

FROM OUR OWN GARDEN

Plain, Thrifty Pointers Gathered From Experience

Of course if you take up Horticulture as a fad, straining your purse strings to outdistance your neighbours, you will probably spend more than you gain on fertilizers, tools and labourers. But if your garden is reasonably small, say 24 by 15, do your own digging. You can if you would only think so. In all probability, in Ontario, you will be able to begin in April, and it is plenty time enough if you get your garden in by the first of June. Cucumbers and beans are as well not above ground till after the sixth of June, and tomato plants will do if they are in by the end of June. To be thorough, if your garden has not been used before, I would dig it all over once, doing so many feet a day, and then I would begin to plant the third or last week in May. When ready to plant I would dig the size of each bed or ground space for an allotted number of seed packages and rake and work it up as I wanted to plant. You might dig this space in the morning, and plant at night, or dig in the evening, and let the women plant. It would not hurt any normally healthy woman to help even with the digging, and there are many, many frippery household tasks that might easily be laid aside in favour of the National Thrift Campaign.

Now, don't waste good time and temper laying out symmetric beds, and perfectly measured paths. Your seed, if well watered and weeded, will grow just as well in a gently rounded length of ground, and in crooked and unevenly spaced rows as they will in straight panelled beds at rule-measured distances. Strive after a convenient spacing and regularity, and give all your energies to cultivation and nourishment. Don't waste your money on tomato plants at five cents a plant, nor squander coin and muscle trying to have green peas by the first of July. Sow and labour to enrich your whole year's diet with a wholesome variety and sufficiency, not to make a display of green-grocery fireworks for some voluble and inquisitive guest who will go into ecstasies over a spoonful of early peas or a vivid dish of some exotic salad. Now, surely, if you begin to dig very early you can have the most neglected plot fit to plant seed in by the first of June at least. If you are very discouraged about your soil, of course it may pay to buy the required amount of odoriferous con-

By F. P. M. COLLIER

coction manufactured for the purpose, and so easily obtainable. But accept the comments of your neighbours with philosophic resignation, and rake it in as soon as possible. Then, whilst you are digging, and digging, and digging as finely and as repeatedly as you are able, you can add zest to your labours by studying the seed departments in the various stores; and as a recreation amuse yourself calculating how many packages of seed your ground will hold, and how you are going to balance your taste for one article with the more profitable selection of another, so as to get the maximum nourishment out of your limited quarters. Don't rush after high-priced seed. I have known a better yield from the fresh two-cent packages in the departmental stores than from those procured by scientific agricultural catalogues. Take your time and consider the question well. Don't make any more blunders than necessary. You want to produce this year, not to experiment. For wise production is going to be the sinews of war, and the harbinger of victory. Don't get alarmed if your neighbour has his garden in the first week in May. A snowstorm later on, or an early June frost may destroy all his ill-advised haste. In outlying districts the second June planting of a garden is a very common occurrence; for beans, cucumbers, corn, and such tender shoots fall sure victims to an early summer frost. Again I repeat, begin to dig early, and aim at having all your planting except, perhaps, cabbage and tomatoes, done by the eighth of June. And even as late as that you can easily ensure a good crop. Far better make your preparation with care and forethought, than rush things prematurely in a slipshod and blundering fashion.

Now, there are certain vegetables that should be grown in every man's garden if space will permit. For there are certain things, when your sole aim is food supply, that yield a rich harvest of nutriment and utility at a minimum cost and trouble. And we offer the following list as a fair sample of staple and essential items of diet. Amongst the creepers, Hubbard squash (the large, green variety), vegetable

marrow, cucumbers and nasturtiums. For the summer months, lettuce, beans, green onions if you must, and radishes. For the winter, beets, carrots, parsnips, winter onions, cabbage and tomatoes. Now, it seems to me that the above is a sufficiently varied list to fit the needs of the amateur beginner, who has even a very generous plot of ground, and after we have explained the desirability of selecting each variety, we will devote a short space to the vegetables omitted, and the reason for their omission.

Let us begin with the creepers. The cucumbers first, because they will usually run along the ground, and two or three hills at most should suffice for an ordinary small household. The common eating variety is the most profitable, serving for summer table use, and making at the same time a good article for pickling. Don't waste your cucumbers by picking the little ones, so as to have fancy, factory gherkins. Let them grow a goodly size, and cut them in the old-fashioned way, they will taste just as nice, and by some people are preferred so. Then when properly salted, they can be divided, and made up into green or mustard pickles. And the mustard pickle goes well with bread and butter, if made from the cut fruit. When the end of August comes, and you are tired of eating them, and have enough gherkins, let them grow large for sweet pickles.

Don't plant vegetable runners too close together, in case of inoculation. Choose, preferably, opposite corners or ends of your plot. Hubbard squash makes a good climber, especially over a chicken house or pen, and two or three vines yield a splendid crop of huge green squash, that are as well left to grow until near frost time, and then they will keep all winter. They are particularly delicious when peeled and baked in the oven, especially with roast meats. The vegetable marrows grow very fast, and are very prolific bearers. They can be used almost when a finger length long, needing only to be peeled and cut in two, and boiled without removing the seeds, and served with drawn butter. Pull them only as you need them, leaving the rest to grow, and ripen until fall, when they are fit to store for winter. Artichokes, I am told, are good climbers, though I have no personal experience to quote from.

(To be continued.)

THAT CRAG-TOP GARDEN of MINE

Mr. Lemuel Goodbosh and Mr. Jones in a Conspiracy to Organize a Canyon Club

MY first garden and how Mr. Lemuel Goodbosh and I cooked up a scheme based upon the love of nature, is the theme of this exuberant, but sometimes sad, narrative. The garden, let me say, was a rented one. It occupied the crag-top corner commanding a two-sided canyon. From the new street just crawling along above with its accessories of sewers, poles and boulevards, you never would have guessed the depth of the canyon below. From the bottom of the gorge no man could behold more than the smoke-tops of the houses. And of that surprising corner my rented garden was the key, because it lay right along the side street that turned a somersault into the jungle of the canyon and lost itself in a sort of cow trail down and up again.

How Lemuel Goodbosh ever came to miss acquiring that corner with the sunlit garden on the crag I never knew. He was anything but slow. He was my nearest neighbour three lots to the east; in the summer of 1914 owner of the three lots betwixt us and of about ten more eastward along the crescent of the canyon. These he had bought when the price was low. His own house had been there some time. He was in fact a bit of an old-timer, this seductive Lemuel, whose soul unfolded itself to me those two summers of my tenancy at the crag-top garden.

Just at this time last year and all those other

By THE EDITOR

The cover illustration, which shows the hopeful side of this narrative, is by J. E. H. Macdonald.

years above-mentioned I used to stand behind the cottage and look at a whole lot of the world at once from the middle of my thawing-out garden. It was perked upon a corner lot that began to dip down into a huge ravine before the garden stopped. So from the twin cherry trees that shaded my west verandah and the two hydrangeas that stood in front of my south one, clean back to the end of the world it seemed sometimes, my old garden was a tramp sort of thing that just naturally yearned to lose itself in the wilderness and to pack itself with all sorts of shrubs that crawled up from the canyon below.

Oh that broad-faced, grass-swarded garden with all the curious curves and corners and crannies in it used to fairly dance up there on top of that glorious hill that looked over to westward where two church spires poked up. It had a motion like the stars. I could feel it. Spading it, raking it, gathering up truck and burning it there, one felt like a clumsy second cousin to a god. I seemed to be the only gardener about. There were others. But they were somehow all fenced in. When I burned a winter's

truck in that garden, the smoke sneaked away with a sort of chuckle to get lost among the drowsing buds in the ravine.

I have never known how much of this place was garden and how much was the tree-blown gully behind. That gulch which the city garbagers were doing their worst to fill with offal—curses on them!—was the last outpost of a great natural park that once swept up there with a little spring-fed brook in the bottom. Houses—pot-bellied, \$30-a-month builders' houses, hundreds of 'em—had been crammed and jammed into the lower reaches of that ravine. This chunk of Muskoka had been left for a while. It was as wild as gipsy-land. In summer you never could see to the bottom of it. The sky seemed to roll up out of it in ever lasting webs of blue and reels of gorgeous clouds, all to be reflected in the face of that crag-top garden with the quaint little clapboarded cottage in the midst. How the light did pour into that place! It never was in shadow except at night. It never was still. There was always some breeze crawling up from the canyon to stir the flowers.

I know some people look at gardens very practically. So do I. The number of days and weeks—compounded of hours and hours and holidays and Saturday afternoons and Sunday mornings and after-darks—that I spent sweating at that garden were among the most practical experiences of my whole