

## CHAPTER XVII

### PLANTING AND GENERAL CARE

**T**HE best time of year for general planting, according to my experience, is autumn. Everyone may not have found it so—many have not, I know—but that does not alter the fact that I have. And it seems to me perfectly logical that it should be the best time, except for certain special things.

Plants stir in the spring long before they wake, precisely like a sleeper in a snug bed, conscious of a summons yet not quite able to grasp its meaning. Through all their tender roots the life force thrills first; then, little by little, it mounts until we one day see the signs and say the "sap is running—soon the buds will burst"—and spring is here!

This waking-up time is a time of abounding vigor and, if it were not for things outside the plant itself, the period just preceding it would unquestionably be an ideal time for moving a plant into new quarters. But spring weather conditions are the most uncertain of uncertainties—and herein the danger lies.

Lifting a plant from the place where it has been growing deprives it of countless numbers of its fine feeding roots; therefore it shuts off a portion of its food supply. New roots form rapidly to take the place of those lost, when the ground is not waterlogged, and when it keeps at an even temperature. In the spring, however, the ground is more than likely to be water-