

Horticultural.

HINTS FOR MARCH.

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At present we have the prospect of an early spring. The snow has in most situations disappeared, and the frost is rapidly thawing out, so that unless severe weather again set in, gardening operations will be in a forward condition. Care, however, should be exercised in this uncertain climate, not to uncover and expose tender plants and shrubs too soon. All decayed shoots, or such as have been injured by the winter cold, should now be removed; and every effort made, as far the weather and the state of the surface will admit, in clearing up the garden and preparing for active out door operations.

For raising choice early annuals, which give so marked a beauty to a garden, large or small, the following description of framing from *Buist's American Flower Garden Directory*, will be found concise and explicit:

OF FRAMING.

Where it is desired to have the more showy annuals early in bloom, it is necessary to prepare a hot-bed frame, for the purpose of bringing them forward. It is time, about the first of the month, to collect and prepare manure for the desired hot-bed; and, as that operation, in many instances, is very imperfectly performed, a few observations on the subject may be useful.

Take three parts of fresh hot stable manure, with one part of fresh oak leaves. Have a sufficient quantity to make the intended bed, or beds, from three to four feet high. Shake and mix up both together in a compact, conical heap, in order to encourage fermentation. If the weather is cold and windy, cover it with straw or leaves and boards, which is necessary to produce the desired effect. If fermentation soon takes place, it will need to be thoroughly turned over in eight or ten days. If any of it has become dry and musty from excessive heat, as you proceed, water the affected parts, pile all up neatly, and leave it protected in part as before. In

five or six days more, it will have to be turned again, repeating it until the first extreme heat has been over. In neglect of this, the heat, after making up the bed, will be vehement for a week or two, frequently destroying the vegetative purity of the soil, and proving destructive to the seeds.

Allowing the manure to come to a lively heat, having no unpleasant, rancid smell, proceed to mark off your intended bed, running it east and west, as nearly as possible, measure your frame, and allow the site of the bed eight inches, each way, larger than the frame: at the corners, place a stick or rod perpendicularly. The ground ought to be higher than that around it, to prevent water from getting into the bed, which, if low, must be filled up; or, if supposed that water may lodge there, a little brushwood might be put under the manure, which would keep it from being inundated. The manure must be built up square and level, shaking, mixing and beating it regularly with the back of the fork. When you have it to the desired height (from two to three feet will be sufficient for annuals), leave the centre of the bed a little higher than the sides, thus allowing it more to subside. When finished, put on the frame and sash, or sashes, keep them close until the heat arises, covering them at night with mats or shutters. As soon as you feel the heat increased, give air by tilting the sashes a few inches, to let off the steam and stagnated air, observing to close in the afternoon, and cover at night. If the heat is violent, about half an inch of air might be left during the night. In about three days, if all has been properly attended to, the bed will be what is termed sweet. Then put in about six inches of fine garden soil; if heavy, mix a little sand with it. Spread it level, and, when the soil is heated through, sow in small drills, from one-eighth to an inch deep, according to the size of the seeds; cover with very fine sifted soil. Some very small kinds do best when sown upon the surface. When sown, give gentle sprinklings of water until they come up, when it will be necessary to give air freely during the day, to prevent them from being weak, or damping off, which many of them will do if they have not air regularly admitted.

A LIST OF CHOICE FLOWERING ANNUALS ADAPTED FOR SOWING ON A HOT-BED.

Alyssum calycina, white, fragrant.
Argeratum Mexicanum, blue-flowered
Argeratum.
Asclepias curassavica, swallow wort, orange
and red-flowered.