

How to Utilize the Small Greenhouse

By Henry Gibson, Staatsburg

THERE are a number of crops that are easily within the reach of the amateur who has at his disposal a glass structure, such as was described in the pages of the August number of *The Canadian Horticulturist*. Many are apt to feel that something more elaborate than the simple structures described therein is required to produce the handsome flowers and beautiful ferns that one sees in the florists' windows. True, many things are beyond achievement, as in such a place one cannot have long-stemmed American beauties nor the most delicate orchids to present one's friends with at Christmas, but he can very easily have carnations, more beautiful because they will be fresh, if not quite so large as those you get from the florists. You may also have cyclamen, as beautiful and much more serviceable than the best orchid that ever graced a table.

To accomplish such results requires not so much elaborate equipment as unremitting care and attention, not eternal "fussing," but consistent thinking.

There is, perhaps, no more well-beloved flower than the carnation, which entirely deserves the place it has won in the flower-lover's heart. It is equal, if not ahead, of the rose. As a plant it will stand a good deal of abuse, and yet under the care that an amateur can give it will produce an abundance of fine blooms.

To be grown at its best, the carnation should have rather cool treatment, and plenty of ventilation, two factors which place it within the reach of even the smallest greenhouse operator. A night temperature of fifty degrees Fahrenheit should be maintained, with a rise of from fifteen to twenty degrees on bright, sunny days. Avoid cold draughts when ventilating, and on dull days keep the temperature round fifty-eight to sixty degrees.

If you have room for only a few dozen plants, grow them in pots. Probably the local florist has a few left over that he potted up when he had finished planting his benches. Get a few of these, put them into six inch pots, using a good rich soil, say four parts of soil to one of well-decayed barnyard manure. When the pots get full of roots, give them frequent applications of liquid manure. Don't let them starve, but don't overfeed them, and you will be rewarded with a surprising number of blooms from even a single dozen.

If, however, a part of a bench can be allotted them, the results will be more satisfactory, besides entailing a good deal less work by way of attention.

The bench should be well drained and contain about five inches of soil such as

that recommended for pot culture.

For early blooming the plants should be put in early in August, the earlier the better; but for one's own use later planting will do. Select a cloudy day for planting, and be very careful not to plant too deep, as stem rot is almost sure to develop as a result of this very common error. Water thoroughly, and keep them shaded for a few days, with frequent syringings every day until they become established, when they should have full sun and an exposure. Watering should only be done, and done thoroughly, when the soil begins to dry out. Practise syringing regularly on bright days, but never on dull ones, and always have the foliage dry overnight.

TRAINING THE CARNATION

As the flower stems grow up, some support will be needed. If you can get one of the many forms of wire supports used by commercial florists, so much the better; but should you not have these on hand, the old method of stake and raffia will do very well.

To get the best and largest flowers, the flower stems must be "disbudded"—that is, all but the end or terminal bud must be pinched off, thus throwing all the strength into the one large flower. If on the other hand the terminal bud is taken off and several of the side buds allowed to develop, the result will be a beautiful cluster of blooms, more pleasing to many than the single large

flowers. There are any number of wonderfully good varieties of carnations to choose from, but the white, pink, and light pink *Enchantress*, with a good standard red, should meet the requirements of the average amateur.

VIOLETS

Requiring less heat than the carnation is the old-time favorite, the violet. The essential thing is to get good plants. As with the carnation, if only a few are required, they can be grown in pots, using the six-inch size. The soil, whether for pots or benches, should be slightly heavier than that used for carnations, about one-fifth well-rotted manure to the soil used. If you can use a bench for them, select one as near the glass as possible, and set the plants about fifteen inches apart if they are field-grown stock and of good size. Water well and keep the house moist and shaded for a few days as you did with the carnations.

GIVE PLENTY OF LIGHT

Violets outdoors grow luxuriantly in deep shade, but to be successful in a greenhouse during the winter months, it is necessary to allow them all the light possible. Keep all the dead leaves picked off, also any useless runners. Syringe on all bright mornings to keep down red spider. The night temperature will be better at forty-five degrees than anything above, with a rise of very little above fifteen degrees during the daytime.



Inside View New Horticultural Pavilion, Allen Gardens, Toronto