

The Amateur's First Garden

The Things it is Useful to Know Before Beginning It

By MINERVA BEATTIE

BUT WHAT to do first? Easy to say, "I want a garden." Easy, too, to make a little trench in the earth and drop seeds into it at stated intervals.

But—what little trench—in what earth—and at what intervals?

It is these very practical details that daunt many an amateur. We can all see ourselves thinning out a too-luxuriant growth, tying up the too-heavy fruit on our tomato plants to supporting stakes, and so forth. But most of us are helplessly nonplussed as to the soil we should have and the soil we have; the starting of seeds when we have no green-house, the selection of seeds which it will pay us to grow; the supplying of proper nourishment to the seedlings and growing plants, the prevention of their destruction by the many garden plagues, and so on.

It's with these A.B.C.'s we will deal here.

First of all—location.

Now, few of us are in a position to say: "Go to, I shall make me a garden in a sunny spot, sheltered from winds, on high, well-drained ground, where the soil is a warm sandy loam—plenty rich enough to feed the plants, yet not so heavy as to hold the moisture and keep out the heat."

Ideal, of course—but how often is it available?

Most amateurs, about to start a little vegetable garden, have only a back-yard, or some small available plot, to choose from. It will be necessary to sum up the advantages and disadvantages, to know whether it will be worth while to attempt a garden. The soil you can probably enrich and make suitable, but the first consideration is sunlight. How many hours will the sun shine directly on the plot each day, unimpeded by fences, shade trees or buildings? For a general kitchen garden, you should be able to count on at least five hours' sunshine.

If you cannot count on that much, say only on two or three hours, it will be best not to attempt anything beyond green-leaf crops, such as lettuce, spinach (or Swiss chard, which gives a maximum result from a minimum space), and a little plot each of parsley, chives, and mint, those first-aids to cooking that are so invaluable. Indeed, where no garden at all is possible, any woman will enjoy a

window box or a few pots with a tuft of each of the indispensable herbs growing fresh at her hand.

SOIL next.

Since the little kitchen garden is usually expected to produce an appreciable amount from a small space, the problem narrows down to one of "intensive gardening." The best plan, if one is reasonably sure of success, is to have in mind the ideal soil for the purpose, and then get as near to it as possible. Since it is from the soil our plants must draw their nourishment, we must try to give them the "balanced rations" that they, as well as humans, require.

An open, loose-textured soil is naturally easier for the rootlets to penetrate and feed from than a soil that is too dense and heavy. The moisture

Bone meal, too, is valuable. Any of these necessary fertilizers may be bought from the local seedsman.

Before adding the fertilizer, however, be sure that the soil has been thoroughly dug up, turned over and "fined" almost to the sifting point. This is tremendously important because earth that is full of even small lumps and clods, will give the tender young roots and shoots unnecessary obstacles to overcome.

Think out your garden first. No sane man ever started to build a house without first planning it in great detail. The same sort of forethought will pay when making a garden.

What vegetables do you want? How much of each? What arrangement will answer best?

And at this point, you may think!—oh for a hot-house, so that I could have some early tomatoes, cauliflower and lettuce started!

In that case, use a flat seed box or as many such boxes as you like and start your tender young plants in the house. When there is a certainty of no more frost, of warm, growing weather, you can plant out your well-grown seedlings.

These boxes should be a convenient size for handling—there is no object in having them big and cumbersome, as they must find place on the sills of bright, sunny windows. Three or four inches will give the desired depth. Put an inch-deep layer of gravel or cinders in the bottom for drainage, then fill nearly to the brim with rich or well fertilized soil, sifted finely, then pressed down firmly. Make little trenches, not more than half an inch deep, lengthwise and crosswise of the surface, about two inches apart, and sow your seed in these quite thickly about ten to the inch.

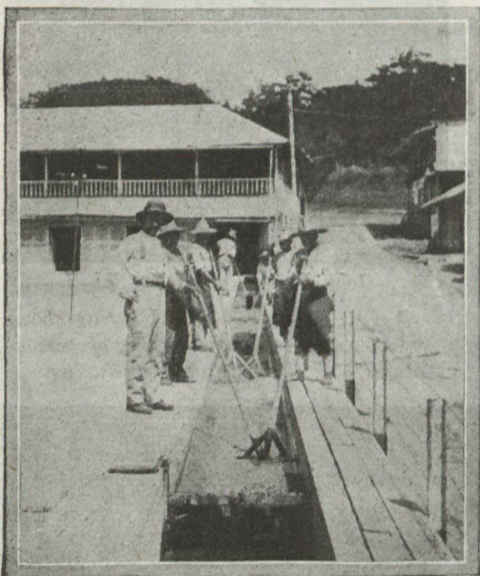
Keep the soil moist, but not "leaky," and for extra speed, cover each box with a piece of glass. When the plants reach the height of an inch or two, they should be thinned, leaving from one to two inches between each, so that they will have nourishment enough and room enough, to be replanted a couple of inches apart in other boxes, if you want to keep plenty of them.

Another good point about these handy boxes is that they may be set out of doors for a few hours during the warm part of each day, and the tender young plants gradually acclimatized, so that when they are finally planted (Continued on page 58)



in the ground takes into solution much of the nutrient demanded by the plant life, which makes the feeding process an easy one.

Well rotted vegetable matter, which is rich in the nitrogen so stimulating to growth, should be generously added to the average soil, or rich manure.



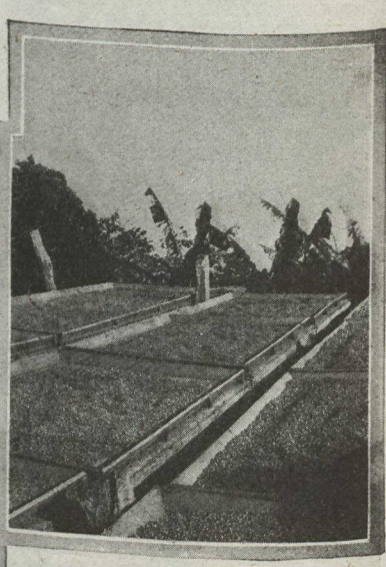
NEARLY all coffee imported into this country is grown in Central and South America. This picture shows coffee fresh from the trees being carried to the sun-drying floors in sluces. It is washed as it passes through the canals. The fruit of the tree is not unlike a cherry, but in the centre of pulp are two seeds—the coffee bean of commerce.

The History of the Morning Coffee

It has Travelled a long way and gone through many Processes before it reaches our Percolators.



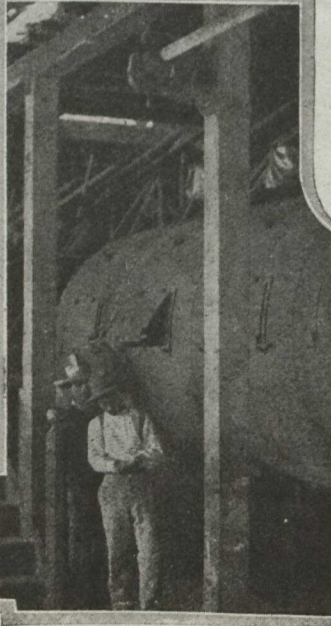
THE great concrete drying floors of the finca (farm) of El Pacayal, the biggest coffee farm in Guatemala, where there are more than 7,000 acres planted with coffee trees and 4,000 workers employed during the picking and drying season. The men are busily spreading out the coffee to dry in the tropic sun. In the centre of the drying floors is a conveyor, which carries the sun-dried coffee to the steam-drying house seen in the background.



ON small plantations coffee is usually dried in big wooden trays and the contents turned over once or twice a day until thoroughly dried. One large plantation, alone, sends huge quantities of coffee all over North America.



STONES, sticks and foreign matter of all kinds must be separated from the coffee grains before they are dried. In the photograph above are shown the picturesque natives of Port Au Prince, Haiti, engaged in the task of cleaning the coffee and preparing it for the drying machine.



THIS is a coffee-drying cylinder, such as is used on a big coffee plantation. After the beans have had sufficient sun and have been sorted, they are finished in this machine. They are then placed in huge bags and shipped to the various coffee centres throughout the American Continent.



STACKING coffee in a big warehouse. After it reaches its destination, it is roasted. The grocer tests it before you buy it. Scientists say that every adult takes some kind of stimulant, and coffee is most widely used. When all traffic in intoxicants is stopped, millions of people will drink more of it. The consumption will increase greatly through lunch room trade. Hundreds of thousands of people will go into lunch rooms to eat pastry and drink strong coffee instead of going to saloons for drinks.