

THE HOUSE OF FLOWERS

A Woman's Ideas about the Natural Way to Beautify a Home

By NINA E. BACON

THE garden of flowers has been, in all ages, the inspiration of the highest qualities of mind and heart, the burden of poet-songs, the connecting link between the memory of the traveller and his early home. The association of a breath of perfume from an old-fashioned flower has been known to waken longings in the heart of a prodigal that later have led to his reformation. No other power for good is so well within reach of rich and poor alike as the flower-garden.

The country-dweller, above all others, has at hand the elements necessary for its culture; earth, with its wealth of fertility from moss and leaves; air, freely permeated and warmed by sunshine; and water unbegrimed by smoke or soot, in pearl-like dew, gentle shower, or long, persistent, root-soaking rain that carries in solution to the thirsty plants the foods held in store in the soil. One more element—and this a vital one—must go to the making of a perfect garden; love in the heart of the worker. "Elizabeth" telling of "her German garden" breathes out from a full soul, "I love my garden," and this short first sentence tells the secret of its success. This element, too, should be pre-eminently a possession of those who live in the open country, untrammelled by the bonds of social form and routine.

Given these decided advantages, the maker of a farm flower-garden must endeavour to select such plants as will give a maximum return of floral beauty for a minimum outlay of time and strength, since, in most cases, the gardener will be also the housekeeper, poultry woman and dairy-woman.

Hardy Flowering Shrubs.

At the head of this list are the hardy flowering shrubs and trees, the blossoming vines and the perennials. These, once planted, will, as time goes on, with little further care increase in size and beauty, giving to the homestead an indefinable atmosphere of refinement which can be obtained by no other means.

In locating our hedges, clumps and masses of bloom, we must keep in mind that to these, as it is to a jewel, the setting is a most important matter. The Rudbeckia, or Golden Glow, is plebeian indeed, when placed in the open, among flowers of varied tints; but, when used in the foreground of an evergreen windbreak, and reinforced by a border line of Nasturtiums, climbing and dwarf; it adds for months a richness to the landscape which is still further enhanced if it form the framing for a stretch of velvety lawn. A clipped grassy space, even if limited, should not be omitted from the garden scheme, as nothing else affords the necessary relief. Among perennial hedges may be mentioned the Hollyhock border, always charming, especially so against a background of Virginia Creeper. As a covering for unsightly fences and sheds, and a foil for our "wilderness of sweets," this vine, though costing us nothing but the digging, is unexcelled. It has the hardihood which the beautiful Ampelopsis Vetchii lacks. A lovely combination in either masses or lines is blue Larkspur and white perennial Phlox. These Phloxes in borders—crimson, white, mauve and pink—are most attractive in late summer and require almost no cultivation. Of the hardy tuberous plants, easy of management when once established, the Peony easily leads, closely followed by the German and Japanese Irises. A bed of Peonies is unsurpassed; dark, luxuriant foliage setting off the great spherical blooms; Van Houtii or Chieftain for red; Dorchester for pink; Festiva Maxima for white, are all good. The Iris, a product of the old and unassuming Flag, runs the gamut of colour from white to orange-brown, from pink to crimson, from mauve to purple, with many modified and combined tones. A mass or border of these, set well in from the lawn edge, that they may not become matted with grass will more than repay the farm gardener for the trifling first cost of time and money.

Cultivate Sweet Peas.

Having gathered from year to year, as means and opportunity permit, trees, shrubs, vines and perennials which will yield their harvest of fragrance and colour in season, and having disposed them according to some definite plan by which their beauty will be accentuated, if possible, we shall be able to spend some time—and egg-money—on those flowers which thrive only with cultivation at regular intervals.

However busy we may be, let us have sweet peas. Nothing is more inspiring than a double row of them, pink, white, mauve, purple and crimson



GROFF'S FAMOUS GLADIOLI.

Grown on Rennie's Trial Grounds, Toronto.

with wings spread; "Sweet Peas on tip-toe for a flight." Dig a generous trench, a foot and a half wide and deep, put in some charcoal or stone for drainage, fill to within three inches of the top with alternate and packed layers of well-rotted manure and good soil, having the last layer of soil. Sow thickly two rows of the best and freshest seed obtainable, cover and pack down firmly. Plant them by Good Friday at latest. The spring showers will be moisture enough at first. Later on, water well and gather the blooms every day since they are like the widow's oil, increasing the more for being used. A somewhat sunny location is best for them. One wise woman plants her Sweet Pea hedge near the pump that she may easily keep it from thirsting. Experience has proven that brush is the best support for the vines, and soap-suds the most effective remedy for green fly.

Individual Taste.

Individual taste must be the guide for arrangement, care being taken always to harmonise colours, and individual circumstances regulate the extent of our undertaking. Two warnings may be permissible; do not starve the divine side of your nature by doing without a garden, if it be only a window-box; and do not elaborate your plans for it till what should be a rest becomes an incubus. One woman whose moments are crowded to overflowing, empties her packets in a plate, mixes all kinds together and sows them in a wide border, rich and worked to mellowness. She has quantities of blossoms for cutting, and her bed does not look to be a jumble. Her secret is, she sows much more of white than of other colours, and "the fairies" seem to keep antagonistic shades apart. Sweet Marjoram and Lavender find a place here, too. A longer season of blossoming will be obtained if the annuals are started in a small hot-bed made in March. A corner beside your early tomatoes, cucumbers and melons would suit them, and they may be grown on here till large enough to transplant in the open.

FRUIT-GROWING IN ONTARIO

FARMERS have begun to realise from the instruction of Fruit-Growers' Associations and experimental farms that there is money in fruit. The effect of the missionary work carried on by these organisations is being evidenced in the fine, trim orchards throughout many rural districts. Of late years the farm orchard has taken on a dignity all of its own; it is no longer a towed clump of bushes full of cobwebs down the lane a piece from the house. The orchard is a revenue producer in the same way as the cattle grazing over in the fields, or the golden areas of No. 1 hard. The farmer prunes his trees and sprays them. His ambition is to pick two barrels off each tree in the fall. He knows that his care will bring its own reward; there will be an easy profit of eighty to one hundred dollars for every acre of his orchard.

The cry of vegetarianism is more fruit and less meat. There is a big market for the staple fruits of the Dominion. Annually one million barrels of our apples are bought up by Great Britain, Denmark, South Africa, Bermuda, Cuba, Belgium and New Zealand. The encouragement given by buyers abroad has boomed the fruit-growing industry of this country. In parts of Canada it has become a highly-specialised business. Especially is this true of Ontario, where a third of a million acres is devoted to fruit cultivation of all kinds—apples, grapes, peaches, pears, plums and cherries. Sixteen million trees of fruit in Ontario! Selling price of apple-orchard land, five hundred to one thousand dollars an acre. Four chief belts divide the fruit-growing area of Ontario. Down on the south-west corner of Lake Ontario, and in the Lake Erie counties is the famous Niagara district, the vineyard of Canada, lying in the same latitude as Constantinople or Peking. Here are ten thousand acres of grapes, yielding four tons to the acre; also the finest peaches in the world, and bushels of plums, cherries, quinces, apricots and the delicious berries of the early spring. North a few miles to the counties of Huron and Bruce is the Huron district, an apple country. In the east the valleys of the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence is another apple country. But where the apple is king is the great sweep of territory up from the northern shore of Lake Ontario, whence comes a good proportion of the apples sent across the Atlantic. These are the win-

ter apples, the hardy kind which stand rough handling and exposure. While the smaller fruits have a big vogue, it is the apples and peaches of Ontario which have made the province celebrated as a fruit country. Of apples the Spy, Baldwin, King, Rhode Island Greening, Fameuse, and the McIntosh Red have hit the market hardest. British consumers hold in great favour the Spy, Baldwin and King; perhaps more the McIntosh Red, the Dundas County apple, rich and alluring. The Fameuse, grown in eastern Ontario, is the apple of the French eye. The demand of France for this apple four years ago far exceeded the supply. Peach culture some time ago was confined to the State of Virginia. Long ago has Niagara ousted the peach-growing industry of the south. At first, the winter frost, though slight at Niagara, militated against the success of fruit-growing there; but the officials of the experimental farms have lessened the possibility of root freezing to a large extent by experiments with fruit trees on hard plum roots. Here is the ripening order of the various Niagara peaches: Alexander, Early Rivers, Hale's Early Yellow, St. John, Early Crawford, Fitzgerald, Elberta, Longhurst. Great quantities of peaches are shipped to the big cities across the line; peaches like the Yellow St. John, Early Crawford, Elberta, and Smock, packed in a refrigerator car stand a trip across the continent to Vancouver and the western coast cities. Peaches and small fruits are sent by swift express and whole train loads from Niagara to Winnipeg and beyond.

The problem of shipping facilities for perishable fruit has ever been a bugbear to the fruit-grower. At the Good Roads Convention in Toronto, the other day, Mr. R. H. Dewar, a prominent farmer living near Hamilton, illustrated the difficulties of a farmer who lives a distance from market in getting his fruit to town. Said Mr. Dewar, speaking of his own experiences:

"We have a chance of two ways in getting our fruit to market. Getting it to Toronto by road is out of the question, but we may send it by express or else by waggon to Hamilton. By the latter route the roads are good up to within a mile of Hamilton, but that last mile is so rough that often the fruit is jolted so badly that a fifty per cent. loss is sustained and in many cases the fruit is discoloured so as to be almost unsaleable."