

Notes on the Garden and Farm.

English Ivy.

The use of English ivies for the purpose of decorating living rooms is more extensive every year and cannot be to highly recommended. Being very strong they will live through any treatment; but study their peculiarities and manifest a willingness to gratify them, and they will grow without stint. Many houses are too hot for them, as indeed they are for their owners. Neither plants nor people should have the temperature over 65 degrees Fahrenheit. Take care not to enfeeble your ivies by excessive watering or undue heat and you will see they will not mind whether the sun shines on them or not, or in what position or direction you train them. Indeed so much they will do themselves to render a room charming that we would rather have an unlimited number of them to draw upon than anything in nature or art.

Do you wish the ugly plain doors that shut off your tiny entry to be arched or curved, like those in the drawing room of your richer neighbor? Buy a couple of brackets, such as lamps for the burning of kerosene are sometimes placed in, and screw them on the sides of the door. Put in each a pair of English ivy, the longer the better; then train the plants over the top against the sides—indeed any way your fancy indicates. You need not buy the beautiful but costly pots the flower dealer will advise; common glaze ones will answer every purpose, for by placing in each two or three sprays of Coliseum ivy, in a few months time no vestige of the pot itself can be discerned through their thick screen.

The English ivy growing over the walls of a building, instead of promoting dampness, as most persons would suppose, it is said to be a remedy for it, and it is mentioned as a fact, that, certain rooms where damp had prevailed for a length of time, the affected parts inside had become dry when the ivy had grown up to cover up the opposite exterior side. The close overhanging pendant leaves prevent the rain or moisture from penetrating to the wall. Beauty and utility in this case go hand in hand. *Journal of Horticulture.*

Poultry in Orchards.

The Massachusetts Ploughman says:—

Some farmers make it a practice to keep their poultry in their orchards from early spring until cold weather sets in, and they find it pays them for so doing. A picket fence should be built around the orchard, high enough to prevent their flying over, with a suitable house or shed in one corner of the yard to shelter them at night. Thus situated, the poultry will thrive and prosper, keeping themselves in good condition, and the increase in eggs will be greatly augmented and their usefulness and value enhanced to their owners at least, on account of the thousands—myriads of insects and worms which they destroy, and which will more than repay the cost and labor of building the fence. By keeping them enclosed in this manner, a large number of fowls may be retained in an orchard; and the continued scratching which is done by them will prove advantageous both to the soil and the trees themselves.

NATIVE PLANTS IN HANGING BASKETS.—No one need be deprived of hanging baskets on account of remoteness from greenhouses, or inability to purchase greenhouse plants. No baskets are produced more exquisite than can be made by judicious use of the plants found in the forests and fields. The basket itself may be made of woven twigs, the end of an old keg covered over with rustic branches and roots, or the steel springs of a superannuated hoop skirt. Then, for filling, the forest furnishes abundance of moss, rich, light soil, ferns, partridge berry, saxifrages, and all the immense variety of other plants which love to nestle in its shades, or seek its open, sunny banks. *—Cor. Country Gentleman.*

INTERESTING TO DAIRYMEN.—At a meeting of milk producers in Massachusetts, some time since, a Mr. Wetherell stated that cows, upon an average, need forty-five pounds of hay per day, or its equivalent, whilst giving milk. That large cows produce more milk for the amount of food given, than small ones. That scrub cows give annually 1400 quarts of milk, whilst the Holstein and some other breeds will produce 4000. All cows should be kept clean, as well as their surroundings. In producing winter milk, cows without grain will do nothing.

Poultry Yard.

Feeding Chickens—the Use of Troughs.

Theoretically the feeding of chickens on the ground may answer very well, but practically such a course is open to serious objection. The great benefit supposed to be derived from feeding on the ground is that the chickens pick up with the food more or less sand and grit, which aids digestion.

This is the only advantage we have ever heard claimed for this method of feeding, except that it is "handy."

The sand and gravel argument, however, amounts to nothing, since these can otherwise be easily provided, and, in fact, they usually are in every well regulated poultry establishment.

It matters but little how wide a range is given to poultry, they naturally congregate at particular places at certain times in the day for their accustomed food, and it would be a useless task for us to attempt to keep clean enough for feeding the ground over which they tramp so continually. Neither is it always possible to toll them a short distance to clean ground, even if the space at command would permit. But even when the ground is as clean as we would wish, if the food be thrown on it the strongest fowls or chicks get the first and best of the rations, while the weaker are compelled to eat what has been tramped over and more or less soiled. They cannot relish such food as they would that which is fresh and clean, and therefore eat merely enough to keep themselves from starving. So, of course, they cannot thrive, but must remain the weak and profitless members of the flock.

All this may be avoided by placing the food in shallow troughs, so arranged and covered that the chicks can help themselves to what they want without trampling the contents; and in case any should be left over, it may be kept clean in the trough or taken away and saved until the next feeding.

Such shallow wooden trays as we recommended in June last, for holding water vessels for chicks, should be used. They keep the food clean and prevent waste. They are made about seven inches wide, one and one half inches deep, and from one to three feet long, as may be most convenient. On each corner of the tray or trough is nailed a strip of lath, which serves as a leg to raise the trough an inch or two from the ground. These same laths extend above the upper edge of the trough about two and one-half inches, and from the top of one to another are tacked other laths, thus forming a frame, on which a board is laid for a cover to shade the food beneath, as well as to keep the chicks from trampling it, the food being reached only from the sides and ends of the trough beneath the cover.

A flock of thirty or forty half-grown chicks will feed nicely from two such troughs of three feet each in length.

Chicks of this age should not be fed too often. Liberal feeding has been so persistently preached to beginners, of late years, that many seem to have been led to think the perfection of liberality is to keep up such a constant supply of food that the chicks may never know what it is to get even a little hungry.

"Many and many an amateur splits on this rock, feeding his chicks as often when six or eight weeks old as he did when only say a fortnight out of the shell, and thus never giving them time to get any real appetite, without which nothing will healthily grow. It is very well to feed newly hatched birds say every two hours, though even then it is not very well unless care is taken that not a scrap of food be left after each feed, but the whole two hours passed with no opportunity of eating anything but grass, insects and so on. That is the great secret, the patent process; if any have not thought of it, let them begin now, and after each feed of the little chicks, unless they have to be left for some time, scrape all remains of food away. But as they grow the time must be extended, and at two months old they ought not to be fed oftener than every four hours. It not only saves trouble and food, but makes larger growth. Water, on the contrary, will, of course, be always by them, and let it be always fresh, always clear, always cool." *—Prairie Farmer.*

Ducklings need food every two or three hours. A little wheat middlings is good to mix with the meal; and they should be confined in a pen until several weeks old, and not allowed to have access to water, except in a pan or saucer for drinking.

THE HORSE AND HIS RIDER.—M. Perret, a French pharmaceutical chemist, has discovered a very simple and economical method of saving horses, particularly when they are not in motion, from being tormented by flies. It consists in merely rubbing them with a little concentrated oil of laurel, which is extremely disliked by the flies. The oil should be specially applied to the parts where the flies usually settle. With about three-pennyworth of this oil a horse can be anointed for three days. There is not the slightest danger in using it, and, indeed, its slightly stimulating action is beneficial to horses, and keeps their coat in good order. This expedient may also be usefully replaced by a solution of sixty grammes of asafetida, mixed with one glass of vinegar and two of water. The strong odor of the asafetida drives away the flies, and if horses be well washed with this, not a fly will settle on them. No apprehension need be felt in using the asafetida, which has no deleterious properties.

A WONDERFUL FLOWER.—One of the most exquisite wonders of the sea is the oplet, a flower resembling very much the German China-Aster. It has the appearance of a large double aster, with a quantity of petals of a light green color, glossy as silk, each petal tipped rose-color. These lovely petals are never still, but wave about in the water, while the flower clings to the rock. So innocent and lovely looking, no one could suspect it of eating anything; certainly, if it did, only a bit of rainbow or a drop of dew. But those beautiful waving petals have other and more material work to do—to provide food for a large mouth, which is cunningly hid deep down among them. They do their duties famously; for, as soon as a silly little fish comes in contact with those rosy tips, he is struck with a poison, fatal and quick as lightning. He dies instantly, and the beautiful arms wrap themselves about him, and drag him into the greedy mouth. Then those lovely petals unclose and float innocently on the water, just like our water-lily. This flower was long ago talked of, but its existence doubted until the last century. Now the oplet is known to be a thing that really exists.

The Green Fly in Plant-Cases.

Much the easiest and completest way of keeping these sap-sucking and destructive vermin in check in crowded plant-cases, is to use the fumes of tobacco. These will penetrate every crevice, and reach every hidden aphid without the handling of a pot or a plant, requiring only the use of a good syringe to shower and wash the foliage after the fumigation.

Put in a small case it is quite difficult to get up smoke of sufficient density to be effective, without evolving a damaging amount of heat from the coals which it is necessary to use—as a few coals will not sustain fire enough without flame, which is deadly to the plants. And smoke from a fumigating bellows is not sure to reach every insect, but is sure to annoy the operator and pervade the room with the unpleasant odors of the burning weed.

After two or three victories, bad as defeats, in campaigning against these marauders in the recesses of a plant-case, I caught a happy suggestion about "touch," which opened the way to full success by so simple and so beautiful an operation, that I now almost sigh for more aphides to conquer.

I made some touch-paper by soaking soft felt-like wrapping paper, or the thinner sort of blotting paper, in a solution of saltpetre, and then allowing it to dry. Taking a strip of this, three or four inches wide and twice as long, strewing shreds of tobacco all over it, and rolling it up from one end into the shape of a giant cigar stump or a tiny roly-poly, I had a quasi cartridge, one of which proves sufficient to destroy every aphid in a 6 by 3 feet window case. A bit of wire serves to hold it together and to hang it by, and there is nothing more to do but to touch it with a light and to close the window, laying wet strips of paper on the joint, if necessary, to keep all smoke out of the room. The fumes pour incessantly and copiously from the ends of the cylinder, rise to the glass, and then fall cool among the foliage—sure asphyxiation to every one of the robbers.

This is a peculiarly eligible method for a small case; but in a large plant house, hot coals can be used in sufficient quantity to maintain dense fumes for half an hour if desired, without risk of burning the plants. *—Country Gentleman.*