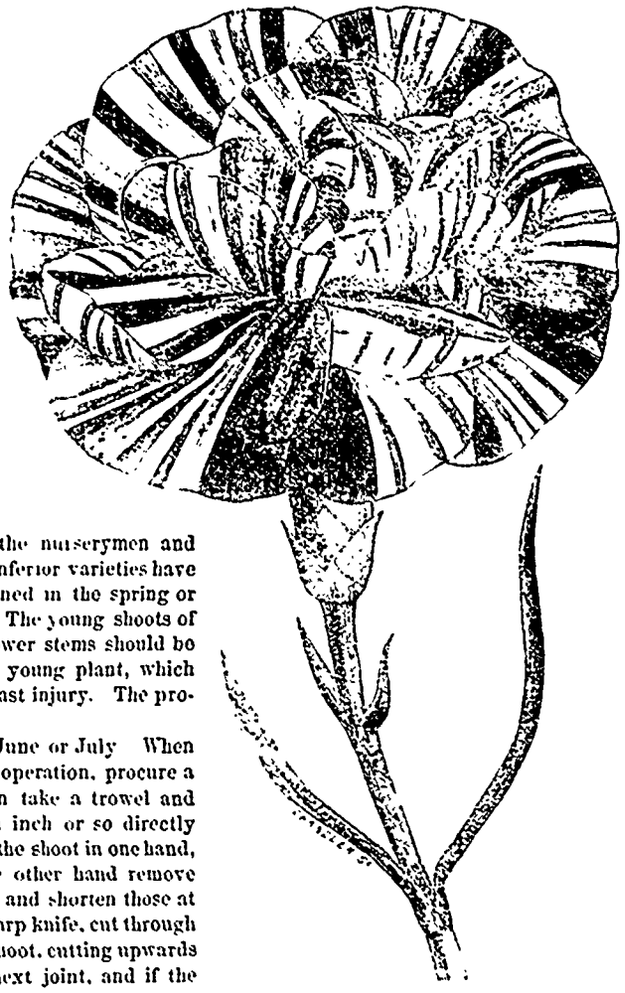
Horticultural Department.

Carnations and Picotees.

"How can I obtain Picotees and Carnations, such as were common, very common, in my younger days, in Europe—flowers almost or quite as beautiful as the rose, and even more desirable, I think, for their fragrance?" Such is the inquiry now before us There is nothing but the rose that can lay any claim to equality with the Carnation As suggested in most parts of Europe they are quite common, and we must admit that our climate is not the best for this flower. Old plants will suffer more or less by our severe winters, but young plants either grown from seed, or from layers will be found perfectly hardy In answer to the question how plants are to be obtained, we reply, some very good varieties may be obtained of the nurserymen and florists, though we must say that very inferior varieties have often been sold. These can be obtained in the spring or fall and will flower the first summer. The young shoots of the plant which do not throw up flower stems should be layered, and each one will produce a young plant, which will endure the winter without the least injury. The process of layering is as follows:—



The proper season for layering is June or July When the time arrives for performing the operation, procure a quantity of small hooked pegs; then take a trowel and remove the earth to the depth of an inch or so directly under the shoot to be layered. Take the shoot in one hand, and with the finger and thumb of the other hand remove the leaves from the body of the shoot, and shorten those at the top an inch or so. With a thin, sharp knife, cut through the strongest joint on the body of the shoot, cutting upwards until within a short distance of the next joint, and if the joints are close it may be necessary to cut through more than one. The slit may be from one to two inches in length. Then press the centre of the shoot down to the earth, being at the same time careful to keep the slit open and the top in an upright position: take one of the pegs and secure it in this situation. A little clean sand placed around the cut, will aid in the formation of roots. In September or October the shoots thus layered will be rooted sufficiently to separate from the parent plant, when they may be cut away and removed to winter quarters. Another way to procure plants, is by purchasing and planting seed; get the best you can obtain. The seeds may be sown in a hot-bed or cold-frame early in the spring, and transplanted the latter part of May or early in June—as soon as the plants are large enough to bear removal They transplant quite readily and unless the weather is hot and dry shading or watering will not be necessary But, watch them and do all that is necessary to give them a good start.

If you have no hot-bed or frame, prepare a nice mellow bed in the garden, early in the spring, and sow the seed. In about a month you will have young plants. If they come up thin, so as to allow plenty of room for each plant to grow, you can let them remain in the seed bed, keeping the soil well cultivated until September, when they should be removed to the beds where you design to have them flower the next season If they come up thick in the seed bed you can remove them in the spring to the flowering bed, or prick them out in another bed four or five inches apart, until September.

Nothing is needed for winter protection—a very few leaves scattered over the bed will do no harm, but too much is worse than nothing as it keeps the plants too damp. Where it is particularly desirable to keep an old plant over the winter, draw the earth well up around it and cover any long straggling branches the same as for layering. In this manner they will generally pass safe through the winter. If the best seed is obtained, and you have twenty-five plants, perhaps one-third will be single and worthless, another third semi-double, or with some other defects, but these will be very good for cutting. Of the remaining third perhaps two or three you will consider delightful specimens, and be willing to name them after your nearest friend. The others will be such as all your friends will praise, though they may not meet your ideas of a good flower.

As soon as the first flowers appear, pull up all that are single and other poor ones. Save the second class until they have nearly done blooming, as they make a fine show in the garden, and are very fragrant and therefore desirable for bouquets. But as soon as the flowers begin to fail pull them up also. Then layer three or four of the best and you will obtain the best flowers only the next season. Pursue this course a few years and a collection of very desirable seedlings will be secured.

We give an engraving of a good Carnation; it is named Emperor and obtained a prize at one of the leading shows. If any of our readers succeed in growing such a splendid flower from seed they will be exceedingly fortunate; but what has been done may be again. We know of few things more interesting and even exciting than watching the flowering of a bed of seedling Carnations.—*Rural N. Y.*

Cyclamen Culture.

We recommend seedlings of *Cyclamen persicum* to be allowed to grow as long as they will without receiving any extra stimulant in the shape of more heat. Give them water so long as they continue to grow, keeping them on the shelf of your greenhouse, but when new leaves cease coming from the crown, the plants assuming a stand-still aspect, turn the pots on their sides to make sure of their not being watered. Keep in the full sun until all the leaves are off, when they may be placed close together on a shelf in a cool part of the greenhouse. We do not advocate shaking them out of the soil and storing the bulbs in sand, certain as we are that it has a tendency to weaken the bulbs. We should not be surprised if the seedlings continued to grow on through the winter until the beginning of May next year, when you must gradually withhold water and have the bulbs thoroughly ripe by the beginning of June, the pots then to be set aside in a cool place without water until the end of August. At that time pot the plants singly, choosing pots about twice the diameter of the bulbs. Drain well: at least one-third of the pot should be filled with broken pots or sifted ashes, covered with a thin layer of sphagnum moss or cocoa-nut fibre. Use a compost formed of equal parts of turfy sandy loam and leaf mould, with a sprinkling of silver sand.

The bottom of the bulb should do little more than rest on the soil, and not be buried beneath it; but the crown of the bulb ought to be level with the rim of the pot, its bottom just within the soil, which leaves room for watering.—Water sparingly until the growth commences, and as it increases give more water. Place in a light and airy situation, for if kept in a close, damp, or dark place, they will never flower.

In after-seasons, when the plants die down, turn them into the open border of the garden, allowing them to remain until the nights begin to be chilly, towards the end of September, when leaves very often are appearing and flowers rising. Pot forthwith, place on a shelf in the greenhouse, and you will have *Cyclamen persicum* in bloom all winter. Yours, however, may be the evergreen variety, by no means so rare as represented, and if so, you will pot in August of each year, and have flowers all the year round, but if evergreen they need a rest, and that is done by giving less water from June until September, you then have their beauty when outdoor flowers are scarce.—*Cottage Gardener.*