

Harvesting and Storing Vegetable Crops

THE principles that are involved in the storing of vegetable crops differ with the various classes. One of the most important points to bear in mind is the fact that much of the decay of vegetables in storage is not the fault of the storage, but is due to the work of diseases with which the crops are infested before they are put in storage. Discard all specimens that are bruised and which are likely to decay. The practice of a few prominent growers may be read in the following paragraphs:

POTATOES AND GARDEN ROOTS

"The best place to store potatoes and garden root crops," said Mr. Jas. Guthrie of Dixie, Ont., to *THE HORTICULTURIST*, "is in a root house, isolated and specially constructed. Dig the cellar four feet deep and over it construct a house, well roofed with cedar. Around the sides, bank with earth about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet deep, using sods as first tier next the wood. Keep the house dark, but ventilate every 12 feet.

"In a roothouse like this, the vegetables come out in spring in fresh condition. They are also easy to get at when needed in winter. Exclusion of light is important. It makes potatoes green and spoils the cooking qualities. This is illustrated sometimes in the sale of potatoes in cities. Often, the purchaser immediately places them in a well-lighted cellar, and soon they become poor in quality. He then blames the grower for supplying poor stock. This is scarcely fair, as the fault lay with the man who bought the goods."

PARSNIPS

In the fall some growers take up only as many parsnips as are needed for domestic use and for sale during the winter. The rest are left in the ground until spring. * In digging, leave in the soil as long as possible, but dig before the frost binds up the ground. Store in a cool cellar, and on a sand floor if possible. If the cellar contains a furnace and the atmosphere is warm, it is better to cover the parsnips with sand to prevent wilting.

"Parsnips left in the ground and dug in the spring will not keep as long as those harvested in fall and stored in pits," said Mr. James Daudridge, of Humber Bay, Ont. "In some soils they are heaved by frost. Sometimes they are injured by the ice and snow forming a crust around the crowns; when thaws come, the crowns will start to rot."

CABBAGES AND CAULIFLOWER

In storing late cabbages, be absolutely certain, primarily, that they are not infested with the black-rot fungus. Another essential for successful storage is that the heads be kept at a low temper-

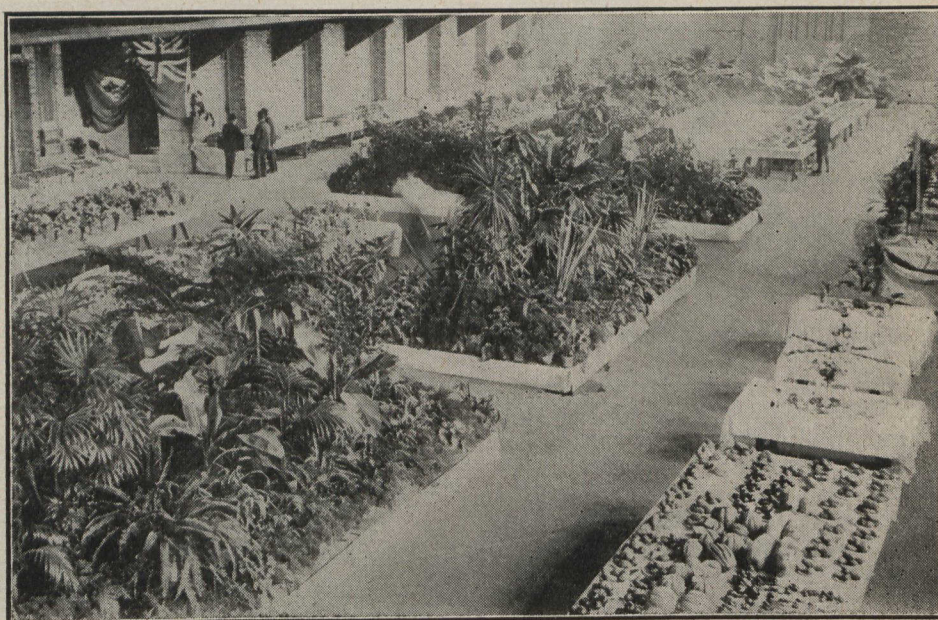
ature, nearly to freezing point. Some vegetable gardeners claim that if the cabbage is allowed to freeze in the fall and kept so all winter it will keep in good condition until March or April. This method is dangerous, however, as there is a great liability of losing the entire crop when the heads dry out in the spring. The best and safest method is to keep the cabbages as near freezing point as possible, at a nearly constant temperature, without allowing them to become actually frozen hard. In this manner they will keep until spring and remain in good condition.

"Late cauliflowers head about October 1," said Mr. T. W. Stephens, of Aurora,

hastens decay. Leave the roots on and cut off a few of the loose outside stalks and any that may have got bruised or broken, then cart to the cellar.

"Have on hand some damp, not wet, sawdust and some boards. Begin next the wall, and lay first about three inches of sawdust and saturate it well with water, then pack one tier of celery as close together as possible and bank with sawdust slightly moist. Set another row similarly and pack as before, banking about one-half or two-thirds of the height of the stalks. Set the plants upright or they will grow crooked.

"Follow this plan until a space is set about three feet wide, then place a board



Fruits, Flowers and Vegetables of Niagara District Horticultural Exhibition

Ont., to *THE HORTICULTURIST*. "They should be harvested at once. Trim off the largest leaves and store, root and all, in a dry cellar. Beware of dampness, as it causes rot. Store on the floor. Cauliflowers may be stored in boxes or barrels if not filled too full. When properly stored, they should keep until February or March."

STORING CELERY IN SAWDUST

Most growers pack celery in sand. While the practice is a good one, there are others who follow a different method of procedure. One of these is Mr. J. C. Black, of Truro, N.S., a well-known authority on these matters in his native province. "When storing celery," he writes, "I used to pack in earth in the basement of a barn, but later on I adopted the plan of packing in sawdust. In taking up the plants in the field, they must be handled carefully so as not to break or bruise the stock; the latter

8 or 10 inches wide against the last row of celery, and fasten it with stakes. About eight inches from this put another board, both, of course, on their edges. This will leave an eight inch space between them. Pack against the latter board until again three feet wide, then leave another space of eight inches. The spaces are for the purpose of ease in inspecting the condition of the celery and for applying water occasionally to the roots without wetting the tops, which causes decay.

"In this way I have stored thousands of stalks, with good success. Of course, everyone has not access to sawdust; in that case, earth will do, but celery keeps better and comes out brighter and cleaner from the sawdust. This method can be adopted for family use in a small way by packing in boxes. The temperature should be kept low but not to the freezing point."