

Horticulture.

New Flowers.

We notice many pleasing indications in our city gardens as well as in those of the surrounding districts, that flower cultivation is extending among

well with vigorous growth. If new soil cannot be had, a wheelbarrow of manure to every fifty square feet will be enough. If the garden earth looks gray or yellow, rotten leaves—quite rotten leaves—will remove it. If heavy add sand. If very sandy, add salt—about half a pint to fifty square feet. If very black or rich from previous year's manurings, use a little lime, about a pint slacked to fifty square feet.

If the garden be full of hardy perennial flowers, do not dig it, but use a fork, and that not deeply.

Dig garden ground only when the soil is warm and dry. Do not be in a hurry, or you may get behind. When a clod of earth will crush to powder as you tread on it, it is time to dig—not before.

If perennial plants have stood three years in one place, separate the stools, replanting one-third, and



ZINNIA ELEGANS.

us. Seedsmen, too, experience yearly a largely increasing demand, not only for seeds, but for plants in pots. In our nurseries, so far as ornamental shrubs are concerned, the same remarks hold good. This is as it should be. The utilitarian aspects of ordinary work-a-day life should be, as far as is practicable, blended with the ornamental and the beautiful. Floriculture is not one of those luxuries that can only be indulged in by the wealthy. A few square yards of ground, and the judicious expenditure of a few cents in the purchase of the seeds of such delightful plants as we have illustrated in the two last and present issues of THE FARMER, are all that is necessary.

Zinnia elegans, shown in one of the accompanying cuts, is a recently introduced double flowered variety of the well known *Zinnia*. It is a hardy annual, very elegant in its habit, and attains a height of about three feet. Mr. Simmers states in his *Cultivators' Guide* that "at least one-half of the seeds from double flowers will reproduce double flowers."

Clarkia elegans flore albo pleno shown in our next illustration is a much valued little hardy annual, with double white flowers. There are several varieties of the *Clarkia* species, but they are all similar in habit, and they are all easily cultivated.

The *Victoria Aster*, represented in our last cuts, is a new and splendid variety of this deservedly admired flower. Each bloom is as large as the so-called Giant Asters, of elegant habit; very regular globular form, extremely double, and of bright rosy crimson colour. The plant grows very robust, one and three quarter feet high, and owing to its robust and regular growth it is self-supporting.

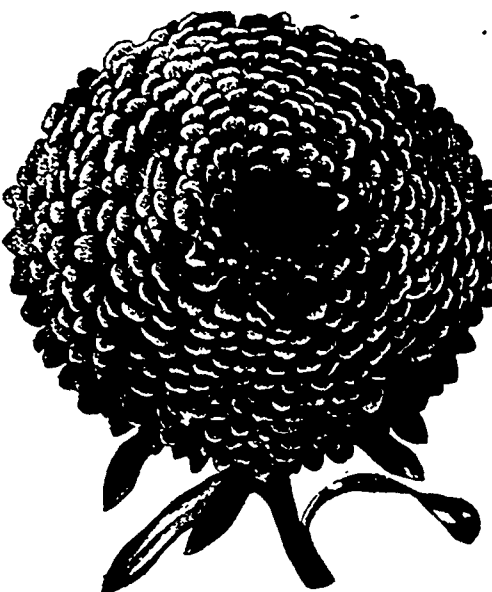
Hints for the Flower Garden.

PREPARING the ground is, of course, the first thing in order.

If flowers have been growing in the ground for many years, new soil does wonders. Rich manure makes plants grow, but they do not always flower



CLARKIA ELEGANS.



VICTORIA ASTER.—(Half Natural Size)



VICTORIA ASTER.—(One-tenth Natural Size.)

give the balance to your neighbour who has none. Set out the annuals you have got forward in windows or frames—that is hardy ones. The plan is barbarous. No wonder with such old foggy rules, our handsome young ladies are disgusted with gardening. Let the girls lift the seedlings carefully from the soil in the pots, set the roots in a saucer of water, take them to their assigned places in the garden, and from the water dibble them at once in. Cover for twenty-four hours with an inverted flower pot, next day cover only six hours during the middle of the day—next but an hour or so during hot sun, if there be any; and the plant is safe. Study the difference between hardy and tender annuals. The latter must be set out only in April. In the north—extreme north—also of course, our rules are too early.—*Maryland Farmer*.

My Asparagus Bed.

ONE year ago this spring I planted an asparagus bed. I ought to have done so years ago, and since the duty is performed, I have greatly regretted that I neglected it so long. How seasonable a luxury has been lacking from my table by putting off from year to year to year a little timely labour. And is not this remark true in an extended sense of most of us farmers? How much of the toothsome products of the garden we might enjoy, of fruit we might gloat over, of flowers we might smell, of delicious shade that might spread its coolness on our beavers, if we would only expend this bit of timely labor. But I planted my asparagus bed, at least, as to save time; and I did it. I have gained a year. Generally they do not yield for the table until the third season, but on the 22nd of April of the second year in the calendar of the asparagus bed, I made the first cutting; and in a week's time the shoots were up again, of a dark green color, and as thick as my finger. I planted in this way: In a sunny corner of the garden I made a hot-bed the previous year. The manure, well rotted, remained in it. This I trenched deeply, and mixed the manure well in the soil. On the top I took care to have three or four inches of nice loam, not over rich. In this I planted strong, two-year old asparagus roots, and hoed them faithfully all summer. This is all. The result is, this year I shall have asparagus enough for my own table; next year I expect to have some for my neighbours.—*Rural New Yorker*.