

THE HOME GARDEN

Garden Calendar For February

Dig and Manure Flower Borders which have not yet been prepared:

Plant—Hardier Border Plants, Alpines, Hardy Climbers, Shrubs, Deciduous Trees, Fruit Trees, Vegetable Roots. And especially: Paeonies, Delphiniums, Pyracantha, Vines for Forcing, Gladioli, Young Grape Vines, Roses, Virginian Creepers, Clematises, Anemones, Ranunculuses, Forest Trees, Horse Radish, Early Potatoes, in frames, Garlic, Shallots, Forcing Asparagus, Forcing Rhubarb, Forcing Sea Kale, Start Paeonias, Start Glaxias, Start Achimenes.

Sow—Peas, Earliest, Early Horn Carrots in warm border, Frame Radish, Spinach, Mushrooms, Cucumber in heat, Melon in heat, Early Cauliflower in heat, Brussels Sprouts in warm border, Globe Beet in warm border, Lettuce, Cose and Cabbage, Onion, Mustard and Cress, Broad Beans, Cabbage, Leek in warm border, Capsicum in heat, Corn Salad, Parsnip in warm border, Parsley, Conve Tronchuda in heat, Chery in heat, Early Turnip, Asters, Tender Climbing Annuals in heat, Begonia, Nicotiana, Cockscomb, Auricula, Gloxinia, A little Primula, Lobelia, A little Geranium, Petunia, Phlox Drummondii, Jerusalem Artichoke.

Note—Some of the above sowings are probably a little early in some localities, but it is worth while to risk sowing a little seed in order to obtain an early crop of delicious spring vegetables.

POTATOES WORTH HAVING

How to Have Fine Mealy Potatoes That Keep All Winter

THE most delicious potatoes are "new" potatoes, as opposed to those that are allowed to mature before being dug. And the varieties and cultural methods for producing these in perfection, as opposed to the supply of larger tubers for winter storage are quite distinct. But quality in potatoes goes deeper, since some varieties are bred for perfection in baking, while others are adapted for salads and for frying.

The baking varieties ought to cook to a fine, flour-like texture, in an hour or less, when baked or roasted in a hot oven. The salad varieties are of firmer texture, suitable for slicing, and do not break up into fine particles except when baked for a much longer time.

The mealy varieties will burst open and fall apart if cooked too long, but they are the best for general use, because they require less time for cooking and because baked potatoes are healthier than fried potatoes.

The solid varieties are not so convenient and economical for general use, because they require more time and fuel, and if underdone they are lumpy; but they are greatly valued for hotel and restaurant use in some sections, because when boiled in the skins they remain firm and solid a long time and are just what is wanted for frying and for salads, whereas a baked potato loses its hotness, meanness, and often its color five minutes after it is taken from the stove.

Quality in potatoes also depends on cultural conditions. The best mealy potatoes are produced on a warm, sandy soil; these will be of convenient size and keep well. The largest but poorest potatoes are produced on wet, heavy soil; these are coarse grained, soggy, too large for convenient handling, and quick to decay.

We ought to pay more attention to varieties. Some will cook dry and mealy as soon as they reach full size, even when freshly dug; others can be cooked more quickly and evenly after they have been dug for some time and the tubers have partially dried out, and yet others continue firm and solid when cooked even after they have been stored in the cellar all winter.

Varities For the Early Crop

The extra early varieties will ripen from two to four weeks earlier than any of the main crop varieties and may be two months earlier than the latest, but they have to sacrifice size to earliness, and the potatoes are mostly round, not oblong. The plants are stiffly erect, free from side branches, and have heavy compact leafage. The potatoes lie closely together in the hill, thus permitting close planting in rich soil. And with an early planting, the growth is made and the crop matured before there is any danger of the foliage being attacked by blight.

The earliest and hardiest variety is Quick Lunch or Noroton Beauty, producing round tubers of a very pale brownish color with carmine splashes around the eyes. Eureka Extra Early and Early White Ohio are similar in form and growth, rather larger in size and a little later in season, with smooth white skins and very attractive in appearance. These varieties grow rather larger than the White Triumph and Red Triumph potatoes, which are extensively planted in the south for early Northern markets. All the varieties in this class cook firm and solid, but those named are free from any hard core, and in my estimation are much finer in flavor than the special

salad potatoes which are imported from Germany.

Varities For the Main Crop

The main crop varieties produce larger potatoes and more of them than the earliest varieties, and the potatoes are generally oblong. Their stems are of a spreading or vine-like character and branch freely; and in a warm, wet season they develop a second growth of branches and foliage after having blossomed. The rows should be placed further apart, and there is a greater necessity to guard the plants from the blight and the potato bug.

The earliest of the main crop varieties may be two to four weeks earlier than the latest and heaviest yielders and they are distinct in that the potatoes cook to a dry, mealy, floury texture as soon as they reach full size. The earliest of this class is Burpee's Extra Early, an oblong, white or very pale brown tuber, with the finest cooking quality of any variety that I have ever known. Early Bovee, Early Rose and Early Beauty of Hebron are also excellent varieties, a little later in season.

Among the latest and most productive sorts I consider the Vermont Gold Coin the most satisfactory, being vigorous, blight-resisting to a great degree, and producing a large crop of large, smooth, white-skinned potatoes, which have a finer cooking quality than any I have ever grown, with the exception of the one just mentioned.

Other excellent large varieties are Carman No. 1 and Carman No. 3, Rural New Yorker No. 2, Green Mountain (or as it is locally known in this section, State of Maine), Sir Walter Raleigh, and Uncle Sam. Irish Cobbler, a second early variety, is quite popular in some sections on account of its strong, vigorous growth and productiveness, especially when grown in moist soils, but it is decidedly inferior in quality to the other varieties named in this list. Nearly all these later varieties have long tubers which are also broad and thick, and of smooth, regular outline and show but little waste in preparation for the table.

It is worth while devoting some space in the family garden to a planting of potatoes for early use, although the main supply can be grown more cheaply under field cultivation. Special attention and extra feeding and frequent cultivation are necessary for the best results with the very early varieties, and these can only be given in a garden. It is usually better in small gardens of less than a half acre to grow the more succulent vegetables only.

How to Raise "New" Potatoes

The ground for the early planting should be well drained and on a warm, sunny slope, but if the garden is level with stiff, heavy soil, the ground can be made warmer and drier early in the spring by laying it off in raised beds with shallow walks or ditches at intervals. It is best to have the ground prepared in the fall by spreading a heavy coat of stable manure and plowing or digging it under before the ground freezes.

The Danger of Manure

Fresh stable manure plowed or dug under in the spring is apt to lead to scabby tubers. If the land was not manured in the fall commercial fertilizer had better be used for the garden plantings, or else a compost of hard wood ashes mixed with poultry droppings. Paradoxical as it may seem, heavy applications of long or strawy manure used in this way make a heavy soil lighter and looser in texture, while on a light, sandy soil they will make the land of heavier and more loamy texture. If manure is applied in large quantities, liberal applications of air-slaked lime should be given too. It is almost impossible to over-enrich the land if the fertilizing elements are thoroughly mixed with the soil before planting. The fertilizer-manufacturers have for potatoes special brands which show a high percentage of potash, and they will also be found excellent for garden crops in general. Four quarts, or even more, of a good fertilizer can be used to a row one hundred feet long, or a large handful can be mixed with the soil in the hill where the plant is to grow; but if such liberal quantities are used, be careful to stir it into the soil with a rake or hoe before planting the seed.

As early in the spring as it can be worked in good condition, dig or plow the soil to a good depth, raking or harrowing the surface to a medium fineness. Mark out the rows, making furrows or drills with the hand plow or hoe about three inches deep and putting the fertilizer or compost in the bottom. Cut the seed potatoes into pieces having two eyes to each, and lay these pieces with the cut side down in the bottom of the drill or furrow, and twelve to fifteen inches apart. Small or whole potatoes, or large potatoes cut in halves

lengthwise can be planted in the same way, but are liable to throw up a greater amount of stalks. These must be thinned out when hoeing, as otherwise the potatoes will be comparatively small. For the best development of the tubers, leave only one or two strong stalks to a hill.

The space between the rows should be governed by the method of cultivation. For the hand or wheel hoe two feet apart will suffice, while if a horse cultivator is used, the rows should be fully three feet apart.

For the earliest crop, plant the seed near the surface, as growth will then start more quickly than if the seed pieces are covered deeply in the ground—as is done in the old-style field plantings where the seed pieces are placed in the bottom of every third furrow, to be covered by the plow. A depth of about two inches (covering with fine soil) will do for the early garden crop, the soil being thrown over by the hand plow, rake or hoe. The ideal depth for best average results is four inches; too shallow planting results in having tubers exposed.

When to Cultivate

Cultivate frequently throughout the growing season—once a week at least and oftener if convenient. In the home garden either the hand plow or wheel hoe may be used.

Extra care and labor expended in the preparation of the soil before planting give

the ground is wet so that the soil adheres to the tubers, it should be dusted lightly with fine dry lime or land plaster to improve the keeping qualities. A darkened place is the best for the tubers after they have been dug and stored, as strong light will turn the skins green.

Follow Potatoes With Cabbage

In the highly fertilized garden the aim is to keep crops coming on in as rapid succession as possible. Therefore, as soon as the potatoes show signs of flowering, or of having completed their growth, work up the soil between the rows (as deeply as possible) and set late cabbage plants or hills of sweet corn between the potato rows. Either will make a good start while the potatoes are maturing.

New Potatoes in Summer

While I have only referred to the earliest possible planting, other plantings may be made in the same way at any time during the spring months, while in the Southern States it is a common practice to make a planting the last of July or early in August to furnish a supply of "new" potatoes in the fall. If a continued supply of "new" potatoes is desired in the home garden, the period of production can be lengthened to include very nearly the entire summer, either by making several plantings of an early variety at different times, or by planting at the same time different varieties which will come on in succession. As a rule, the

late plantings (especially of early varieties) do not develop as large a growth of plant and foliage as the early plantings, and come on more quickly, yet produce nearly as large a crop of tubers.

The only really serious insect preying on the potato is the striped Colorado potato beetle, and this is easily held in check by frequent light applications of paris green. The old bugs which live in the ground all winter begin their attack as soon as the young plants appear above the ground, but do little damage. The soft worm-like larvae hatched later rapidly defoliate the plants, however. Therefore, treat the young plants early in the season.

The one serious fungus disease is leaf blight, which sometimes checks the growth of the plants. This appears when the hot weather sets in with sudden and marked changes. Spraying with Bordeaux mixture will check this; if paris green is added to the mixture (one pound to a hundred gallons), both bugs and blight can be treated in a single application.

The small home garden is seldom equipped with a suitable spraying apparatus, and in such cases both the poisonous insecticides and fungicides are most readily applied in dry powder form by means of bellows or gun.—E. D. Darlington, in Garden Magazine.

Herbaceous Border

The cultivation of hardy plants has become very popular during recent years, and there are so many to choose from that there need be no lack of variety. Those contemplating making new borders will do well to get the ground manured and trenched without delay, as thorough cultivation is very important if good results are to be obtained. The best position is one exposed to the full sunshine and protected by trees and shrubs. Failing this, borders on each side of a walk, or beds cut in the grass, will answer admirably. Herbaceous plants, with few exceptions, succeed best when divided and replanted every three years; such plants as Paeonies and Hellebores, however, are better, left undisturbed. It is advisable to retain the outside portions of the roots, as these are more vigorous and give finer results than the exhausted central portions. To arrange a herbaceous border well requires a knowledge of the plants themselves and of their needs as to position and space. Do not plant all the tall subjects at the back, but place some in the centre and towards the front, arranging them in groups with dwarfier plants in between. This gives a more natural appearance to the whole arrangement.

The main groups should be formed of plants of bold and striking appearance, as these will form the features of the border. The following kinds will be especially useful: Delphiniums, Aubrietias, Saxifragas, Bocconia, Lilioms, Campanulas, Thalictrums, Trollius, Heilanthus and Rudbeckias. For the intermediate spaces, Aquilegias, Potentillas, Hesperis, Gaillardias, Aubrietias, Saxifragas, Iberis sempervirens and Funkia ovata are suitable. Such plants as Hyacinthus candicans, Veronica spicata, Spiraea, Montbretias and Gladioli should also be included. Some of the choicer varieties of Pentstemons are well worth a place. Masterpiece, pink with white centre; Lord Aldenham,

dark red with white centre; Royal Standard, pink with dark centre; Raphael, white and pink; and Crimson Gem are splendid sorts. As a general rule it is better not to plant Michaelmas Daisies in the ordinary mixed border when space can be set apart for them elsewhere, for they are dull and uninteresting all the summer. Such varieties as Ideal, Hon. Edith Gibbs and Enchantress are very beautiful when grown on single stems; while Delight, Sensation and Captivation form charming masses for the front of the border. With regard to staking the plants, the necessary support should be furnished in the early stages of growth, so that the young shoots may be secured while perfectly erect, otherwise they are likely to get twisted and broken. While it is necessary to use stakes that are strong and durable, it is undesirable to have them too heavy, for nothing gives a border a more unsightly appearance. During dry weather herbaceous plants require frequent soakings of water at the roots, and damping the borders over on hot summer evenings is beneficial to the plants.—James Gardner.

HERBACEOUS PAEONIES

The Paeony among herbaceous plants, like its ally the Tree Paeony among flowering shrubs, stands unrivalled. Time was when the Paeony was thrust into any out-of-the-way shrubbery border and huddled together with hungry Laurels and other shrubs. Today, however, it is given a position of prominence in the garden.

Planting Time

The best season of the year for planting is during the early autumn months. We have seen it stated that the "spring-time, when the plants have made about six inches of new growth," is the time to plant. Nothing is more opposed to ultimate success than this. The autumn is the best, because at that season the new main roots issue from the rootstock or crown, and planting now affords the Paeony a good opportunity of becoming quickly established. The Paeony is impatient of removal, and such impatience is manifested in greater degree when the work is done at an unseasonable time.

Preparing the Soil

Gross feeding and deep rooting, these plants are only seen to best advantage when the ground is thoroughly well prepared. In some kinds the root fibres will descend to 3-12 feet or more, hence the deepest cultivation of the soil is necessary. It is not every garden or locality, however, that can command so great a soil-depth, but where a Paeony garden is contemplated—and few hardy plants are more worthy of the honor—special provision should be made for their success. Plenty of manure must be incorporated with the soil, and be buried one foot deep or thereabouts. The poorer soils are liberally dressed, and wet or heavy soils may have an addition of grit or burnt garden refuse as well.

Planting and Position

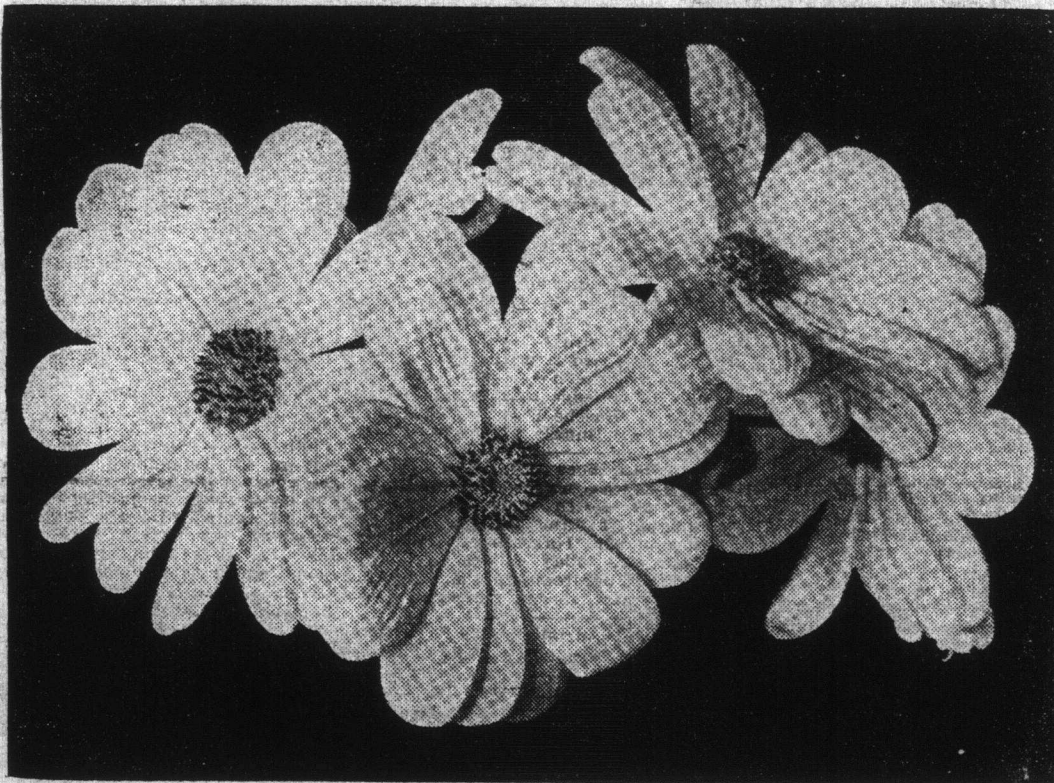
Where transplanting has to be done it is important that the plants be divided also, and there are few greater errors than that of planting the big clumps intact. A plant having three to six good crown buds apparent is suitable, and when setting in the plants these crown buds must be covered about two inches deep with the soil. Where an immediate effect is desired (three or more plants should be arranged over a large area, the individuals to be not nearer than 18 inches from plant to plant, and farther apart if possible. The best position is an open one, screened from wind it may be by shrubs not far removed, or shaded partly by distant trees, yet away from their roots. The Paeony, happily, is not prone to many diseases, but its leafage is nipped in spring-time by frost, hence the above suggestion. When established beds and clumps exist deluging with liquid manure and water will be found of the greatest assistance to the plants, and in dry seasons in perfecting the flowers. By adopting these few simple practical details these splendid fragrant flowering plants may be grown to perfection.

A Neglected Torch Lil

Although this Flame Flower, Torch Lily or Red-hot Poker has been cultivated in gardens for twenty years it is still one of the best free-flowering sorts and is especially fine in autumn. K. Saundersii can be highly recommended as a border plant, and also for massing in the pleasure grounds. It is a form of K. aloides (syn. Uvaria), and has rich green leaves and bright orange scarlet flowers, fading with age to orange yellow. It is a robust grower, some of the stout flower-spikes being 5 feet to 6 feet in height.

A Good Fruit Tree Spray

One of the most effective winter sprays is made by dissolving a tin of concentrated lye in five gallons of boiling water, and adding one handful each of salt and whaleoil soap. A little lime can be added if found necessary. Spray thoroughly every branch and twig.



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positive returns in an earlier start and a stronger growth. Equally, too, constant and thorough surface cultivation afterward will show most markedly beneficial results. The old saying, that "cultivation is manure," may not be entirely correct, but cultivation certainly does enable the plants to derive the greatest benefits from the fertilizers used. Cultivation also conserves the supply of moisture in a dry season, and by keeping the soil constantly loose and open, admits air to the roots. If the soil is left slightly ridged over the row or hills when the potatoes are planted, cultivation can be begun before the shoots appear above the surface.

After the plants attain a height of ten to twelve inches, draw up the earth to form a ridge or hill about the plants, but before this is done, extra feeding can be given by working the soil away from the row and sowing another dressing of fertilizer along both sides of the stalks, afterwards throwing the loose earth up to the vines. When the earth is well ridged or hilled around the plants, the tubers form in the ridge or hill and are easily dug; they are also kept drier in a wet season or when grown in low, wet ground.

Digging and Storing

The tubers may be dug for immediate use in the fresh state at any time after they reach a suitable size—say from one inch to one and a half inches in diameter. These potatoes are not pared or peeled, as the skin is barely forming on the tubers. They are simply scraped clean, boiled until tender and then served with melted butter or a white sauce. All the potatoes in the hill can be used at this stage, the small or "marble" size being just as good as the larger ones, but only as many as are needed for immediate use should be dug at one time.

The potato is said to be "ripe" when the skin is firmly set on the tuber and does not rub off or suffer abrasion in handling. The tops of the very early kinds die down as soon as the growth is completed, but with the larger, later sorts, the tops or vines remain fresh and green even after the potatoes have reached their full size.

These late varieties must be dug as soon as the skin becomes firm and well set. If left in the ground in a rainy season, a second growth starts, causing knobs on the tubers which, besides detracting from the appearance of the tubers, impairs both the keeping and cooking qualities.

When the potatoes are dug, they should be stored in a cool, well aired cellar or shed. If