



THE SIMPLE LIFE



THE HOME GARDEN

GARDEN CALENDAR FOR JULY

Plant: Many Hardy Border Plants if weather is suitable. And especially, Pyrethrum, Delphinium (cut back for late flowering), Galliardia, Narcissus, Iris Reticulata, Winter Greens.

Sow: Cabbage for Spring, Colewort, Peas, quick growing kinds, Carrot, Cauliflower, Mustard and Cress, Dwarf Beans, Lettuce, Cos and Cabbage, Onion, Turnip, Endive, Early Horn Carrot in shade, Radishes in shade, Parsley, Fricoly Spinach, Black Spanish Radish, Kalecchia, if not sown, Brompton Stock, Queen Stock, Antirrhinum, Cucumber.

THE FIFTY BEST ROCK PLANTS



RECENT writer in the London Times says that it is not quite so difficult to make a choice of the fifty best rock plants as of the fifty best hardy perennials; but no list is likely to please any one very much except the maker of it; and even he will probably see the faults of it soon after he has made it. One plant will seem the best of its kind today and another tomorrow. Besides, he is sure to forget some of his favorite plants. But still his list may contain some beautiful plants unknown to some of his readers, and it may confirm their liking for others. The list which follows does not pretend to be even the writer's final choice, but it will contain only plants which he has thoroughly tested, and which he knows can be made to flourish without any great amount of skill. Some of them are quite easy, others not quite so easy; but none are inexplicably capricious, and none demand conditions which the ordinary well-made rock garden in the country cannot supply. They are chosen first for their beauty, next for their perfect fitness for the rock garden, and last for their comparative ease of culture. None of the larger shrubs suitable for the rock garden are included among them, and no bulbs. Some are not rock plants in their native countries, but all will look better and probably do better in the rock garden than anywhere else.

If the present writer were allowed to grow only one rock plant, he would without hesitation choose *Lithospermum prostratum*. It has only two faults—namely, that it will not endure lime in the soil and that it is not easy to propagate. Otherwise it is as perfect as a plant can be. It is a small shrub, quite prostrate in its growth, and for some months of spring and early summer covered with brilliant blue flowers, while it often bears again, though more sparsely, in the autumn. It is always described in books as quite easy to grow. Yet one often sees poor plants of it even in pretentious rock gardens. The reason is that gardeners often will not give it what it wants. Its wants are well known, and, except on limy soils, easily supplied—but they must be supplied if it is to thrive. It will do well either on the north or south side of the rock garden; but it does not like too hot a place or too poor a soil. It roots very deeply, and should be planted in at least two feet of good fibrous soil and leaf mould, and placed so that its roots can run under a large rock. Also it should never be disturbed, and if possible it should be sheltered from easterly winds, which often damage it in winter early spring. When it is well grown it spreads into a bush several feet across, and in flower is as brilliant as any gentian. Seed can never be obtained, and it must be propagated by cuttings, which are sometimes difficult to strike. These are usually taken after it has flowered, and consist of fresh growth with a little of the old wood, but good healthy shoots taken in April will often root better.

An excellent contrast to the *Lithospermum* is *Arenaria montana*, which has large white flowers. But care must be taken that the *Arenaria* does not smother the *Lithospermum*, as it grows a great pace. It will thrive anywhere except in deep shade or a bog, and few rock plants are more beautiful. It can be raised from seed almost as easily as mustard, or any shoot will root quickly. It is equally beautiful mixed with *Saponaria ocymoides*, another rampant plant, also of the Pink family, and with bright pink blossoms. This also should be raised from seed, and cut back whenever it gets leggy. Another small shrub of the highest beauty and value is *Daphne cneorum*, especially the finer variety of it called *Maus*. This, like the *Lithospermum*, has certain definite wants. It thrives best among rocks and in the same kind of soil as the *Lithospermum*. It must not have either too dry or too damp a place, but may be grown either on the south or the north side of a sunny open rock garden. There is some dispute as to whether it likes lime, but it will certainly thrive without it. It is difficult to increase except by layers, and these take some time to root. Whenever the shoots grow leggy they should be layered, and then the plant will spread and increase in vigor. It is beautiful at all times of the year, but the beauty and scent of its pink blossoms are incomparable. It has the reputation of being capricious; but this is probably because it dislikes disturbance, bad drainage, sour soil, and an exposed position. It should not be planted anywhere near the *Lithospermum*, but a good contrast to it is *Saxifraga cotyledon*, the most useful of all the rosette Saxifrages. There are several varieties of this, but they do not differ much. It can be easily raised from seed or increased by offsets, and flowers very freely. It likes a rich, light soil, and does not need lime. It should be given plenty of space, as each rosette will grow into large patches. There are, of course, innumerable Saxifrages, and at least twenty of them might claim to be among the best fifty rock plants. We must include one

more of these, and we choose *S. burseriana* major for its extreme beauty. It needs some care and should be grown in a cool, well-drained place, where it gets sun for about half the day. The soil should consist of fibrous loam; leaf mould, and mortar rubble, and the plant should be surrounded with rubble or chips of rock. It is small and must be secluded from all rampant plants. There is the same difficulty with the *Campanulas* as with the Saxifrages. It is hard to make a choice among them. We choose the best variety of *Campanula garganica*, the name of which appears to be uncertain. It has pale starry blue flowers, is easily raised from seed, and thrives in any well-drained open place among rocks and in rich, light soil. There is no *Campanula* more beautiful either in flower or in habit. If a more vigorous *Campanula* is required, we must add *C. muralis*, especially its larger variety, *Portenschlagiana*. This will grow anywhere on the rock garden, and looks its best contrasted with *Silene alpestris*, an exquisite but most vigorous plant, with flowers like those of a delicate little white pink. Both of these should be left undisturbed for some years after they are planted. The *Silene* does not like a very hot dry place. For a contrast to *C. garganica* there is nothing to surpass

stony soil, and to be left alone when once planted. It bears milky white flowers, large for the size of the plant, in late spring, and dies down in the autumn. Another beautiful plant for a cool, well-drained place is *Polemonium confertum*. This is rare, but can be easily raised from seed or increased by careful division in spring. It has delicate pale lavender blossoms, and is more beautiful even than its white variety, *P. melitum*. It likes a light soil enriched with leaf-mould.

For the hottest places in the rock garden there are no plants better than the *Aethionemas*, and of these *E. grandiflorum* is the most brilliant in color. It is hardy enough to endure most winters and can be easily raised from seed, especially if sown when fresh or from cuttings taken in spring. All the *Aethionemas* like lime and a poor soil. Another excellent plant for the same kind of position is *Onosma tauricum* (Golden Drop). In a dry place and poor soil this grows to a considerable size, and flowers all the summer. Its chief need is protection from stagnant moisture in the winter. It should be increased by cuttings taken either in April or the autumn. The cuttings must be kept as dry as possible, as they are apt to damp off. The *Erodiums* are all plants for dry places, ex-

peat is not necessary, and is not averse to lime.

Rosa alpina is the only rose suitable to the rock garden, and it is suitable only to large rock gardens. It grows rather more than a foot high and has bright pink flowers. It needs space, as it spreads by suckers and prefers a cool place and rich soil. It is very easily grown. It varies a good deal in size, and pains should be taken to get the dwarfest variety.

There are not many rock plants that flower in autumn, and one of the best of these, where there is space for it, is *Polygonum vacinifolium*, a perfectly prostrate knotweed with pink blossoms in September and October. It spreads very rapidly, and its shoots take root as they spread. It should be grown in poor soil and in an open position on the north side, if it is to flower well. It can be readily increased by rooted shoots cut off and replanted in spring, but should not be disturbed when established. Other plants that will flower late in the year are *Papaver alpinum* and *Linaria alpina*. These often die after flowering, but if raised from seed in spring in a cold frame and planted out as soon as possible they will come into flower about July and continue to bloom till the frosts. They can also be sown where they are to bloom. They will flourish in any well drained position

A. argentea (rightly called *Tanacetum argenteum*). This is beautiful both for its silvery foliage and for its pure white flowers. There is no better plant for the top of the rock garden, and it may be mixed with the *Aethionemas*.

Few of the dwarf *Hypericums* are quite hardy; but *H. reptans* will survive most winters if planted in a warm place where its roots are protected by large rocks, and it is the most beautiful when in flower. It likes a rich, light soil, and may be increased by cuttings taken in spring. Near it may be grown *Edraianthus serpyllifolius*, a little bell flower of a brilliant purple color, not at all difficult to grow in fissures of the rocks and in light, rubbly soil. This is also best increased by cuttings taken in spring. One of the earliest of all spring flowers is *Iberis saxatilis*, the smallest of the Candytufts, and not always easy to obtain true. It likes a limy soil and a fissure between rocks looking south. It is quite prostrate, and the largest plants are only a few inches across. House-leeks are innumerable in variety, but the best for the rock garden is *Sempervivum arachnoides* and its larger variety *S. lagerei*. These are quite easy in any high and dry sunny place. They like a fissure where they can spread out over the face of the rocks.

All the plants mentioned in this list are only suggestions, and could be matched with other plants as beautiful. The writer chooses them because he has tried them all and knows their beauty and that they can be grown with a moderate amount of skill and pains. He could make another list almost as much to his taste—and perhaps more to the taste of others. There are now too many rock plants, and the beginner is apt to be bewildered among them. But if he stocks his rock garden with the plants we have mentioned, he will have nothing worthless and nothing that he need despair of growing.

ABOUT DEUTZIA

One of the hardiest deutzias is the species *parviflora*, a native of Northern China. A native of China and Japan is *deutzia scabra*, usually sold in nurseries as *deutzia crenata*. It varies in height from 6 to 10 feet, according to conditions, with stout yellow branches. The upright spiced white clusters come into bloom in June and last until July. There are a good many forms of this deutzia in cultivation, differing in semi-double, double, and purple and rose-tinted blossoms.

Deutzia watereri has a large rose-tinted flower, which is very showy. *Deutzia discolor* is a native of China, a graceful shrub growing three to four feet tall, with white flowers tinted with pink on the outer side of the petals. It needs protection from frost. *Deutzia kalmiana* is a beautiful shrub with large white distinct blossoms slightly tinted with rose, but should be well protected in winter.

A large number of hybrids have lately been sent out by French producers in which the percentage of *leutzia gracilis* on one side has been largely used and which are conspicuous for rose tints, large bell-shaped blossoms and more conspicuous clusters.

CELERY FOR PROFIT

The soil for celery should be a deep peat, with plenty of natural moisture. It should be drained to the depth of two and a half feet, so that there will be no stagnant water lying in the ground. Next break the sod with a good, deep furrow. Turn it over well in the fall, and disk, and as early as possible the following spring. Disk it again, and apply about five hundred pounds of some good fertilizer per acre, with about forty bushels of lime, fifty bushels of wood ashes, and half a ton of salt an acre. Disk it every week till time to plant.

Sow the seed in an open bed, as soon as the frost is out of the ground in the spring. In peat soil the frost is usually all out by the middle of April. Give extra care in well lifting the soil for the seed bed. Do not cover the seed too deeply. Tramp the soil very firmly with the feet before sowing, and roll after with a hand roller. Do not sow the seed too thick, as the plants will be slim if this is done. About one hundred plants per square foot is a good stand for first-class plants. Keep the plant beds well weeded, so that the plants will be strong and bushy.

When the plants are about two and a half inches high, start to plant in the field. Set the plants six inches apart in the rows, and have the rows four feet apart. Stretch a line straight across the field, then walk on the line and you will have a good plain mark to plant by. Make the "holes" with a pegger. Great care should be taken to press the soil firmly about the roots, and see that the tap root of the plant is straight, or else your plant will be a failure. After planting keep free from weeds and cultivate the same as any other crop of roots till large enough to bank up for blanching.

Use fertilizer whenever the plants need it. If you are getting excellent results without its use, it does not seem essential that you apply any. At the same time a slight dressing, as a mulch, is always good. However, if the ground is sufficiently rich, a fertilizer may cause the canes to run to wood and destroy the fruiting qualities.

On Saturday, June 27th, Mrs. Sutton, of Jessie Street, Victoria, brought into The Colonist office a box of large sized, full flavored, ripe raspberries. Pretty early, even for Victoria, considering the quality.



Asperula hirta, a little woodruff with delicate pink flowers, that looks as if it would be difficult, but is almost as easy as *Anemone*. But even more beautiful and worthy of the best position in the rock garden is *Asperula aethiops* (or *suberosa*), a downy little plant with flowers like pink coral, which it bears all through the summer. This is not difficult, but should be planted in a dry fissure between the rocks in full sun and looking south, in a compost consisting mainly of mortar rubble with a little fibrous soil and leaf mould. It is not a plant for a cold climate, but may be easily grown in the south of England, and can be increased by careful division in spring or by cuttings taken at the same time. It should also be planted in spring. Of all rock plants the Pinks are the most valuable genus, and if one species is to be chosen among them we choose *Dianthus neglectus*. It is not the easiest, but easier than *D. alpinus* or the wonderful *D. callizonus*; and it is perhaps the most beautiful of all. It can be easily raised from seed, but hybridizes too readily with other species. Some seedlings will probably be inferior, some true, and some may turn out splendid hybrids, finer even than the species. It is a small plant with grassy leaves and brilliant pink flowers washed with yellow on the underside of the petals. It thrives best in fissures between big rocks looking south and in poor, rubbly soil. It certainly likes lime.

The *Androsaces* are a difficult family, but *A. carnea* is not more difficult than *Dianthus neglectus*, and as beautiful. It should be planted in a cool, well-drained position, as it can endure neither drought in summer nor stagnant moisture in winter. In a hot rock garden it will do best with a northwest aspect. The soil should consist of fibrous loam, silver sand, and leaf-mould. It grows best in a level pocket, if it is sharply drained, and cannot endure lime. It should be top dressed with leaf-mould and silver sand in the spring. It can be raised from seed, if this is sown when fresh, and it often ripens seed in England. Near *A. carnea* may be grown the exquisite *Oxalis enneaphylla*, a much easier plant. This likes a rich, light,

cept the beautiful little *E. reichardi*, which is not very hardy. The best of them, perhaps, is *E. guttatum*, neat in habit and with delicate white spotted flowers. It is a very easy plant for sunny rock work and often ripens seed in England. *Geranium argenteum* is the best of the Cranesbills for the rock garden, more beautiful than *C. cinereum* because of its silvery leaves. It should be planted in a deep crevice between rocks looking full south, and must be top-dressed or replanted if it grows out of the ground. It shares this habit with many of the Alpine primulas, among which it is difficult to make a choice. But certainly none is more easy or beautiful than the white *Primula nivalis* (the true name of which appears to be *P. pubescens alba*). This thrives in any cool place in light rich soil, which should be two feet deep at least. All the Alpine primulas like to be surrounded with stones.

Few *Gentians* are quite easy, and not long ago *Gentiana verna* was supposed to be almost impossible in England, chiefly because it was treated as a rock plant. It should be grown in a flat sunny basin where it will catch all the rain. If this is well drained it will not suffer from damp in the winter. The soil should be deep, half loam and half leaf-mould. It is best planted in early spring, and the most important point in its culture is to top-dress it with leaf-mould at intervals through the summer and to water it frequently in dry weather. The plants must be very firm in the soil, and it is well to tread on them whenever they seem to be at all loose. Strong plants should be obtained to start with, and these are best got from Ireland. With these precautions it is easy to grow where the air is pure, and there is no need to speak of its beauty. It should never be disturbed when established.

The culture of *Ranunculus pyrenaica* is now fairly well understood. It is most splendid near a waterfall, but most gardeners cannot provide it with this. It will thrive, however, among rocks where it is placed so that the sun never strikes upon it, and is best planted so that the roots run horizontally into the ground. It likes a rich soil of loam, peat, and leaf-mould, though

not too dry and seed themselves profusely. Both are extremely beautiful.

Few of the *Pentstemons* are true perennials, but *P. Clabber alpinus* lasts as long as any, and is a true rock plant. It varies in color, but the best varieties are a beautiful glassy blue. It can be easily raised from seed or increased by cuttings. Of the *Columbines* *Aquilegia pyrenaica* is the dwarfest and a very beautiful plant. It is easy to grow in a cool well-drained place, but difficult to get. *A. alpina* is never seen in its true beauty in England. It seems to deteriorate in cultivation. Of the low-growing spring *Phloxes* there are many varieties, but none so beautiful or compact as the white *Phlox nelsoni* and the pink *P. vivid*. These should be mixed among bold rocks and in a light rich soil. In damp or shady places they are apt to die off in winter. If they are top-dressed with leaf-mould the shoots will root, and this is the best way to increase them.

There are several Alpine *Ranunculi*, but none more beautiful or vigorous than *R. amplexicaulis*, which likes a cool place and a soil of loam and leaf-mould. Of all the *Violas*, the new *Viola gracilis* from Greece seems the most valuable for the rock garden. It appears to be hardy and vigorous and has bright but delicate purple flowers. It should be grown in a warm place and light, rich soil, at least until its capacity for standing our winters is better known. Among *Veronicas* we choose *V. saxatilis*, among *Potentillas*, *P. alba*—both most beautiful plants not so often grown as they should be. *P. alba* flowers for six months of the year, and will grow almost anywhere. In a large rock garden space should be found for *Nierembergia rivularis*, which in England thrives best in a flat, sunny, well-drained place and should be top-dressed with leaf-mould when it starts into growth in spring. It increases at a great pace, and flowers for a long time. *Dryas octopetala* also needs a large space; and flowers most freely in full sun when it is protected from drought by large rocks. It likes a strong dose of lime in the soil. There are many good *Achilleas* for the rock garden, all liking a dry, sunny situation, but the best is