

but I am inclined to think that the great improvement was due to something else than iron filings. The subject is worth investigation, and if repeated experiments show a decided gain in productiveness in trees, then there will be no denying the facts.

Yours respectfully,

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## Flowers.

### TEN HOUSE PLANTS FOR THE WINTER.

The chief requisites of success in the winter care of house plants are sunshine, moisture, uniform temperature and cleanliness. It is not wise for the cultivator to be too ambitious; one cannot produce all the effect of a varied conservatory in one window, and any attempt to do so will result in disastrous failure. When I say moisture is an indispensable requisite to success, I do not mean that the soil should be waterlogged, nor should the pot stand in a saucer of water, unless it is an aquatic plant. I mean that the atmosphere should be moist, and here we encounter the greatest of all difficulties in the culture of house plants. Both stove and furnace produce a dry heat, and this is more or less trying to all plants. Where possible, it is well to stand a pan of water over the stove or furnace; the evaporation is very serviceable. If this cannot be done, the only plan is to water frequently, but discreetly. Gas is also very trying to plants; even where there are no perceptible fumes the light frequently causes the flowers and buds to drop off. When we are arranging for the comfort of our floral pets it is well to recollect that we ourselves require sunlight as much as they,

and it is hardly wise to entirely block up the only sunny window in a room during the dark winter days. A stand or window-box is always preferable to the numerous shelves we so often see shutting out every ray of sunlight. For these reasons plants noticeable for fine foliage rather than for flowers may be specially recommended, since they require less sunshine.

We must give first place for beauty and ease of culture to *Ardisia crenulata*, a plant little known among amateur growers, though becoming popular as its virtues are becoming known. It is a sturdy-growing, shrub-like plant, with shining, ovate, dark-green leaves. In August or September it bears small, inconspicuous, greenish-white flowers. These are followed by bunches of berries, which, as they mature, turn bright red, resembling, in size and appearance, the Mountain Ash. These berries last the entire season, keeping their beauty, in fact, until a succeeding crop is ripe, so the plant is never without them. The effect is really beautiful, so bright and Christmasy. The plant does well in an ordinary living-room, with regular watering, but it must not be waterlogged or stand in water. The leaves may be sponged once a week, and it will keep its brightness in a northern window where there is little or no sun. This plant is a charming decoration for the dinner table; in fact, it is infinitely desirable in every way.

The Climbing Asparagus (*Asparagus tenuissimus*) is not yet very familiar, but it is a charming thing and may be highly commended as a window climber. Nothing short of a hard frost or the absence of water for two or three weeks will discourage it. It climbs and twines like smilax; but the foliage is fine and feathery, like common asparagus, only more so. It does well in a room heated by a stove, does not harbour insects, and, in short, is a botanical paragon.