

## Ladies' Department.

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### CULTIVATION OF PLANTS AND FLOWERS.

On the laying out of a garden, the soil and situation must be considered as much as the nature of the ground will admit. Many soils which are harsh or arid, are susceptible of improvement by a little pains. Thus, a stiff clay, by digging well and leaving it to become pulverized by the action of the frost, and then mixing plenty of ashes with it, becomes a fine mold, which I have ever found most excellent for all flowers of the hardier kind. The black soil is the richest in itself, and requires no assistance beyond changing it about a foot in depth every three years, as a flower garden requires renewing, if a lady expects a succession of handsome flowers. The ground should be well dug the latter end of September or October, or even in November, and if the soil is not sufficiently fine, let it be dug over a second or third time, and neatly raked with a very fine-toothed rake.

Stony ground requires riddling well, and great care must be taken to keep it neat by picking up the little stones which constantly force themselves to the surface after rains. Nothing is so unbecoming as weeds and stones in parterres, where the eye seeks flowers and neatness. Almost every plant loves sand; and if that can be procured, it enriches and nourishes the soil, especially for bulbs, pinks, carnations, auriculas, hyacinths, &c. Let it be mixed in the proportion of a third part to the whole.

If the dead leaves are swept into a mound every autumn, and the soap-suds, brine, &c., of the house be thrown upon it, the mass will quickly decompose, and become available the following year. It makes an admirable compost for auriculas, &c., mixed with garden or other mold.

If the ground be a gravelly soil, the flower-garden should not slope, for stony ground requires all the moisture you can give it, while the sloping situation would increase the heat and dryness. A moist earth, on the contrary, would be improved by being sloped towards the east or west.

The south is not so proper for flowers, as a glaring sun withers the tender flowers; but the north must be carefully avoided, and shut out by a laurel hedge, a wall, or any rural fence garnished with hardy creepers, or monthly roses, which make a gay and agreeable defence. Monthly roses are invaluable as auxiliaries of all kinds. They will grow in any soil, and bloom through the winter months, always giving a delicate fragrance, and smiling even in the snow. Monthly roses will ever be the florist's delight: they are the hardest, most delicate-looking, and greenest-leaved of garden productions; they give no trouble, and speedily form a beautiful screen against any offensive object. No flower garden should exist without abundance of monthly roses.

It has often been a disputed point whether flower gardens should be intersected with gravel walks or with grass plots. This must be left entirely to the taste and means of the party forming a garden. Lawn is as wet and melancholy in the winter, as it is beau-

tiful and desirable in the summer; and it requires great care and attention in mowing and rolling, and trimming round the border. Gravel walks have this advantage: the first trouble is the last.

Many females are unequal to the fatigue of bending down to flowers, and particularly object to the stooping posture. In this case, ingenuity alone is required to raise the flowers to a convenient height; and by so doing, to increase the beauty and picturesque appearance of the garden. Old barrels cut in half, tubs, pails, &c., neatly painted outside, or adorned with rural ornaments, and raised upon feet neatly carved, or mounds of earth, stand in lieu of richer materials, such as vases, parapet walls, and other expensive devices, which ornament the gardens of the wealthy. I have seen these humble materials shaped into forms as pleasing to the eye, and even more consonant to our damp climate, than marble vases. They never look green from time, and are renewed at a very trifling expense. A few pounds of nails, and the unbarbed trimmings from fir plantations, are the sole requisites towards forming any device which a tasteful fancy can dictate; and a little green paint adds beauty and durability when the bark falls from the wood it protects. I have seen fir balls nailed on to these forms in tasteful patterns; and creepers being allowed to sail gracefully over the brims, give a remarkably pleasing and varied appearance to the parterre.

Every lady should be furnished with a gardening apron, composed of stout Holland, with ample pockets to contain her pruning knife, a small, stout hammer, a ball of string, and a few nails and snippings of cloth. Have nothing to do with scissors; they are excellent in the work room, but dangerous in a flower garden, as they wrench and wound the stems of flowers. The knife cuts slanting, which is the proper way of taking off slips; and the knife is sufficient for all the purposes of a flower garden, even for cutting string.

There are many modes of adorning a small piece of ground, so as to contain gay flowers and plants, and appear double its real size. By covering every wall or palisade with monthly roses and creepers of every kind, no space is lost, and unsightly objects even contribute to the general effect of a "plaisance." The larger flowers, such as hollyhocks, sunflowers, &c., look to the best advantage as a back ground, either planted in clumps, or arranged singly. Scarlet lychnis, campanula, or any second-sized flowers, may range themselves below, and so in graduated order, till the eye reposes upon a foreground of pansies, auriculas, polyanthus, and innumerable humbler beauties. Thus all are seen in their order, and present a mass of superb coloring to the observer, none interfering with the other. The hollyhock does not shroud the lowly pansy from displaying its bright tints of yellow and purple; neither can the sturdy and gaudy sunflower hide the modest double violet or smartly clad anemone from observation. Each flower is by this mode of planting distinctly seen, and each contrIBUTES its beauty and its scent, by receiving the beams of the sun in equal proportions.

If the trunk of a tree stands tolerably free from deep, overshadowing branches, twine the creeping rose, the late honeysuckle, or the everlasting pea