

Horticulture.

EDITOR—D. W. BEADLE, CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE
ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY, ENGLAND.

THE KITCHEN GARDEN.

Selection of Site.

It may not be always possible to choose such a spot for the kitchen garden as would be most desirable. In villages and city suburbs one may just take what he has got and make the best of that, and it is astonishing, often, what wonderful results can be achieved in the face of great hindrances. Yet he who chooses the most favorable site will always have the advantage, other things being equal, over his less fortunate neighbor. It is desirable, generally, in our climate, to select a piece of ground that slopes gently to the south or south-west, and if possible somewhat sheltered from the north and north-east. The ground should be most thoroughly drained, so that there is never any water standing in the soil within three feet of the surface. This is essential to success in all garden culture; and if no piece of ground can be found which is naturally of this character, it must be made so by putting down under-drains. It will be all to no purpose that a delightful sunny exposure is selected if the soil be full of water. The sun cannot warm such a soil, and the seeds that may be sown will either rot or lie long dormant; and when they do germinate their growth will be slow and sickly. If there be any intention of growing vegetables for market, such an exposure and such a character of soil are of the very greatest importance. The whole question of success or failure turns upon this point. He who can get his vegetables first into market will command both the best prices and the best customers, and it will certainly not be the man who has for his garden a wet, and therefore cold piece of ground.

Choice of Soils.

Having succeeded in obtaining a garden site with a warm exposure and that is thoroughly drained, the kind of soil is not of so very great importance. Yet, even in this, there is room for a considerable measure of selection. A very light sandy soil, though it be loose and porous and easily worked, is a very hungry soil, and will need a very heavy annual expenditure for fertilizers. At the opposite extreme lies a very stiff clay soil, which, though it may not need such excessive annual applications of manures, is nevertheless a very hungry soil in its texture and nature of the soil. The best of garden vegetable soils. But between these two extremes may be found a number of soils which are of a medium sort, both in their natural texture and in their quality, by judicious treatment, which are well adapted to garden culture. Doubtless the best soil for the best suited to the purposes of a kitchen garden, is a rich sandy loam, in which there is enough clay to make it retentive of manures, and enough sand to be porous and easily kept in a friable condition.

Laying out the Garden.

Having selected the site and secured as far as possible the desired soil, the garden is to be laid out. As most persons combine within the same enclosure, both the kitchen and fruit garden, there is of course room for the display of considerable taste in the laying out of the ground, locating the walks and arranging the several beds. Much in this matter must be determined by the special conformation of the whole garden plot, the character of the surface and the direction of the boundaries. But as in such grounds the idea of utility and convenience is ever prominent, it follows that all merely fanciful arrangements are out of place. The usual and most convenient form of such a garden is a square, or a figure

that nearly approaches a square. Around this a walk is laid out leaving a border of variable width, but usually not exceeding six feet wide, between the walk and the outer boundary. The portion of the garden bounded by this walk is then laid out in squares of convenient size by cutting walks through it, running at right angles to each other. The width of these walks may be varied according to the size of the garden, but should be wide enough to admit of convenient passing to and fro with the necessary garden implements; say from four to six feet in width.

The amateur will take pains to have these walks kept firm and smooth, and the ground being already thoroughly under-drained, he can readily do so by throwing out a little of the surface soil, and filling in with coarse gravel at the bottom, finishing off with finer gravel at the surface. If he can conveniently put down a couple of inches of fresh gas-house lime before he finishes off the surface with the finer gravel, it will be a long time before he is troubled with weeds in the walks.

Perhaps it would be expecting too much of most of our farmers to ask them to put gravel on their garden walks; but if they could be induced to take the trouble to throw out a few inches of the soil and fill up the space with stone rubbish mingled freely with the waste from some neighboring lime kiln, it would be found in the end a great help in keeping the walks solid and free from weeds. Those who cultivate market-gardens on an extensive scale, must lay out their grounds accordingly, and prepare their walks more as roads, upon which the cart and market wagon may travel. And these too, if they can readily spare the means, will find that a solid road bed will, by no means, be an unremunerative part of their investment.

A good basis for the laying out of a kitchen garden, may be found in the accompanying plan, suggested some years ago by an American contemporary.

THE FRUIT GARDEN.

It will not be necessary to treat particularly of the location, soil or laying out of the fruit garden, as what has been said on these topics under the head of the kitchen garden applies with equal force to the garden devoted to fruits. Indeed the fruit garden is but an accompaniment to the kitchen garden, and is usually embraced within the same enclosure. The soils in the main that are best adapted to the one are well suited to the other, and the slight modifications that may be deemed desirable for the several fruits will be noticed as each is particularly treated.

Strawberries.

The first fruit that claims attention under this head is the strawberry; both because it is the most delicately delicious of them all, and because it is the first in the season to gladden our eyes and gratify our palates. And as it is always very desirable to ripen this fruit as early as possible, there should be at least a small bed in one of the most sunny and most sheltered spots of the garden, where the soil has been well worked and well enriched to a good depth,

and where, while the ground does not quickly dry out as the season advances, the earth soon becomes warm in spring and encourages an early growth. In such a spot, well sheltered from rough and chilling winds, the earliest variety of strawberry should be planted. It is of little moment whether the plants are set during the first days of September or in the month of April. Usually we have found that more of the plants live and thrive well if set out in April, than when planted at any other time. In small gardens, the plants may be set in rows eighteen inches apart, and one foot apart in the row. When planting is done on a somewhat larger scale, it will be found to be more convenient to place the rows three feet apart. In selecting the plants for setting, those of the previous season's growth are to be preferred, the young plants just nicely rooted on the runners. Some stress has been laid by writers on this subject on the particular plant of the runner, counting from the parent plant; but our experience has not confirmed any such preference, and we are disposed to consider it as more fanciful than practical. So long as the young plant has healthy leaves and roots, and an abundant supply of the latter, we have failed to detect any superiority arising from its numerical distance on the runner from the parent plant.

Other beds may be planted with this fruit, according to the wants of the family, and the season of strawberries may be considerably prolonged if some of the latest ripening sorts are planted where they will be shaded as much as possible from the sun

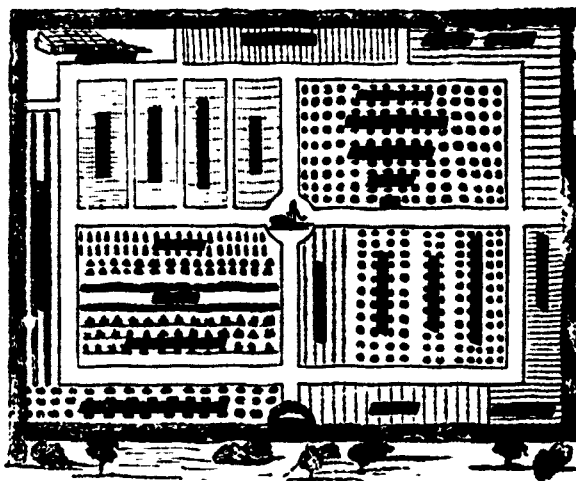
and robbed of the quickening influences of the southerly breezes.

In all cases, strawberries will thrive best in deep rich soil, and if the best results are desired the surface of the ground between the rows should be covered with a dressing of manure in the autumn, and mulched just before the berries begin to change color, with a covering of newly cut grass. Fresh cut

grass is to be preferred to any other material for mulching because it is free from ripened seeds, and the fall dressing is for the same reason to be taken from the heap that has been most thoroughly composted.

The market-gardener, as well as the cultivator for merely family use, will find this liberal treatment of his beds of strawberries both in the way of winter and summer covering amply to repay all his trouble. Indeed upon these two things, and one can scarcely say whether the one be more important than the other, the crop, and with it the financial results, mainly depend. The culture beyond this is of the most simple kind. The weeds must be kept down and the soil kept open and friable if we expect the plants to grow. Yet after a time the old plants will have done their work and begin to fail. The wise gardener will have anticipated this by planting a fresh bed with young vines which will come into bearing in time to take the place of the old bed, which should then be dug over and cultivated for some years to other crops.

At another time we shall name some of the more desirable varieties of strawberries, and treat of the special culture more particularly adapted to each, their size, quality, productiveness and time of ripening.



PLAN OF A KITCHEN GARDEN.