporating and adding moisture to the atmosphere; it is by the dryness of the air that plants suffer the most. The leaves should be frequently sponged to remove dust and keep the pores open, so that they can perform the functions essential to keep the plant in a healthy condition.

We must remember that plants in a house are in a place not congenial to their growth, and we must endeavour to supply artificially what is lacking in light, moisture, and purity of the air.

Where there are young people, the cultivation of plants should be encouraged; they will contribute their share to make the home attractive, train the expanding intellect to the beauties of Nature, and turn the thoughts away from debasing pursuits and amusements. And when the home is left and the battle of life begun, many an anxious and lonely hour may be cheered by the memory of that sweet home, beautified and enlivened by the presence of "Mother's house-plants."

GEO. MOORE.

WEEDS.

The word weed is derived from the Anglo-Saxon (weed), and means, not merely a noxious or poisonous plant, but any which grows spontaneously on cultivated ground, owing its proper character of a weed, not to anything in itself but entirely to its intrusion among other plants holding possession of the soil in the capacity of a crop.