

Garden, Orchard and Forest.

Seasonable Hints—March.

BY HORTUS.

PRUNING.—There always is more or less of this operation to be performed every season in each well-ordered orchard and garden, and it should receive more careful study and attention from the owner thereof than any other, for on the discriminating and intelligent use of the knife and saw much of the future form, vigor, fruitfulness and longevity of the trees depend. Many a fine orchard is prematurely destroyed by one careless and ignorant pruning. This month we consider to be the best in the year for this operation. Care should be taken when cutting off a branch not to cut too close to the trunk, nor to leave a stub

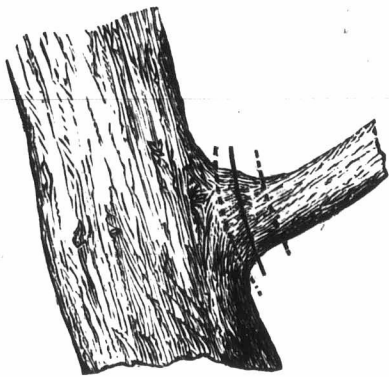


Fig. 1.

sticking out therefrom. The dotted lines show too close and too long a distance; the black line shows the proper place to cut.

Remove all branches interfering or rubbing against another, all dead limbs and water-shoots. A good scraping of the loose bark on main trunk and branches will improve the appearance of the orchard and add to the health and vigor of the trees, besides destroying eggs and cocoons of insects. To preserve or secure a pyramidal form in young pear trees, dwarfs and standards, shorten back last season's growth to one-half on the lower branches, those higher up more so, finally cutting back the leading branches and leader to within two or three buds. This will give a renewal of young wood for fruiting, and increase the size and quality of fruit borne thereon. Plum trees should be shortened in well if they have made a strong growth the past season, to prevent them from having long, slender branches, easily broken with the wind when bearing fruit. Currants and gooseberries require the wood thinning out and cutting back to produce plenty of young wood for fruiting. Raspberries should have all the dead canes removed and those left cut back to four feet.

MANURE liberally with good stable dung, lime, ashes or any other fertilizing material, to be forked in when the frost is out.

HOT BEDS are useful to raise young plants for the garden and early salads for the table. They are a great convenience to those who have not a green-house, and are of simple construction and easily managed. Select some dry situation, sheltered from the north and fully exposed to the sun. Procure enough horse manure, with plenty of litter; mix it well up and throw in a pile for a few days, until steam escapes, when the mass should be thrown over again and left a few days longer, after which place it where your bed is to be, from eighteen inches to two feet in depth, treading and beating it firmly as you put on the manure. Having placed your sashes on, allow the bed to stand a few days to let the steam and strong heat escape. Then place on six inches of good soil and your hot bed is ready for seeds. Give some air in the middle of the day by tilting the sashes up a little.

HEDGES.—The question of hedges or live fences is a particularly interesting one to the general public, but to the farmer, who with his broad acres of land requiring fencing and the annual decrease in his woods wherefrom he derives his supply of rail timber, it is one of great importance. What makes the best hedge is the next question. Honey locust is much recommended and forms a good hedge in the vicinity of St. Catharines and south-western portion of Ontario, but in the neighborhood of Toronto, to the north and east, it is not hardy enough to thrive; it grows and lives, but soon becomes scrubby and dwarfed. The common Berberry we find from experience to make a capital hedge, and the opinion of a gentleman living near Aurora, who has almost miles of different kinds of hedges, is that it is the best hedge plant for Canada, that is, for defensive purposes. Being very hardy and endowed with a nature to thrive under almost any circumstances, it soon presents a barrier sufficiently formidable to prevent man or beast, or even a mouse, from penetrating it. It makes a beautiful ornamental hedge as well, bearing in early summer clusters of bright yellow flowers, followed by pendant branches of scarlet berries, which hang late into the winter. The Buckthorn is claimed by many to be the best hedge plant, and we think it is. It has all the desirable qualities to recommend it for extensive trial—hardy, rapid growing and easily transplanted. Its leaves and bark have a pungent, bitter taste, which renders it free from attacks of insects and the browsing of cattle. Have the ground where you wish to plant a hedge of the foregoing in good condition—plowed and drained—by having level before planting. Much trouble may be saved in the future in having a straight and level top to your hedge. Procure two-year old plants, if possible, cutting them back with an axe and a block to about six inches of a top; set your line and dig out a trench of sufficient depth and width to suit the roots. With a bundle of plants prepared, one person can place them against the straight edge of the trench as fast as an assistant can put in the soil. Half fill the trench; then give them a firm treading, finally filling with nice loose earth. The plants should stand about three to the foot. Place a good mulching of manure on each side of the hedge, to retain the moisture and keep down the weeds; a hoeing occasionally through the summer, to loosen the soil, will greatly benefit them. To form a strong hedge, keep down the centre and encourage the side growth; this will also secure a good bottom. An annual cutting in the fall will suffice to form a defensive hedge.

In figure 1 we give end views of hedges showing the various forms practiced; we prefer the centre

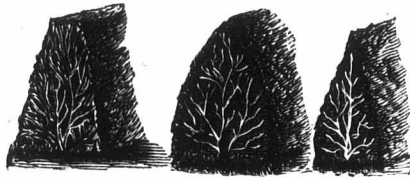


Fig. 1.

one, however, as being the most natural. For making ornamental hedges quite a variety of plants or shrubs present themselves. We will, however, confine ourselves to mentioning the following as being the most generally planted:—Privet, suitable for small places, borders of walks, &c.; Horbeam, a variety of beech, makes a capital hedge; Native White Cedar, Hemlock and Norway Spruce. The evergreens mentioned all make beautiful hedges with but little care; the White Cedar, with but an occasional clipping, soon forms a symmetrical hedge. Hemlock is so difficult to transplant that hedges of it are scarce; it forms the most graceful of any, however, wherever it succeeds. The Nor-

way Spruce makes the best of evergreen hedges; perfectly hardy and growing freely on all soils, it is deserving of extensive cultivation. Bearing cupping with impunity, it is susceptible of being trained into any form the cultivator might fancy. In fig. 2 we show an archway in a hedge; a rustic

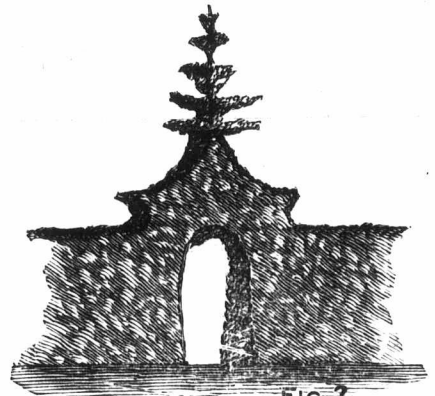


Fig. 2.

gate would complete the picture. Lovers of the grotesque may leave plants at intervals in the hedge for the purpose of training into shapes of fountains, cones, columns, &c., as delineated in fig. 3. In planting Norway Spruce for hedges, secure plants twice transplanted; a good size

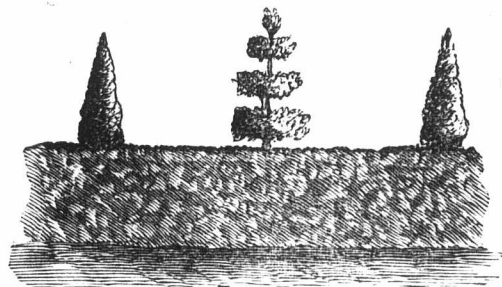


Fig. 3.

would run from eighteen inches to two feet six inches. Be sure to order them of a uniform size as near as possible; two feet apart in hedge will be about the right distance.

ROSES.—Everybody loves a nice rose, and for the benefit of those intending to plant, and who are not familiar with the varieties, we have made the following little list of hardy roses:—

M'me Plantier—Pure white, very double.
Persian Yellow—A bright yellow rose, very double, with small foliage.
Salem—About the best moss rose there is; bright pink.

Duc d'Aunxale—A free blooming, double crimson rose, belonging to the hybrid perpetual type.

La Reine—Bright rosy pink, very double; H. P.
Gen. Jacquemont—Very large, bright crimson rose; free bloomer; H. P.

The above six are old kinds and about the best, combining variety of color with free blooming and other desirable qualities.

PLANTING TREES.—Be sure to fill up any blanks there may be in your orchard or garden, for in planting trees it is not the cost of them you should look at; it is the time—"a season lost cannot be regained." Also, trees improve your place by their appearance, and enhance the value of your property. So, at all events, plant a few trees at least, the number depending upon the space desired to ornament—not crowded together, but naturally and judiciously, allowing glimpses of distant views, and yet a portion conveniently near the residence for shade. Clustered in the nooks and corners, let the various flowering shrubs and hardy flowering plants perfect their bloom in such succession as will give an added charm and continuous surprise each day. Along the borders of the walks determine to plant some flower beds of neat design, to be filled, when the proper season arrives, with choice flowers. By such means we make home dearer to ourselves and children, and make attractions around the spot that time will not efface.