

BLOOMS THAT PLEASE

A Man's View of the Garden and its Problems.

By THOS. H. BINNIE

NOTHING is more beautiful around our homes than a well-kept lawn. People passing along the street always stop to admire a well and neatly trimmed lawn and flower garden. In years past our forefathers did not see the necessity of having these luxuries for they had all the trees and more, too, than they could care for. They also had all the wild flowers in their native glory and there was no reason to stop their work of clearing the land to care for things which they grew wild all around them in such great profusion. They were making the way clear for the cultivation of plants for man's grosser wants and as soon as they had these they commenced growing and caring for the more beautiful of nature's plants. It is not so very long ago that almost every one thought that flowers around a house denoted luxury and wealth, but this is true in few instances to-day. How cheering it is to come home with "that tired feeling" and spend the evening in the shelter of some tree, with the many coloured sweet smelling flowers giving off their fragrance to the quiet air. This in itself is recompense for the time and trouble spent in caring for them.

Grow More Flowers.

Why do we not grow more flowers? Why do we leave our back yards and very often our front yards in such an unsightly condition? It is not very pleasant to sit and watch bare brick walls or dirty grey board fences, yet this is what many of us do during the summer. There is some excuse during the winter months when plant vegetation is stopped, but when nature favours us it surely should be our duty as well as pleasure to add to the brightness and beauties of our homes. In setting out a plant border arrange all plants in as natural a manner as possible. Do not have the flowers stuck here and there as if the future of the city or the country depended upon the plants growing in a formal outline. Informalities are conducive to the best happiness in the life of man and this also holds true in the case of the flowers. Allow the plants as much natural sway as possible and arrange them so that the different flowers will blend into each other as naturally as if they grew so of their own accord. To do this it is necessary to understand the habits and nature of each plant selected.

How pleasant it must be for the mild Dicentra (bleeding heart) or the pretty Columbine to be playing hide-and-seek behind the tall and stately Sunflower or the long rough stem of the Hollyhock. Though they are small and delicate the harmoniously coloured Pansies, the bright sprightly Phlox and the pale meek Alyssum do not need the shelter of the large foliage of the Iris nor the protecting wing of the Golden Glow. The gorgeous and varied colours of the eastern opium flower (Poppy) do not provide a suitable canopy for Candytuft or the dainty aromatic Mignonne. Neither do the flowers like to be stood up in rows like scholars taking a lesson or as sentinels on duty. Methodical arrangements are unknown in nature and if the most pleasing effects are to be had flowers must be set in clusters where they can enjoy each other's company. A regiment of soldiers do not present so formidable an array or so impressive an appearance when they are in single file as they do when in a solid block. The same is true of the flowers.

Two classes of plants present themselves to us for use in the border around our yards—annuals and perennials. The former are those that can be grown from seed every year and have the advantage of being easily discarded if they do not prove up to expectations or are placed in the wrong position in the border. The snow is hardly gone ere the many-hued Crocus and the dainty Snowdrop open their petals for the admiration of all. How bare our gardens would be in May if it were not for the magnificent Tulips or the exquisitely scented Narcissus. The Hyacinth too, sheds its fragrance in the open at this time and these bulbs should be found in all gardens, where they can be so easily grown and where they reach almost perfection. While there are other bulbs that will give a wealth of beauty during the summer months we must get our largest and best display from the seeds which are planted in spring. Pinks commence their duties of producing their beauty about the end of June and are closely followed by the Poppies. The strength of any plant must not be allowed to go to waste in producing seed. A man can not do two things at once and be successful with both, neither can a flower produce blossoms if it is allowed to develop and ripen its seed. Play the part of the tailor and use the scissors in taking all the flowers possible (do not rob the plant too much) for the decoration of the house. Of all the poppies there is none that has such a wealth of colours as the Shirley but the double flowers of the opium varieties are more favoured by some growers. Try a few small clumps of Candytuft at the base of such plants as the Gladiolus and the Dahlias and see what a pretty effect it has in covering the earth. To have all the color of the rain bow there is no flower that will equal Phlox while if some Stocks are planted near them you will have colour and fragrance. Carry the season as far into the fall as possible. After you have taken such pains to have flowers all summer it would be a pity to allow the latter portion of the season go bare and barren. Plant some asters and have a vast variety of flowers till the frost flies.

The First Flowers.

In the country it is one of the first signs of spring for the boy of the family to come running in the house with the cry, "Sap's runnin'," and the boy is very proud to think that he is the first to find it out. So it is with the city boy or girl. They are just as proud if they find the first flower of the year. Naturally we shall not expect to find this first flower amongst the seedlings that are sown in the spring, but in the perennials that are always in the ground ready for the balmy spring breezes to start vegetation. Jack Frost has not stopped his visitations before the Anemone throws up its flower stalks with their purple blossoms to relieve the dullness of the perennial border. Closely following these are the pure white flowers of the Alyssum and the many brightly coloured bouquets of the Barrenworts with their pretty foliage. Our grandmothers used to grow the Bleeding Heart yet this old-fashioned flower has a tender place in our thoughts and is always found in a perennial border. Columbines with their lovely shades and the pretty Irises will carry the blossoming period to the first of July. During the months of June and July the lilies

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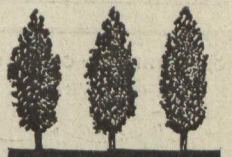
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