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Rennie's Carpet of Snow Alyssum

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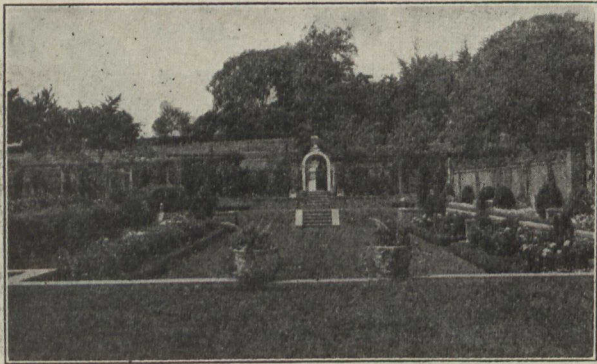
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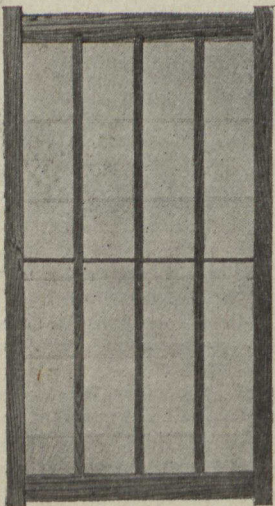
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## FLOWERS FOR THE HOME

*Any careful and tasty Housewife may Beautify Her Home at slight expense.*

By THOMAS MANTON

MANY of our country people when visiting their city friends are struck by the beautiful plants they see decorating their homes, and often wish they could have the same. They see the hardy *Aspidistra*, the beautiful and graceful Boston fern, and the stately Kentia palms, all living and apparently thriving, and they see the really beautiful effect produced by them. But few of them know that with but little effort they can have an equally good show. The country home is nearly always a better house for plants than the city home. In the city gas and furnace heat make the atmosphere of the home a very bad place for living plants, and the list that will thrive or even live in such conditions is a very small one. In the country home it is generally different. The heating is done with wood and the lighting with oil, so the oxygen in the air is not used up and plants and people thrive in it.

In place of the Boston fern, the country woods are full of beautiful plants of the Christmas fern with its dark green leaves so like the Boston that many people think it the same. If these are carefully dug up about the end of September, when its growth is fully matured, carefully potted and well watered to settle the soil it will last in a cool room in the house for three months. Early in the spring, generally in March, fresh plants can be obtained from outside and will then last until spring flowers come in again.

There are several evergreen ferns that are native to the country that can be treated the same way, and while they are inexpensive they are comely and suitable for home decoration. The writer has often used these in decorations with the choicest exo-

tic plants. In the country home the Sultan's Balsam, or as it is commonly called the "Patience" plant is about the best for continuous blooming. If given a light, rich soil and started well into growth in the fall, placed in a sunny window and carefully watered, it will be covered with bloom all winter and be a source of never-ending pleasure.

A handful of "Wandering Jew," or as its proper name is, *Tradescantia*, procured in September and planted in any old pan in rich, sandy soil, will grow and thrive in any fairly light place in the country home. I have seen plants of this placed on small tables in the fall and by the spring they have grown so that the leaves touched the ground and were really splendid. A pan made up like this covered with its bright green leaves is very useful in the winter, especially at Christmas time. Then in places where the Bitter-Sweet is plentiful, short branches of it covered with its bright orange-coloured berries stuck in the pan produce a striking effect and one that will last for weeks. The country woman who will give a little thought and time to home decoration has near at hand quantities of the most charming natural material at all seasons of the year, but material that is often not appreciated because of its very cheapness. Often a little taste and care used in its selection will bring out beauty in it not seen before. I remember seeing a very beautiful decoration in a city house, made up with common beech sprays and wild asters. This was of course in the fall of the year, while in the spring the branches of the golden willow associated with branches of the common red-stemmed dogwood can be made to look very well.

## BEAUTIFYING THE PREMISES

THE desolate appearance of many of our farm and general country gardens gives a bad opinion of our people to those who have travelled in the older countries of the world. Many of our people have been too busily engaged in the work of clearing the land to do anything towards beautifying the home plot; but the great change that has come over the farming world through cheap transportation and labour-saving machinery is bringing home to our country people the necessity as well as the utility of improving appearances around the home.

In clearing the farms, fine trees have been ruthlessly sacrificed, and in many places near our large towns and cities trees are now being planted and carefully tended to try and take their places. A good hardwood tree should always be left or should be planted not far from the house, its pleasant shade being so very acceptable to both old and young.

The road from the street to the house should have a gentle curve and on either side a few flowering shrubs should be planted; Lilacs white and purple, *Spyrea Van Houtte*, *Cydonia Japonica* and if possible *Prunus Tri-loba*. These are all good growers, but should not be planted too close together. Unless the place is very small, they should be ten feet apart and quite as far back from the edge of the road. After they are first started they should be mulched with good manure. The only time they should be pruned is just after they have done blooming, as if pruned in

the fall or spring their flowering shoots are cut off and their flowers lost for the season; if pruned immediately after blooming they will make flowering wood again before winter sets in. The flowers in all these shrubs are made by the fall preceding their appearance in the spring, so if the wood is cut off the flowers are lost.

A bed of that beautiful shrub, *Hydranger Paniculata Grandiflora*, immediately in front of the house is very effective. If this is used the bed must be well worked and manured, as this shrub is a very strong feeder. Unlike the other shrubs mentioned this is best pruned in the spring. The flowers come in the fall and always on the current year's growth. To get large-sized blooms the bushes should be cut back very low and the bed should never want for water all summer. When the flowers are turning pink if they are cut and dried they are useful for decoration all winter.

The verandah should be covered with creepers. The cheapest is the Virginia Creeper. This is a quick grower, is clean and no trouble. Another cheap native creeper is the Bitter-Sweet, otherwise *Celastrus Scandens*. This is also a rampant grower, but it needs pinching to make it branch out and training to make it cover the space intended for it. The common varieties of hardy grapes also make cheap and effective creepers. The Dutchman's Pipe is a handsome creeper with striking large leaves, seldom bothered by insects.