

OUR FLOWER PAGE.

GERANIUMS.



GERANIUMS deserve a place at the head of the list of desirable plants for house and garden culture because they are such easy things to take care of. Give them a good soil, water in sufficient quantities, and plenty of sunshine, and they ask little more. Of what other plant can you say this?

If you want them to make your garden bright throughout the summer, all you have to do is to cut the flowers off as soon as they begin to fade. Do this, and they will continue to bloom up to cold weather, and the frost will generally find them as full of blossoms as they were at midsummer.

Many take up plants which have bloomed through the summer hoping to make them bloom in winter. But this is generally labor thrown away. If you want geraniums to bloom well in winter you must prepare your plants for this work.

This is done by keeping them from blooming in summer. Start the plants early in spring. Do not try to force them, but let them grow along steadily through the summer. Give a good soil; water enough to keep the soil moist all through, and pinch back the tops from time to time to make them throw out branches and form compact plants. This is important, for if allowed to grow to suit themselves geraniums almost always take on awkward shapes. But by pinching in and forcing branches to start you can make fine-shaped plants of the most straggling growers. The time to do this is while the plants are young. If allowed to grow after their own inclinations for six or eight months you will find it a difficult matter to bring them into proper shape.

A good compost for the geranium is one part loam, one part turfy matter, and the other third equal parts of perfectly rotten manure and the sharpest, grittiest sand you can find.

In potting, be sure to put at least an inch of broken pottery or brick in the bottom of each pot over four inches across. Smaller pots will not need drainage. The matter of drainage must be attended to in pots of the size referred to above, for if the soil is put into the pot without something to keep it away from the hole in the bottom it will soon fill it, and the consequence will be that the pot becomes water-tight, and the surplus water which you give will settle to the bottom where it will stand about the roots of the plants rotting them, or inducing disease, or souring the soil.

When you water them be sure to give enough to wet the soil all through. The practice of putting on a little dribble of water now and then is most harmful. The surface of the soil will look moist, and from this you will get the impression that it must be wet below; while the fact is, it will be as dry as dust in the bottom. Therefore water only as needed, and make a thorough job of it. Put on so much that some of it will run out at the bottom of the pot, and then you will be sure that the soil is thoroughly saturated.

Many varieties of geranium are fine for summer blooming, but the number adapted to winter culture is comparatively small. Below I give a list of the best varieties for winter blooming:—

Mary Hill, double bright pink.

S. A. Nutt, double, dark crimson.

Gloire de France, double carmine and white.

Concurr's Regional, single pink and white. A most wonderful bloomer, giving a steady succession of flowers almost all the year round.

Gaerdner Gaerd, pink, great bloomer.

Sam Sloan, velvety crimson.

Pauline Lucca, white.

Mrs. Jas. Vick, salmon.

Mrs. Moore, white, marked with rosy salmon about a large white eye. A beautiful flower.

Apple-blossom, pale pink, very fine.

The fragrant-leaved kinds are all desirable, and every collection should include one or more of them.

The rose-scented kind is too well known to need description here. It is not only a beautiful plant but a most useful one, as its pretty leaves always come in play when small bouquets are desired.



GLADIOLUS.

SOME OF THE NEW CHRYSANTHEMUMS.

Among the newer varieties of this popular flower, I have found the following deserving of special mention:—

Diana, a somewhat dwarf grower, but very free in bloom. Outer petals flat; centre ones short and quilled. In color, pure white.

E. Molyneux, red and yellow, both colors being very decided. Petals wide and long. A striking variety because of its size and peculiar combination of colors.

Walter W. Coles, terra-cotta. Each petal backed with pale yellow. Outer petals broad and long; centre ones short and thread-like, and whorled in form, very peculiar and beautiful.

The Bride, an elegant variety, with petals so wide and of such beautiful shining texture that the flower gives one the idea of being made of ribbon.

Mrs. Irvin Clark, a most superbly beautiful flower. Creamy-white in color, slightly suffused with palest rose, and sometimes with softest tints of lemon yellow. Very large and perfect in form.

GLADIOLUS.

For cutting purposes, some of the varieties of gladiolus are invaluable, as they will last in water for weeks after being cut, and as the flowers are smaller than the autumn flowering sorts they make up well in bouquets. Among the early flowering varieties the Colvilli are the best; they are usually planted in October and November, and covered on the approach of severe weather. They produce profuse bloom from May till middle of July. The variety, "The Bride," is, without doubt, the most useful plant in cultivation for cutting during early summer, and can be forced to bloom in March under glass.

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