

The Violet.

"I would give you some violets, but they withered all. . ."
—*Shakespeare.*

Associated with our anticipations of spring comes, perhaps, more than any other flower, the violet. It is one of the evanescent flowers of spring. It soon disappears, and the plant is scarcely distinguishable from the grass among which it has wandered from its original bed; but while it lasts it is exceedingly pretty. All that the violet requires is a cool, damp, and shady spot. It comes up very early, and blooms profusely, needing no special care in cultivation.



Violets.

No variety is sweeter than the little, old-fashioned, simple English violet. The double varieties are also very beautiful; they are larger and more showy, but they require more care, and are of even shorter bloom than the single varieties. The Victoria violet is of a deep purple color, with red spots on some of its petals. The Marie Louise is bright blue, with a white centre, and the Swanley White is, as the name suggests, a white variety, and of great beauty.

Pansies.

"And there is pansies, that's for thoughts."
—*Shakespeare.*

Few flowers are cultivated more extensively than pansies. They are general favorites for several good reasons. Their great beauty is the first and principal one. Their colors interblend and shade so beautifully from such vivid extremes; and their texture is so soft and velvety. Then, again, they bloom profusely, and their season extends from early in spring until late in autumn.

Pansies planted in August will bloom the following year. But the seeds had better be planted in a box during the winter, or even as late as March. The box should be about four inches

deep, filled with good garden soil. The seeds should be planted in rows an inch apart, with half-inch intervals in the row. They must not be planted deep; a mere sprinkling of soil over them is sufficient. They require, however, free moistening; and, lest they should be displaced by the water, it is best to cover the earth in which the seeds lie imbedded with a sheet of coarse paper, through which, until the shoots appear, the water can gradually soak. As soon as the little plants have become well started, they should be removed to their permanent places in the bed prepared for them. If allowed to remain long in the box, they will not prove vigorous and thrifty. As soon as the frost is out of the ground, the pansies may be transplanted. They require a rich soil, well pulverized. Though they thrive best with all the light they can get, yet they should be protected from the noonday sun. If they are on the north or east side of the house, they maintain their bloom much longer than they otherwise would. In a more exposed situation, their period of bloom would probably end by the middle of July. Dishwater is an excellent fertilizer for a pansy bed. Pansies should be plucked as soon as they reach their highest bloom. If they are once allowed to go to seed, no more flowers, or, at most, only occasional, undersized ones, may be expected.



Pansies.

Pansies are quite hardy, and stand the winter well. In severely cold weather, however, if they have no covering of snow, some artificial protection is necessary.

Fruit Buds of 1896.

If you wish to know whether a bud has passed through the winter successfully, cut through it with your knife and examine its heart. If the bud is fresh and green throughout, it is sound; but if the centre is black, the frost has proved too severe for it. This winter has been characterized by unusual severity, and we may expect that considerable damage has been done to the