

Winter's Work in Lawns.

A lawn should be perfectly smooth. The usual way of making it so is by breaking up and tilling thoroughly. This cannot always be done to good advantage. Sometimes trees and shrubbery interfere, and then at the best it must be up a whole year, and the work done in the summer when other things crowd. In place of breaking up, the *Gardener's Monthly* says:—

"Fine soil hauled on through winter or early spring, and spread over the surface so as to fill up the inequalities, and then heavily rolled in spring, will do as well. A little grass seed may be thrown over before rolling, but even this is unnecessary, as the natural grass will soon come through. Unless the surface soil is very shallow, so much so as to dry out in summer time, many lawns may be better made by this simple process than in breaking it up. As it is, the tough sod has crowded out the annual weeds; but when we break up old ground, the seeds of ragweed and pernicious plants germinate in the ground, and give no end of trouble before a good lawn is obtained. The surface soil of a lawn, however, should be deep, or it will soon dry out in summer, and the lawn lose that fresh green which is most desirable in the driest times."

Celery.

To obtain good celery, it is necessary that the plants should be strong and well grown. Sow the seeds in a hot-bed or cold-frame. When the plants are about three inches in height, transplant to a nicely prepared bed in the border, setting them about four or five inches apart. When about six inches high, and good stocky plants, set them in the trenches. About the middle of July is early enough. Too many make trenches by digging out the top soil, and only putting a few inches of mould at the bottom, and never obtain good celery. The trenches should contain at least eighteen inches of good soil and well-rotted manure, in about equal portions. Take off all suckers and straggling leaves at the time of transplanting. Earth up a little during the summer, keeping the leaf-stalks close together, so that the soil cannot get between them, and during September and October earth up well for blanching. Those who grow celery for market extensively do not use trenches, but make the soil deep and rich, and plant in rows, earthing up with the plough. Take up the plants late in the fall, just before winter sets in. A little may be placed in the cellar, covered with sand or earth, for immediate use. The best way of keeping is to dig a trench about a foot wide, deep enough to stand the stalks of celery erect, leaving the tops a foot below the surface. Place them in this trench, without crowding, then cover with boards and plenty of leaves and straw. This can be opened at any time during the winter, commencing at one end, and removing enough to the cellar to last a week or ten days.—*Vick's Guide*.

New Peas.

Mr. Laxton, of Stamford, England, has succeeded in raising a race of early green marrows of great excellence, by his exertions in hybridizing.

WILLIAM L., raised by him, is a wrinkled olive marrow, as early as Sangster's No. 1, and producing very large pods.

MILUM IN PARVO is said to be a larger form of Little Gem, and in some respects an improvement on that variety.

COMPOSITION FOR WOUNDS ON TREES.—We find nothing better than white lead paint, adding a little lamp black to render it less conspicuous. The edges of the wound where the branch is sawn off should be pared smooth with a knife, and the wound well coated with the paint.

TRANSPLANTING EVERGREENS.—In this country, probably the very best time for transplanting evergreens is in the spring, when the buds are beginning to swell and before they have pushed into growth. When transplanted late in the fall they are very liable to be killed by the winter.

STOVE PLANTS.—It is now universally admitted that stove plants are seriously injured by keeping the temperature too high in winter, as well as by allowing the atmosphere to be too moist at night with a low temperature. To avoid the latter it is preferable to water stove plants early in the day, so that the superabundant moisture may have time to escape.

EARLY TOMATOES.—Those who have not a hotbed will find it to their advantage to sow a few seeds in a box and start them in the house. The best room you can give them is the kitchen, and a nice sunny window where they will have plenty of light. Take care that the plants are not too crowded, but give each plenty of room. A few stocky plants are worth far more than a multitude of long drawn, spindly things.

ORCHARD PLANTING.—The best results in the orchard will be obtained if the ground is well prepared by deep ploughing and thorough draining before the trees are planted, and brought into that state of fertility which would yield a good crop of corn or potatoes. In such soil the trees will make a good vigorous growth, but in a poor or badly drained soil their growth will be feeble and many will die.

THE NORTHERN SPY APPLE blossoms later in the season than most varieties, and thereby escapes frosts that often destroy the crop on the earlier blossoming sorts. The fruit is borne on fruit-spurs interspersed through the tree, and therefore is less liable to be blown off by the winds than those apples which are set on the extremities of the branches. The quality of the fruit is equal to any, and it retains its flavour until late in the spring.

Natural History.

Toads.

The articles on general Natural History in this periodical have hitherto been confined almost exclusively to three orders of vertebrata under the popular designation of quadrupeds, birds and fishes. But between the last two there are other by no means unimportant groups of animals, known commonly as reptiles. Naturalists subdivide these into reptiles proper (comprehending snakes, lizards, and other similar creatures) and Batrachians, or the frog tribe. All these varieties of animals, though mostly objects of abhorrence, are deserving of study, and many of them have been woefully misrepresented. Among this class, against which a general prejudice exists, perhaps none are less deserving of their ill name than toads. Being nocturnal in their habits, and seen, therefore, like the bat, chiefly in the dusk, frequenting often damp and gloomy places, being slow in their movements and somewhat grotesque in their appearance, they have come to be regarded as objects of loathing, and even of superstitious dread. They are considered by many not only as creatures of ill omen, but as venomous and positively dangerous to handle. Now this is a great mistake. A more harmless being does not exist. Like all cold-blooded animals, the sensation they give to the touch is less pleasant than the contact of a warm body covered with soft fur or feathers; and moreover, as a means of protection, especially needed on account of their gentleness and helplessness, the skin exudes a somewhat viscid and acrid secretion, which deters more powerful animals from biting them. This secretion is, however, quite devoid of any venomous or irritating properties, and they have no other means of defence, their mouths even being destitute of teeth. They are not only timid and perfectly harmless, but capable of domestication, and show a quick recognition and a certain degree of attachment to their friends and protectors. Their best quality, however, is their great usefulness in destroying immense numbers of noxious insects. On this account they are invaluable in a garden. A writer in the *Iowa Homestead* gives the following interesting account of this much maligned gardeners' friend:—

"He feeds entirely on insects, and mostly at evening twilight, at which time he hunts for his prey. He is not dainty, but swallows bugs, grubs or flies, as they come in his way, or as he chances to find them. There are many insects which seldom go abroad by daylight, such as various kinds of moths, May-bugs and other beetles, and several insects, the larvae of which are called 'cut-worms,' &c. All of these are devoured by the toad. Later in the season he feeds on crickets and grasshoppers. He is ca-