

# The General Care of Private Greenhouses\*

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At first glance it would seem a comparatively easy matter for any gardener of experience and intelligence, to write a practical and instructive essay on the care of private greenhouses. A little reflection, however, will soon convince anyone that such is by no means the case. It is not that there is a lack of material to work upon; on the contrary, there is far too much, for to touch upon all the different points, even in the briefest manner, would be out of the question in an article of this description. The difficulty is to know what to select and what to reject of the almost endless details, which, while trivial enough in themselves, often play an important part in successful greenhouse management.

Theoretically, the main points in greenhouse management, are the same under all conditions. But, if we attempted to carry them out in practice we should often meet with very indifferent results. The truth is, that in this, as in most things pertaining to horticulture, no rules exist which would give the same results in all cases. It is not simply the cultivation of a lot of plants, or the gardener had himself alone to please, it would be a different matter. But, as in this case—when all is said and done—the main point is to please the owners, the gardener must use whatever methods he finds from experience are the most successful, paying little attention to arbitrary rules or preconceived ideas. While there are of course many other points to be considered, those given below will be sufficient for the purpose of this article. Stripped of all frills, they may be placed roughly as follows: A continuous and uninterrupted succession of bloom, effective arrangement, variety and cleanliness. It will, of course, be well understood that quality is of the utmost importance; but, as it would necessitate giving a lot of cultural directions, it will not be treated as a separate subject.

## CONTINUOUS SUCCESSION OF BLOOM

In order to grow sufficient plants to maintain a continuous succession of bloom through six or eight months of the year, the skill of the gardener is taxed to the utmost limit. From the first to the last of the year, he has to be continually planning what to grow, and how best to grow it, what to force, or what to retard, and the best time to propagate this, that or the other thing, so that they will mature at the proper season. In fact, this point requires more

care and forethought on the part of the gardener than all the others combined.

There are certain parts of what may be called the "greenhouse season," notably the early spring months, when there is naturally a greater abundance of flowers

any time a good geranium than a poor orchid.

In purchasing or propagating any kind of stock, quality should be made the first consideration. It is also better to grow too many of each kind than too



A Beautiful Corner in a Private Conservatory

Greenhouse of Mr. R. B. Angus, Montreal—Mr. W. J. Wilshire, Gardener

than at others. These can, to a certain extent, be allowed to take care of themselves. The careful gardener will direct most of his attention to such plants as will tend to prolong the flowering season as much as possible, or give the greatest amount of flowers during the dullest months of the year. Crops should follow one another without a break, and in sufficient quantity, not only for the embellishment of the conservatory, but for any extra decorations for which they may be required. People are not apt to consider time or season if they wish to make use of their greenhouses for any special purpose, and the gardener who is able to meet successfully sudden demands upon his stock, will often save his employer much annoyance, and himself humiliation.

Of the many plants worthy of cultivation for this purpose it is not necessary to speak, nor to suggest what to grow, or how they should be grown. Each must study his own conditions, requirements, and, it might be added, his capabilities. For while it not even remotely suggests that a man should not grow anything he pleases, it does more credit to his stubbornness than his good sense, if, after repeated failures, he persists in trying to grow things, which for this or any reason are beyond him. Better at

few. This not only allows a choice of the finest plants for stocking up, but it is very handy sometimes to be able to cover up a failure in one kind with the surplus plants of others. As before stated, particular attention should be given to plants that can be brought into flower late in the season. It is just as important that the place should be looking well the last day of the season as the first.

We are often told that people do not care anything about their greenhouses, once the snow is gone. But, depend upon it, they will be interested in them as long as they contain anything interesting. Keeping the flowers in a dreary, flowerless condition for five or six weeks at a stretch, is enough to cause the most enthusiastic to become indifferent. As this is the one thing of all others to prevent, if possible, things should be so managed that when the time arrives for the employer and his family to leave for the country, their chief regret will be in leaving their conservatory behind them.

## EFFECTIVE ARRANGEMENT

Instead of making effective arrangement of the different plants an important point in greenhouse management, some really excellent plantmen seem to think that it is about the last thing to be considered. Having succeeded in raising a

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