

RURAL AND SUBURBAN

PLOT OF WILD FLOWERS

It was just a narrow stretch of ground on a city lot, shadowed by closely-built houses, and a high, tight, board fence, but the wild flowers flourished there, although the conditions were very different from those of their natural habitat.

The beginnings of the garden were made twelve years or more ago, before the danger of the extermination of our native plants was fully realized. The woods, however, were even then receding before the growth of the city of Rochester, making longer and longer trips necessary to bring us to the haunts of our wild-wood friends. So, because we loved them; because if we could not visit them in their native retreats we still longed to see them; because it was only a question of time before many of them would be ruthlessly destroyed, when we found them at all plenty we took a few of them up tenderly with as much of the soil as possible and carried them home.

It was always a matter of surprise that so many and such different species of plants should flourish under such apparently unfavorable conditions. The soil was naturally rather heavy and poor, but many basketfuls of wood's soil and leaf mold were uncomplainingly tugged home and added to it, and the leaves with which nature covered the bed in the fall were allowed to decay and then were carefully dug in around the roots of the plants. Many of our native plants, and especially the early spring flowers, readily adapt themselves to the wild-flower garden, but none of them will do this without more or less care.

The natural thing for everyone to do in beginning a wild garden is to start in the spring when everyone feels an impulse for gardening. When hot weather comes, the desire for gardening wanes, and many wild gardens contain nothing but the delicate shade-loving flowers of May and June. It would be better if we all began with the summer and autumn blooming wild flowers, which are generally more robust and sun-loving. These require less care than the spring wild flowers, and few of them are in danger of extermination. Naturally everyone who begins a wild garden wants to start with lady-slippers, and all the rare and delicate things. These are precisely the things that are in danger of extermination, and people ought to take them until they have had some experience in gardening.

The second commonest mistake is to bring in the plants with insufficient balls of earth. It is only fair to others that when we remove rare plants from the wild to our gardens we should take pains to duplicate natural conditions as far as possible. Lady-slippers and other orchids almost thrive permanently in gardens. Most of them require a combination of shade and leaf mold and more moisture than it is convenient or possible to give. Moreover, it is likely that there are certain undiscovered elements in the cultivation of lady-slippers. It is a great deal better to leave the orchids in the wild and join the Wild Flower Preservation Society of America, than to bring lady-slippers into the garden where it is impossible to duplicate natural conditions.

The glory of the garden was in the trillium blossoms. Roots of white ones (Trillium grandiflorum) were carried home year after year, until several fine clusters adorned the bed. One clump, though seemingly planted in about the worst possible place, close up against the board fence, increased in size until last year it bore forty blossoms. When these were in bloom, all at once, the plant was a beautiful sight. Most of the flowers were of very large size and of the purest white. The red-flowered trilliums (T. erectum), flourished also, making a pretty contrast to the white ones, and the dark-red fruit made the plants attractive after the blossoms had withered. Trilliums are so beautiful and so deserving of cultivation, that it is a pleasure to note that several dealers in native plants catalogue them. They flourish better if transplanted after the bulbs have ripened than when taken up in bloom, and they require two years to become well-established.

"The lady-slippers, or cypripediums, were the choicest occupants of the garden. The greatest pains were taken in transplanting them from their native homes, a ball of earth being lifted with them and care being exercised not to injure the roots. Leaf mold and sand were mixed with the common soil, and for several years they flourished finely. They did best in a partial shade, and with C. spectabile it was found necessary that the ground should be kept moist all the time. After a few years they gradually failed. C. pubescens continued vigorous longer than C. spectabile, but at last it also failed to put in an appearance, and as both species were becoming scarce in the woods, no effort was made to replace them. C. parviflorum, with its quaint little blossoms, survived the longest, but last season only two or three stalks came up, and these produced no flowers. Dealers in native plants are now offering the cypripediums for sale, and it is not necessary to devastate the woods in order to obtain them. I am quite convinced that they are not difficult of cultivation when natural conditions are imitated and continued, but those already accustomed to cultivation would undoubtedly do better than those transplanted from the woods and swamps.

Clumps of bloodroot cheered us early in the spring with their pure-white, delicate-petaled blossoms. Where a little sunshine visited them they came out early, and other bunches, more shaded, bloomed a week or so later, thus giving us a longer opportunity for enjoying this lovely flower; whose only fault is its transitoriness. It is easy to grow. It has even been seen growing on rubbish heaps in cities.

The delicate little spring beauty grew close beside some of the clumps of bloodroot in a very shaded, unfavorable location, but the daintily plants were forgiving and every year put forth a few blossoms, as if hoping for better days. Label the plants you find this spring and in midsummer you may gather the little round brown bulbs about the size of a pea, which lie on the ground.

Hepaticas, white, pink and blue, grew here, there and everywhere, delighting us with their delicate coloring and downy new leaves so carefully soiled. No other wild plant better repaid transplanting and cultivation. Some amateur Burbank ought to improve the hepatica.

Early visits to the woods before any flowers were in blossom, were often rewarded by finding specimens of the brilliant scarlet cups of the fungus called Peziza coccinea. A partially decayed branch covered with these was carried home, laid in a shady place and carefully covered with leaves. It was by no means expected that these gay fungi would reproduce themselves under such different conditions, but they did, and year after year they appeared, making an interesting and attractive feature in our little wild-wood garden.

Though the cardinal flower (Lobelia cardinalis) naturally grows in wet places, usually along streams, it accommodated itself very graciously to our drier ground, perhaps because it was planted near a door where water was frequently dashed over the plant. Beginning to bloom in July, the long spikes of blossoms continued opening to the very tip, and numerous side shoots would spring out from the main stalk, thus prolonging the flowering until the latter part of August. The brilliant blossoms shone like a flame. It does well in ordinary garden soil, but its weak point as a garden plant is that its spike gets ragged, the lower flowers going to seed before the uppermost open. Some people complain that they cannot make the seeds grow. If sown as soon as ripe in a prepared bed of finely pulverized soil without covering, they germinate in seven days. In the spring they should be sown in flats indoors.

A single plant of jewel weed was once carried home. From it sprang a host every year. They tried their best to monopolize the garden, but did not quite succeed. I think the plant was Impatiens fulva, but instead of being yellow the flowers were always a beautiful shade of rose color, never varying and never going back to what was probably the original hue. The flowers were spotted with brown like I. fulva, and in all but color they perfectly resembled that species.

A number of species of ferns was scattered among the other plants. A symmetrical clump of royal fern was always thrifty, and also one of cinnamon fern. The sensitive fern and Pteris aquilina grew rapidly; and the little polypody and the Christmas fern led a tranquil existence.

The up-to-date cultivator finds abundant opportunities to keep himself busy this hottest month of the year. There is no rest in either garden, orchard or greenhouse, if the best results are to be forced out of each during the coming winter; and, moreover, during August we lay foundations in many cases for next year. Budding of peaches, cherries and plums must be done now.

Sow These Vegetables
Peas and beans for late crop may be attempted. If they do mature you will gain just that much, and if conditions are against them and they fail, the value of the seed lost is so slight as to be not worth counting.

Make sowing of spinach for fall use, also some hot-weather lettuce, such as Black-seeded Simpson. In all cases where late crops are planted, use early—that is, quickly maturing—varieties.

Sow parsley for early crop next spring and carry over the plants in a cold frame. Mustard is a welcome salad in late fall and can be raised from seed sown now.

In the nursery, propagate by green wood cuttings any shrubs, trees and vines. Take the cuttings and insert them in boxes of sand placed where they can be kept from frost during the winter, a greenhouse is the best possible place. If you have not got a greenhouse, lay your plans immediately to build one, for all the construction must be finished before the end of October in order to reap the greatest advantages of its possession and to avoid early frost.

In the hardy border, now is the appointed time to thin out clumps that have become overgrown, and also to re-arrange groupings which are to be improved. Soak very thoroughly with water before lifting; then, if the work is done with ordinary care, the plants will not suffer.

Do you want to raise your own perennial plants for bloom next year? Sow seeds in August. The secret of successful germination of all perennial plants, which are often spoken of as difficult to handle, is sowing seed as soon as it is ripe.

Plant Strawberries
Set out potted plants for fruiting next year and re-arrange the old beds that are not to be dug under, retaining such plants as may be desired, cutting off and destroying all others. Cultivation in the orchard must not be continued after this time. The trees will have made their growth, and should be given a chance to ripen up their wood for the winter. Cut low meadow grass, if any has been left owing to the rush of work in cutting the crop on the uplands. Don't delay, for as soon as the growth becomes woody its food value is reduced to a minimum. Top dress with manure all cut-over grass land that needs feeding. New pastures can be seeded.

Farm and Garden Crops
Did you have a sufficiency of fresh green vegetables last winter? If not, resolve now to

remedy any defects. Sow turnips, rutabagas, for winter supplies—fields from which early potatoes and peas have been gathered will be available for the purpose.

Crimson clover and alfalfa should be seeded down by the middle of the month, at the rate of twenty pounds per acre. Alfalfa is not so common in this section as in other parts of the province. Sow Essex rape for stock feed on land that has been cleared.

Troublesome Pests
In the flower garden, look out for aster beetle—a creature about one inch long, of dead black color, which appears suddenly in countless hordes and attacks many of our hardy flowers as well as carrots and other vegetables in the fields. There is no effective means of attacking them other than hand picking. This is expensive and troublesome on a large scale, and where practicable, the next best thing to do is to allow the chickens to run over the ground and catch what they can.

Continue to wage war against green fly and black fly, wherever they appear, spraying with kerosene emulsion. The hardy chrysanthemums are particularly liable to be attacked by the black fly, and if left alone, they will surely injure the opening buds.

Build Some Cold Frames
A few boards, surrounding a well-prepared seed-bed of finely pulverized soil so that they will support a sash some distance above the ground level, will give a practical cold frame that can be used in a variety of ways.

Build these frames now, use whatever space may be wanted for seeds as indicated above, and the remaining space will be useful for winter storage of many things that can be moved in during October.

In the cold frames grow cinerarias, calceolarias, primulas, the Sinensis and obconica kinds) for flowers in early spring. Ventilate the frames from now until cold weather arrives by lifting the sash at both ends. Do not try to keep the interior warm but merely afford protection to the inmates.

House Plants
If the old rubber plant is too big, or you want to propagate from it, now is the time to begin. Tie a handful of moss around the stem, keeping it thoroughly soaked with water, and in a short time roots will be emitted. When this occurs, take a flower pot, cut it in half and bind the two halves around the rooting portion of the stem, filling with light soil containing plenty of sand, and keep well watered. The roots will take firm hold and next spring the stem may be cut off level with the bottom of the pot and the new plant started on its own career.

The same thing can be done with dracaenas that have become unwieldy. Carnations that have been growing outdoors may be potted up, and also cuttings of geraniums which will serve as stock plants to give more cuttings for early planting in the spring.

All tender greenhouse plants that have been put out during the summer should be taken up and potted this month if they are to be carried over the winter.

Flowers for Christmas
Bulbs that are to be in full flower for Christmas Day must be potted during August. Roman hyacinths can be handled exactly like Paper White narcissus, and they are even more sure in their flowering.

The most fragrant window flower for the window garden is mignonette, which can be had from seed sown in pots or boxes now and kept growing. Mignonette is one of the few plants that will not stand transplanting.

IN THE POULTRY YARD
The following excellent article is taken from Poultry, and the conditions and suggestions, it contains are well worthy the serious consideration of Colonist readers who are interested in poultry raising and fruit culture.

"Something like a thousand times a year we come across the statement in some circular or the writings of some beginner in poultry literature, that some particular variety 'when seen on a green lawn' is the prettiest sight imaginable. We would probably be well within the facts if we were to say that this expression has been used of every variety in the Standard, and has become more badly worn than the place that might have once been a green lawn in the average poultry yard.

"A strict regard for the actual truth impels us to say that the average poultry yard is unattractive. So in any place where living animals or birds are closely confined. This lack of aesthetic beauty is one of the facts we must contend with. It is a condition that we must overcome by indirect means, and then not always succeed.

"Too few poultrymen give any thought to this matter, if we are to take the evidence of our senses as a criterion by which to form our judgment of them. Too many poultry yards are allowed to become the rubbish heaps of the farm. Too many are mere bare enclosures, unfit for even fowls, which have no sense of beauty or the fitness of their surroundings.

"Is it because there is no money in attractiveness that this sort of neglect is so very common? If so, it is a mistake. Attractiveness is worth money. The attractive building, farm or poultry yard is not only more valuable than the unattractive one under similar conditions, but attractiveness brings attention, and this breeds more business.

"The man or woman who thinks neatness, orderliness and attention to mere appearance does not count for value is working with mistaken perception of the basis of values.

"Untidiness is bad enough, but allowing untidiness to become filthiness is infinitely worse.

An untidy place may be in perfect sanitary condition, but if tidiness is neglected it is followed by the filthiness that invites disease and loss, besides driving away possible patronage that would make for added profits.

"We believe in the usefulness of order, not alone because it is God's first law, but because it is the foundation on which reputation is made and success achieved.

"Untidiness is a standing notice of carelessness in methods. It gives open and unmistakable warning that the owner of the premises is likely to neglect his duties, and neglect in any one direction is almost certain to be accompanied by neglect in every direction.

"We once knew a farmer who became rich at his occupation. He worked hard and produced good crops, but he allowed his orchard to become a mass of brush from lack of pruning. His fences fell into ruin and were patched up by makeshift methods and his land gradually lost its fertility. A neighbor once asked him why he did not draw on his bank account and fix up his farm. He replied that there was no money out of repairs. In course of time this farmer died. His children, never having had an attractive home, did not care to divide the farm and retain it, and it was sold at public sale at a price that was something less than half the going price for well-kept farms in the same vicinity.

"That man lived in squalid surroundings all his life in order to build up a bank account, and at his death his property was worth less than it would have been if he had used his surplus in repairs, instead of allowing it to pile up in a bank. He was looking for gold coins, you see, and while picking them up he lost values in another direction.

"The fact that poultry keeping is not of itself an aesthetic occupation, if we continue our whole thought to the absolute necessities of its administration, without giving thought to the surroundings, or to the possibilities of making values that are not ponderable or that cannot be arrayed and counted and given a specific value, should inspire us to a greater effort to make the surroundings as pleasant as possible.

"Not long ago we visited one of the finest poultry plants in this country. On this big farm every building is well put up, neatly painted and kept as clean as possible with rather more than ordinary attention to this part of the work. The yards are big and covered with a thick turf. Actually it is the only large poultry farm we can call to mind where the fowls may be said to have a green lawn on which to display their attractions, and we may add, they do look better there than they would in the average yard in which not a spear of grass is allowed to exist.

"The owner of this farm and his wife are both enthusiastic poultry breeders. They work hard to make money, although they might live a life of ease.

"But money is not the only object this good couple has in view. They believe in living in the best sense of the word. They do not keep their eyes constantly on the ground hoping to now and then pick up a stray coin of shining gold. They look at the world from a higher plane. Their horizon is not bounded by the circle of their farm and their poultry yard. If it were given them to choose, as it was Solomon of old, they might not ask for wisdom alone, but they certainly would not first ask for wealth, because they do not regard that as the highest object one can seek in life.

"Here is order, tidiness, and in their wake come success such as has come to few in our brotherhood. Everyone who visits this place goes away to sound its praises. They tell what a nice place it is to go to; how they were greeted with a warm welcome, what a charming hostess the lady partner of this farm is, and thus make friends for this good couple in places where their name never would have been heard if they had, in their quest of gold coin, overlooked the value of attractiveness.

"Unlimited space makes it possible to make desirable conditions on this farm. But limited space does not make it necessary to allow seaminess to be entirely neglected.

"Go with us to another poultry yard of five acres, crowded with white fowls, lying alongside the busiest railway in this country, the numerous trains of which belch forth day after day volumes of sooty smoke. The third largest city in this country is near at hand. The surroundings make for uncleanness, but the yards do not show this. Everyday care keeps the houses clean and sweet, without offensive sight or repelling odors.

"The yards are necessarily somewhat restricted and bare of greenery, except for trees, not yet large enough to furnish a shield to hide the bare ground. Does the owner allow this bleak barrenness of his yard to offend the eye by remaining plainly in sight? Not at all. He plants vines along the fences, and during the whole of the season when visitors may be expected these vines furnish a shield to counteract the barren appearance of grassless yards, and add to the attractiveness of the place by their graceful growth and their emerald green leaves. Here, too, the visitor is delighted by the appearance of the place and the cordiality now of his reception and goes away to become a standing advertisement for it, which is the best kind of advertising and the cheapest that anyone can have.

"Within twenty miles of where these words are written is a farm on which poultry is kept for simple farm purposes. The proceeds of the poultry yard are sold in the nearest town at market prices, or consumed at home.

"This farmer has a fine home, surrounded by beautiful trees. The barns and other out-buildings are good and the fields show the handiwork of a farmer who is proud of his business.

"The poultry yards on this farm are filled with raspberry bushes, currant bushes and

other small fruits. These grow with such vigor that they hide the ground, except here and there. It is one of the most attractive poultry yards we ever saw.

"From the bushes and vines in this poultry yard, bushes and bushels of small fruits are harvested, many dollars' worth being sold every year, after the needs of the family are supplied.

"The hens have shade all summer. They scratch and wallow about the roots of the trees and bushes, keeping them cultivated. The rains wash the droppings in the soil, thus keeping stirred, and the plants grow with additional vigor and become fruitful in the highest degree.

"We asked the owner what he did when the berries and other small fruits were ripening to prevent the hens from eating them. He replied that he let the hens eat all they wanted of them. The bushes were so vigorous and fruitful that the hens only ate a small proportion of the fruits and berries, and what they left made a larger crop than would have been produced under ordinary circumstances, so he could well afford to divide with the hens.

"Here is a case where seeking for attractiveness alone led to profit from an unexpected source. This friend of ours planted the small fruits in the poultry yard expecting the hens to eat all the fruit, his only object being to hide the bare ground and give the hens shade in the summer. The result was so unexpected that he enlarged the poultry yard, so as to include in them the whole berry patch and small fruit orchard, and he has solved the problem of completely hiding the barrenness of a poultry yard, in a way that costs little and adds to his comfort and profit."

Healthy Breeding Stock

Many breeders of experience have learned—and many amateurs are learning—that the first requisite to obtain strongly fertilized eggs is healthy, vigorous breeding stock. It is hardly ever possible to breed good healthy progeny from weak, debilitated parent stock, no matter how much care may be taken in the raising, so the first consideration is to have a breeding pen which are themselves the offspring of healthy, vigorous stock, and then to keep them in good health by proper feeding and housing.

An all too common practice is to house fowls in too warm, closed houses in the fall and winter months. This is often responsible for the debilitated condition of the birds and consequent infertility of eggs in the spring.

Of course the number of females mated to a male has much influence on the fertility of eggs, but if the breeding stock is not strong and healthy, no matter how many or few females in the pen, the results would be apt to be disappointing. But if the birds are all healthy, the number of females in a pen is not so apt to make nearly so much difference in the fertility, as a perfectly healthy and vigorous male bird can be satisfactorily mated to a very large number of females.

Poultry Notes

Hens generally sit very close together on the roosts at night. In putting up roosts, allow about seven inches for Mediterranean breeds, nine inches for Americans and twelve for Asiatics.

Poultry like fruit of all kinds, but decayed and over-ripe fruit should be avoided, as it induces bowel complaint.

It is a mistake to have high ceilings in the poultry house, as all such buildings are too cold in winter. They should be just high enough for one can walk in the house without touching the ceiling.

Hens should always have lime or mortar in order to furnish material to form egg shells with. Hens like raw egg shells, but they conduce to egg eating unless fed with scraps. An unsuspected draft of cold air striking the fowls at night while on the roosts is responsible for any case of cold and incipient roup.

Geese cannot profitably be kept in confinement. They are a grazing bird, and must have a pasture to roam over.

While it has been proved that duck farming can be made profitable without bathing water for the breeding stock, the fact remains that bathing gives the breeders considerable exercise and enables them to keep down the surplus fat.

Turkey hens are profitable until five years of age, but it is better to change males every year.

Let your poultry range in the orchard, and where practical, among the small fruit. They will help the fruit trees by ridding them of the numerous insect pests which infest them, and at the same time provide the poultry with the necessary exercise and food which they require.

Keep your chicken coops clean and lime-washed. You can't raise chickens and vermine at the same time and have success with both.

Two hundred wool growers in Utah and Western Wyoming, representing an ownership of over 2,000,000 sheep, held an enthusiastic meeting recently. The meeting was called by the Utah Wool Growers' Association, and every sheep interest in the state was represented. The purpose of the meeting was to decide on the plans to be followed whereby the wool growers could secure the best market for their wool. A resolution introduced by George Austin of Salt Lake, that no wool grower of Utah shall consign wool to commission brokers in the East, but that the wool grown in the state shall be either sold here or stored to await a better market, was unanimously adopted.

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