

Timely Pointers for Amateur Flower Growers

NOW is the time for making hotbeds for raising petunias, phlox, asters, cockscombs (*celosia christata*), and other annuals. If the bed has been completed about a week it should be in fit condition to place seed boxes in. Always allow a little air to come in at the back of the frame so as to the hot steam, which always arises from a newly made hotbed, to run off. A few finely-sifted coal ashes, placed on top of manure, are very beneficial as they help to keep in the heat.

Seeds of annuals should be sown in a light, sandy soil in shallow boxes. Very fine seeds do not need to be covered. Sow them on top of the soil. Asters, balsams and zinnias require to be covered in the soil at about a depth the size of the seed. In sowing all kinds of spring seeds, the depth they should be sown can be judged by the size of the seed, that is, have just the same depth of earth on the top of the seed as the seed is high. Seed should not be sown in seed boxes until after the soil in the boxes has been well watered. After sowing, the seed should be pressed with some flat object to force them in evenly. It is a good plan to darken the surface with newspapers or other object to cause the seeds to germinate quickly. The seeds when germinating should be watched carefully. When the shoots begin to show the covering must be removed. At this period of growth, ventilation should be watched closely.

Now is the time to strike cuttings of coleus, ageratum, geraniums, lobelias. These will root in about 10 days or two weeks. As soon as rooted they should be removed and potted in small pots in light, sandy soil, and placed back in the hotbed again. Give them a good watering and keep them shaded from the sun for two or three days to allow the roots to start in the new soil. As soon as they are rooted, they should be again placed in the sun and light.

All pruning should be done now as danger from severe frosts is about over. Hardy roses should have all weak wood cut out, and the stout growths shortened to within six inches of the ground. They will be much benefited by a liberal coating of cow manure placed around the roots. Do this as soon as possible, so that the spring rains may wash the stimulant into the soil.

Now is the time to sow balsams and ferns. Put in boxes, or pots, if boxes are not convenient.

All canna roots should be divided, cleaned and put into boxes, upon the bottom of which should be placed a couple of inches of soil. Water slightly and expose to the light. After they

have started growth they may be repotted if so desired. Dahlias should be divided now for summer growth.

Tulips in beds should be uncovered immediately to get all the sun and light possible.

When all frost is out of the ground and the weather is fairly dry, the lawn should be rolled. If lawns are in poor condition, use a standard chemical fer-

tilizer to put them in good order. Grass edgings should be cut off evenly.

Plants that are broken down from winter frosts should be headed back, and grape vines that have not been pruned should be treated immediately to prevent bleeding.

If the roots of phlox or other perennials are large, divide them, using a spade or large knife.

A Fine Orchid

A FINE old orchid that is free flowering and easily grown when once its requirements are understood, is *Cœlogyne cristata*. The plant requires a good porous soil, and not too much of it. It is better to use moss altogether than peat of a low grade. Although when once well potted, they will sometimes grow and flower well for 10 or 12 years, that does not mean that, after

ing yellow. Plants that have become too large may be pulled to pieces, the dead roots and some of the old bulbs cut away, and as many pieces having leads placed in the new pots as can be done without crowding. They will shrivel considerably after this operation, but no attempt should be made to keep them plump by soaking them with water. If the plants are kept shaded and the soil



Cœlogyne cristata in a Ten-inch Pan

once being done, they should forever after be neglected. A top dressing should be given yearly after the flowers are past; and, to assist in this work when the plants become crowded, some of the old bulbs should be cut out and the spaces filled with new material. Water should only be given when the plants are seen to be dying out, and then a good soaking should be given. A dose of weak, liquid cow manure every second watering, when in full growth, will make them produce larger bulbs and finer flowers.

They should be grown in a house with a minimum temperature of 50 degrees, and only be shaded sufficiently to keep the leaves from turn-

just moist by syringing, they will take hold more freely, and will soon swell up again, when they can be more freely watered.

Japanese Iris

When should the bulbs of Japanese iris be planted? How long will flowers of this plant last when cut?—A. F., Woodstock, N.B.

Spring is the best season to plant Japanese iris. These plants grow well in rich, moist land. They should be planted in full sun. Shade has a tendency to make the stems weak and blooms flimsy. The latter last fairly well as cut flowers if cut a few hours before the buds are ready to unfold. The stems should at once be put in water and kept in a cool place.