

Rustic Garden Ornaments.

In many places in the country scarcely a flower garden or front yard is now seen without one or two rustic baskets or vases in which to grow plants. While many persons cannot afford the more costly and elegant ones, every farmer's wife and daughter can, by the aid of husband or brother, possess pretty rustic vases and baskets that will, when filled with suitable plants, richly repay all labor upon them. Sometimes when getting up the wood for the winter use, the farmer may find something just the thing to use as a standard for one of these rustic vases. We have one formed of an oak stump about a foot in diameter, which at a certain distance from the ground branched out with three arms, or legs I should call them, as, when they were sawed off in the proper place, the stump was inverted, and as it stands in the garden it reminds me of my grand-mother's three-legged light stand. Upon this standard was placed a bushel box (such as farmers use to take their fruit to market). It is about nineteen inches long by eight inches deep, and is covered with rustic ornaments such as strips of wood with the bark left on, nailed upon the box to hide it, in any fanciful shape. They may be cut of different lengths so as to form points at the bottom. Several holes may be bored in the bottom of the box to secure drainage, and a few pieces of charcoal laid in the box before putting in the earth.

Use good soil and mix in a little sand, leaf mould and well rotted manure. Money-wort is nice to plant around the edge of the box, and so is the German ivy, as it grows luxuriantly and drapes prettily. Sometimes we plant a tall crimson *Dracena* in the centre, sometimes a tall variegated leaved *Abutilon* or a large General Grant geranium, surrounded by lower growing plants. *Vinca Variegata* is beautiful for garden baskets or vases, to droop over the edges, and a few plants of *Coleus* and *Tricolor* geranium always are pretty for the centre. I find petunias are also very good for this purpose. Pretty baskets to hang beneath the porch or piazza, may be made in the following manner: Take a wooden bowl and tack upon it the roots of the briar rose, or the roots and branches of the wild grape, the more gnarled and grotesque the better; for the handle, nail on two long rattans twisted together; give all a good coat of varnish. If it is to hang in a northern exposure it can be filled with ferns, *Tradescantia* and English ivy; if in a sunny spot, use *coleus*, golden feather, *centaurea*, variegated *alysium*, and the different ivy geraniums. The scarlet bush *nasturtium* is also very pretty for baskets or vases. I have seen them growing in fig-drum which were covered with cones and rustic ornaments, and when suspended from the trees were a blaze of beauty. Old tin two-quart basins may be covered with putty, first leaving an orifice for drainage; then crowd into the putty shells or pebbles, or even pretty stones of different colors pounded and broken into irregular pieces. Three holes should be made at equal distances apart, near the edge, to hold the cord in hanging it. One thing is very essential in the care of these baskets or vases—that is, they should be well watered every evening, and some small baskets may need it both morning and evening.—*Cor. Indiana Farmer.*

The Flower Show—An English Florist at the Centennial.

The transition from fruit to flowers is so natural that I must give you some account of the special floral features as exhibited in the annex to the Horticultural Building. The *Rhododendron* is here a perfect blaze of glory. I have often wondered it was not as great a favorite in this country as it is in England. The reason is not creditable to this country. For while it is a native of America, it is a pet of England. It has been a neglected sprout here in its native wilds, and in England it has been cultured, hybridized, and coaxed until it has become the great flowering shrub of the spring season, with several hundred choice varieties to which are given pretty pet names and many in honor of the great names of the country. Even the Queen is honored by having a *Rhododendron* called the "Queen," and the beauty of the flower is such as would honor any other woman, however noble she may be. The neglect to cultivate the *Rhododendron* in this country is one of the mistakes of the country which this exposition will help to correct. Mr. Waterer, of London, is here himself. His nurseries are about a hundred years old and consist of two hundred acres. He has made the cultivation and improvement of American plants his specialty; the *Rhododendron* was introduced to the Waterer nurseries soon after its

exportation from this country, and has been crossed and re-crossed by hybridizing until the varieties of form and color are quite numerous. Mr. Waterer now publishes a list of them in his catalogue, containing nearly five hundred really different kinds. To walk through the annex of the Horticultural Hall and examine these varieties carefully is quite an interesting process, as there is a much greater difference than would have been thought possible in the same tree. But all appear in a healthy, vigorous condition, being perfectly hardy. Mr. Waterer said they had no difficulty in packing them so as to secure them safe transit; they all take a ball of earth with them. The climate of Michigan is wonderfully well adapted for the growth of this, as of all hardy evergreens. Its humidity makes it resemble, in many respects, the climate of England, and, consequently, the *Rhododendron* would flourish as well, or better, with us than in England. In the best parks and public gardens of England, the *Rhododendron* is the favorite spring flowering shrub. We have nothing in this country taking its place at this period of the year, and Mr. Waterer's care and thoughtfulness in bringing this display has entitled him to high credit. He has done in flowers what Michigan has done in winter apples, taken the first award.—*Michigan Farmer.*

Poison Ivy.

Strange advice sometimes appears in our exchanges in regard to poisonous plants, and especially about "poison ivy." If what is called poison ivy (which, by the way, is not an ivy, but a species of sumac) was the only plant growing wild likely to poison a person by contact, we might excuse some of the mistakes made by writers upon this subject. But the facts are that the so-called "ivy" is the most harmless of the two virulent species found in all our moist woods and low grounds. Even so good an authority as Dr. James C. White writes to a Boston medical journal, advising "all who are unacquainted with the poisons of ivy to avoid any vine or bush growing by rocks, fences and woodsides, and having glossy leaves arranged in threes." Now, this climbing or trailing species of sumac, or poison ivy, is the *Rhus toxicodendron*, and ninety persons out of every hundred can handle it with impunity.

But, growing in similar localities, and frequently side by side with it, there is another species, known as poison elder. Poison sumac, or poison dogwood, is botanically the *Rhus venenata*, which few persons can handle without being poisoned. This virulent species is not, however, a "vine having three leaves," but a shrub, growing ten to twenty feet high, with long pinnate leaves of seven to thirteen ovate entire leaflets. Pinnate leaves are those which have small leaflets on each side of the mid-rib.

Now, when any of our readers are searching for wild plants or fruits, in moist grounds, we would warn them to give this plant a wide berth, if they are at all susceptible to sumac poison.—*Rural New Yorker.*

Training Tomatoes.

Of course no gardener would ever think of trellising an acre of tomatoes, but we do not know of any one little thing that pays better in private gardens than that of giving the tomato vines some kind of a support. It makes but little practical difference what particular support is used; anything that will keep the vines from sprawling out of bounds and looking slovenly, that will keep the plant up, where one can see how to train out superfluous growth, is a great comfort. Besides these advantages, the fruit is less liable to rot, is in sight where malformed specimens can be cut out, and is always clean. Another consideration is the greater ease in "worming" or killing the voracious green caterpillar; indeed, if a trellis of some kind is once used, one will always be used thereafter.

Our present object is to remind the reader to have something in readiness. Set the trellis before the plants are put out, and begin to train it early. Just here we would remind those who like to amuse themselves in the garden, that a tomato vine with a good bit of manure at its roots, and trained against a barn, shed or other building, by means of loops of strong cloth and tacks, will make a display that will astonish those who have never seen a tomato thus treated, not only in the quantity of the fruit, but in the exceeding beauty of the whole plant.—*N. E. Farmer.*

Hawthorn Hedges.

EDS. CO. GENTLEMAN.—Two instances have lately come within my notice which convince me that these fences might be made to answer as well in America as in England. One was by a roadside near St. George's, Delaware. Three-fourths of the fence was Osage orange, say 300 yards, and about 100 yards was hawthorn. The former was good for nothing, being thin and weak, while the latter was strong and thick, only neglected like the former; but if the hawthorn was cut and wattled, it would be a really good barrier, while the Osage orange would be naught but a fancy fence. The other hawthorn is near Baltimore, and was planted, cut and wattled, remaining good for twenty years, but it has been allowed to grow without any restraint, or being cut and wattled again, and the consequence is that it is going to ruin. These hedges require fresh cutting and layering, or wattling, every ten or twelve years in England, when they are not kept annually cropped off with shears; and in this climate, where all wood grows faster, they require to be attended to rather oftener.

G. G.

[To the above we would add that hedges of English hawthorn can be grown in America, and even in this northern part, Canada. The first hawthorn hedge we saw in America was in the State of Pennsylvania. It was neglected, and not as close and impenetrable as we knew them in the old country. Here in this city there is a short hedge of the English hawthorn. It is, we believe, not less than twenty years old, and is strong and healthy, though in a place not well suited to it. And we have seen, a mile from town, a very handsome hedge of that hawthorn, kept low and well trimmed. The American hawthorn would, however, we think, be more certain. It is very hardy, and well adapted to the climate, being indigenous. We have no experience of its growth in hedge rows, but growing in single bushes it makes a strong growth and is really handsome, often of graceful form, and, whether in blossom or bearing haws, is quite ornamental, though this would be of no additional worth for it as a hedge plant.—A. Ed. F. A.]

Eucalyptus Globulus.

The influence of the eucalyptus globulus, or Australian blue gum tree, on malarious districts, has been well illustrated in the Roman Campagna. The locality chosen for the experiment was the most desolate part of the Campagna, about three miles from Rome, where tradition fixes the place of the execution of St. Paul. On that spot three magnificent churches and a monastery were erected, but toward the end of the last century they had to be abandoned by the fever-stricken monks, and the ruins had since become a show place for visitors in the winter. About six years ago some French Trappist monks planted eucalyptus trees in the cloisters, and they have already grown to a height of over thirty feet. During the first four years the monks did not venture to live on the spot altogether, but returned to the city to sleep every night during the summer and autumn months. For the last two years, however, all the monks have inhabited the hitherto fatal spot—the community sleep in the monastery, and remaining day and night all the year in the most fever-stricken spot of the whole Campagna. Notwithstanding this, the monks, most of them beyond the prime of life, have preserved their health. Whether the result has been due to the direct influence of the efficacy of a kind of liqueur which the monks prepare from the eucalyptus and take with their cup of black coffee every morning, is what sanitarians would like to find out.

Salt for Cabbage.

A New Jersey gardener considers salt necessary to the development of cabbage, especially in places far from the coast. He finds them more crisp, of better flavor and to keep better when salt is used than without. He uses it as follows:—A few days after setting out the plants, and when they are damp, either after a rain, or when the dew is on, I take a small dish of fine salt, and walking among the rows, sprinkle a little pinch of salt on the centre of each plant. When the leaves begin to grow I repeat the salting, and when the centre of the leaves begin to form the head I apply salt again, scattering it over the leaves. After this I look them over occasionally and if I find plants that do not head well or appear diseased, I sprinkle the salt over freely. This will save all such plants. A quart of salt is sufficient for five hundred plants in a season, although more can be used with safety.