

Preparation for the Flower Garden.

READ BEFORE THE HAMILTON HORTICULTURAL CLUB BY MR. OLIVER LAING.

The busy season is fast approaching, endeavour to be ready for it. Clean and dress the grass lawns, shrubberies, &c., prepare composts, moulds, and other requisites for the seed and planting time.

When the weather sets in favourable, uncover and dress Crocus and Tulip beds, keep on propagating those things that are suitable for spring propagation, such as *Heliotropes*, *Gazanias*, *Alyssums*, *Verbenas*, &c., &c. The hardy varieties of *Geraniums* may still be propagated, and if properly treated, make good plants before the first of June. It is the practice of some gardeners to select in the fall a few good strong plants as stock, pot them with strong soil into large pots, cut them back and allow them rest for a short time, excite them about the first of January, and when ready keep on propagating from them: through the winter. Some parties in England use wood boxes, instead of pots, for bedding stock. The plan is a good one, both for growing and hardening off the plants. It is, in the opinion of many, far preferable for such as *Verbenas*, *Heliotropes* and the like; in boxes the roots get free course to run, and are not subject to be bound up as we often see them in small pots, so much so that the season is sometimes nearly half over before they begin to grow.

D. Thomson, who strongly recommends the box culture, says in an article published some time ago in the "Cottage Gardener" something as follows, referring to spring cuttings.—So soon as the cuttings make roots about an inch long, they should be immediately pricked off into boxes 4½ inches deep, of convenient sizes to have a few holes in the bottom, to be crocked over, then use 2 inches of old mushroom bed dung, nearly pure horse droppings, afterwards fill up with turfy loam and leaf mould of equal parts, with a small portion of sand. I know from past experience that young bedding plants root and grow very freely in such a compost, and can be lifted without injury.

In growing bedding plants, care ought to be taken not to draw them up too much, as we often find to be the case, by keeping them over close and in too much heat. As soon as the cuttings are struck they ought to be gradually hardened off. If tender and half hardy Annuals are not sown, lose no time in getting them put in. Many are in the habit of sowing in pots. The better way is to prepare a bed for the purpose, say two feet deep, of well sweetened manure, a few inches larger than the frame that is to be used: after the frame has been put on, and the bed seasoned, mould it over to the depth of five or six inches, with rich turfy loam and leaf mould, mixed with a small portion of sand. In a few days the bed will be ready for the seed, which ought to be sown in drills.

I would remark here, that it is very necessary, previous to planting out the beds, to have the matter well considered, and the arrangement fully matured. The different plants, their nature, habit of growth, colour of flowers, tints of foliage, &c., so as to bring out a proper contrast, not only in one bed or border, but over the whole Parterre. Such a study will be found very interesting. In this respect the *Geranium* tribe alone cannot fail in affording to the studious mind the highest source of gratification. Among the new varieties that are being produced yearly, we have colour and shade of every description.

I would again call attention to Hybridizing and the raising of Seedlings, a beginning has been made, persevere and success is sure to be the result.

And may there not be found among our native plants some suitable for bedding purposes? Who will be the first to bring such into notice?

Queries About Hedges, &c.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR.—An answer to the following questions will be gladly received through the columns of THE CANADA FARMER.

1st. I wish to plant an evergreen hedge or screen along the west side of a public road near my dwelling. The object is to keep the snow from blocking up the road, which it does in winter after every storm; also, for ornament. The soil is a cold, wet clay. What kind of evergreens would you advise me to plant, whether from the nursery or the forest, and at what distance apart, and how ought I to prepare the ground? If an under-drain were laid immedi-

ately below the line of the hedge, would it be likely to get choked up by the roots in course of time? or would an open ditch be best, with the clay thrown up in a ridge, and the trees planted on top?

2nd. Do you know of any good combined tile and brick machine which will grind the clay and turn out the tile or brick at one operation, and which can be driven by horse power? If so, what will be its capacity, and what about the price?

3rd. Have any of your correspondents ever tested the efficiency of a tile drain along the line of a post fence, in wet clay soil, to keep the posts from heaving with the frost? Most of the fences in this section, when new, present a neat and thrifty appearance, but the frost soon makes sad work, throwing some of the posts farther out than others, and sideways in every direction.

4th. Do you know where I can get the following three books.—"Kippert's Land Drainage," "Munn's Practical Land Drainer," and the "Chronicles of a Clay Farm," and what will be the price of each? Lately I enquired at half a dozen or more book stores in Montreal, but could not get any of them. Don't you think it would be a good idea if you were to keep an assortment of Agricultural Books at the office of THE FARMER, like most of the editors of American agricultural papers? G. Y.

Ormstown, Chateaugay Co., C. E.

NOTE BY ED. C. F.—1st. Trees will bear transplanting better from the nursery, if they have been properly cultivated, than when taken from the forest. In planting a hedge with trees from the forest, it will be necessary to take quite small trees and use a great deal of care in removing them: and after all, very many of them will probably die. The Norway Spruce will make a fine screen, planted at two feet apart. The White Cedar and the Hemlock also make good hedges, and are usually planted a foot apart. There is some danger that an under-drain would be choked by the roots of the hedge, but perhaps some of the readers of THE CANADA FARMER, who have had some experience with such a drain, will favor us.

2nd. If any of our readers know of such a machine they will confer a favor upon our correspondent by stating where it can be found.

3rd. Will some one give the desired information? Mr. Bolton has had considerable experience in tile draining.

4th. "Munn's Practical Land Drainer" is published by C. M. Saxton & Co., New York; and they may have the other works. Parties having Agricultural and Horticultural books for sale will find it to their interest to advertise them in THE CANADA FARMER.

Creepers.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR.—Is it too much to ask you the names of some of the best and most hardy creeping plants for rocks, &c.; something showy and of quick growth preferred; soil, such alluvial matter as has accumulated in the hollows of granite rocks. W. H.

Brockville, March 10, 1864.

NOTE BY ED. C. F.—The Creeper most likely to thrive in such a location is the American Ivy, (*Ampelopsis hederacea*.) In autumn the leaves change to a rich crimson, and will shed a warm glow over these earth-born castles. It is a very rapid grower, and throws out roots at the joints, by which it attaches itself firmly to anything it finds for support.

The Staff Tree (*Celastrus scandens*) is a twining plant, winding itself around a tree or other like support. Its chief ornament is its clusters of orange capsuled seeds, which remain through the winter.

The Running Myrtle (*Vinca Minor*) will, no doubt, be found useful and by the help of a little training, be made to cover steep slopes. It has dark, green, shining foliage, and very pretty light blue flowers.

The Honey Suckles are training plants, and need some support other than the rocks. The Fragrant Monthly is very sweet, and keeps in bloom all summer.

The Trumpet Flower (*Bignonia radicans*) sends out roots at the joints, whereby it fastens itself to whatever it touches. It has large scarlet flowers in August. It may be that it is not sufficiently hardy for your climate, though we are by no means certain that it is not.

Protection of the Strawberry.

STRAWBERRY beds require looking after to see that they have not too much snow lying in drifts or banks. Last spring our finest strawberries were very much injured by the snow and ice lying too late in the season, excluding the air and light from them, causing them to be too tender to stand the slightest frost. This can be avoided by removing the snow or breaking the ice, which will cause it soon to give way. Constant freezing and thawing is very injurious to the plants, having a tendency to draw them up. A slight covering will prevent this; clean straw is the best to avoid the seed of weeds. Some varieties stand the winter better than others. *Triomphe de Gand* proved quite hardy until last spring, when it came out nearly dead, caused by the great quantity of ice lying too late in the season. Last spring *Adonis* proved very hardy, *Austin* some injured, *Baltimore* *Scarlet* and *Bartlett* hardy. *Diadem* killed out, *Downer's Prolific* stood well, *Early Scarlet* hardy, *Honey* very hardy, *Hooker* some injured, *Jenny Lind* killed badly, *Longworth's Prolific* very hardy, *La Constant* and *McAvoy's Superior* hardy, *Ophelia* stood well, *Scarlet Magnate* injured some, *Syrus* hardy, *Tren-rana* killed more or less, *Triomphe de Gand* killed badly, *Victoria* killed totally, *Vicomtesse* stood well, *Wizard* killed out, *Wilson* very much injured, so much so that it failed to mature a crop of fruit. If the coming season proves favourable, I may be able to give a better account of the above varieties as to hardiness, and a report of their fruit-bearing qualities. Cobourg. B. LOSEE.

Apple Trees in Stiff Clay Soil, &c.

To the Editor of THE CANADA FARMER:

SIR.—I beg to enquire what kind of apple trees are best suited to a rather stiff clay soil, with very little black mould on the surface—not three inches in places?

I see that in your first (Feb. 7) number, "W. S.," of Woburn, recommends "pruning back" of the tap-roots of apple trees, when planting them. Does this mean cutting most of it off and trusting to the side-roots for the nourishment of the tree? And if so, is it not a mistake? GULIELMUS.

Edgeworth, March, 1864.

NOTE BY ED. C. F.—"Gulielmus" is referred to an article on "Where to Plant," in No. 7. Apple trees do not refuse to grow on clay soil, if it be sufficiently dry and in good tilth.

We are unable to perceive any advantage to be gained by leaving a long tap-root on the apple tree. If it has been well grown at the nursery it will not have any such tap-root.

Miscellaneous.

MODERN education too often covers the fingers with rings, and at the same time cuts the sinews at the wrists.

AN ACTIVE OLD FARMER.—Mr. Charles Goodwin, of Ridgehill Farm, Eastgrinstead, England, now in the 79th year of his age, offers to plough any man in Sussex, of the same age, one acre of land, in eight hours, with a turnrise plough, for five pounds—the ploughing to take place within one mile of Eastgrinstead.

A LEGISLATOR'S OPINION OF FARMERS.—He says: "The best part of a population are the cultivators of the soil. Independent farmers are everywhere the basis of society, and the true friends of liberty," and yet a member of the Maine Legislature said the other day that if it had not been for the advantages of a Seminary education he should have been only a farmer.

THE FARMER'S FATHER.—Once there was a peasant, in Switzerland, at work in his garden very early in the spring. A lady passing said, "I fear the plants which have come forward rapidly will yet be destroyed by frost." Mark the wisdom of the peasant:—"God has been our Father a great while," was the reply. The season for farming is opening. Already we see in some of the papers, that the winter has killed this, that, and the other crop. But, "God has been our Father a great while," and will be till the end of the year and the world. Seed time and harvest never fail, and honest industry gets its due reward. Trust God and work hard, so shall thy barns be full, and thy soul at ease.