

## School Gardening

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In all cases, each child should be encouraged to have a garden at home; this is the great purpose of school gardening.

### Preparation of the Soil

When the soil has become fairly dry so that it will not stick to the spade or fork, or press into a ball when squeezed, it should be dug to a depth of 10 to 12 inches, at the same time mixing in a liberal quantity of well-rotted manure. Rake the surface of the plot to a depth of two or three inches, until the soil is as fine as the rake can possibly make it. If the soil is light or sandy, do not have the plots higher than the walks, but if it is not the plots should be slightly elevated. Mark the plots carefully with stakes, one inch square and a foot and a half long, driven down at the corners.

### Planting

The seeds of many flowers, such as asters, pinks, pansies, verbenas, stocks, nicotina, and some vegetables, such as tomatoes, celery, cabbage, cauliflower, are better sown early inside, in shallow boxes. These boxes should be about



Perennial border in rural school ground

three inches deep, and nearly filled with finely sifted soil. The seeds are then planted in rows, in depth according to their size, generally about five times the thickness of the seed. The soil is then pressed firmly over the seeds, and well watered with a very fine spray. A pane of glass is then placed over the box to prevent rapid evaporation, and all placed in a warm, light window.

However, most varieties of flowers and vegetables for school purposes may be planted permanently in the plots as soon as the ground has become fairly warm and the weather also likely to continue so. Do not be in too great a hurry to plant flower seeds especially.

Use about one-third of the plot for the planting of flowers, the rest for vegetables. In rural schools, the boys especially should be encouraged to experiment with various grains, grasses and fodder crops. Be careful in following the seedsman's instructions upon the package; such should be sufficient. Do not attempt many varieties of either vegetables or flowers. The following are recommended: Mignonette, dwarf nasturtium, alyssum, phlox, candytuft, zinnia, stocks and marigold; radish, lettuce, onions, carrots, beets, parsnips, cabbage, cauliflower. At the end of each row place a flat stake with the name of the variety upon it.

### Transplanting

By sowing certain flower and vegetable seeds inside in March and April and transplanting the seedlings into the garden about June 1, a much longer growing season is afforded, and hence a greater degree of maturity acquired. To get the best results from transplanting, it will be necessary to remove the seedlings from the original box to other boxes at least once, perhaps twice, before planting in the permanent location. Always choose the evening, or a damp, cloudy day after a rain for transplanting. Lift as much earth with the roots as possible, and plant a little deeper than they were previously. Press the soil firmly about the roots, at the same time pouring in plenty of rain water, and shade from the sun for a few days.

### Water with the Rake

The garden should be cultivated on the surface so frequently that the weeds will not get a chance to grow,

and there will be little need of watering as well. This should be done with a rake, twice a week at least, and always during the forenoon after a rain, stir and pulverize the surface of the soil between the rows of plants, to the depth of an inch or more. It has been said, "The best way to water a garden is with a rake." In this way the fine surface produced serves as a blanket to prevent the evaporation of the soil moisture by the sun's heat. Deep-rooting plants should have the soil stirred deeply with a hoe or fork to allow the free passage of the air about their roots. When watering is necessary, it should be done copiously, but not frequently. The water used should have been standing in a tub for a day or two, and only applied in the evening or early morning.

Generally a much greater number of plants spring up than should be allowed to grow. It will be necessary to thin them out before they become too large, so that the roots of those left may not be disturbed; this process may be required two or three times during the season, as the plants acquire greater size. The best time to thin out is in the evening or on a cloudy day after a rain; if the soil is very dry, it should be well watered some time previous to thinning. If the plants are removed carefully with a thin stick or an old knife, and at the same time preserving a little soil about their roots, they may be transplanted to another portion of the garden or given to friends. It is the experience of many that transplanted plants acquire a greater size than those left in their original position. Success in gardening, as well as other things, is measured by quality, not quantity, and one large perfect plant is more desirable than two poorer ones.

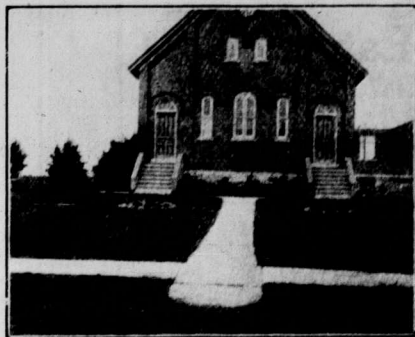
### Pick the Flowers

If you wish your plants to produce the greatest profusion of bloom, and for the greatest length of time, the blossoms should be picked daily, allow none to go to seed unless you wish them for such, when the very best specimens should be marked and left unmolested. Make good use of your cut flowers in the school room, take them home or give them to your neighbors and sick friends. Gifts of flowers are always very greatly appreciated.

### The Garden Journal

Perhaps the children will think they have already plenty of note books to look after. The garden journal need not require an extra one; a portion of the composition or nature study book will very well serve the purpose. Here is where the subject of school gardening may be made to relate to the other subjects on the program.

Have the children make careful

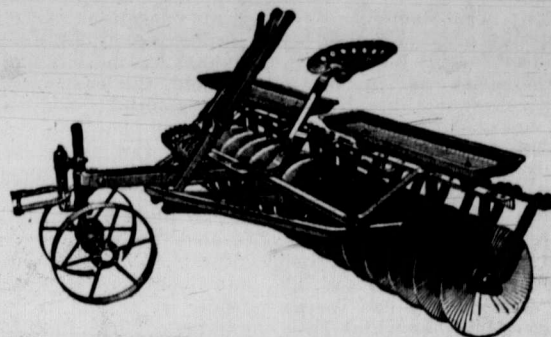


A rural school made beautiful by well kept lawns and flowerbeds.

records of all the interesting things that they do or learn. Insert the plan of their gardens, the description of the preparation of the ground, the planting, cultivation, weeding, etc. Require the children to keep notes of dates of planting, time required by each plant to appear above ground, time required for flowers to bloom and vegetables to be ready for use, time when each ripened or was killed by frost, etc. Make records of the birds and butterflies seen in the garden, the weeds destroyed, and actions of toads, the work of earthworms, the destruction by insects, etc. Include drawings and color studies of various stages in the growth of the most important plants.

Write an account of any visits to

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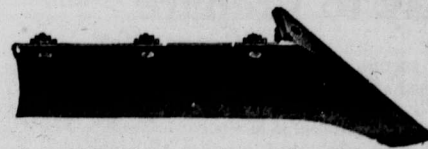
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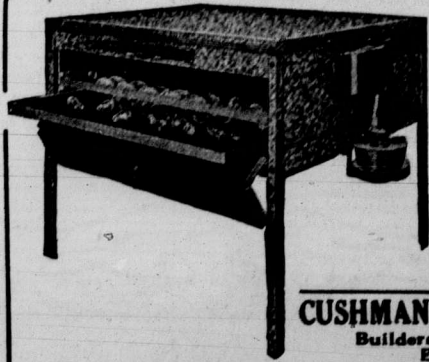
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