

Horticulture.

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Pruning Roses.

One of the most important things to be attended to in the rose garden during the coming month of March is that of pruning. Some growers have expressed the opinion that November is a good time for this operation to be performed, but the greater number recommend that it be done in February. I am altogether opposed to the system of autumnal pruning; and, although I will not go so far as to assert that February is too early in all seasons, I am strongly of opinion that March is quite soon enough for hardy sorts, and too soon for the China. By hardy roses I understand the whole tribe of summer bloomers, generally comprised under the divisions of moss, Provence, hybrid Provence, French damask, alba, hybrid China, hybrid Bourbon, hybrid noisette (a distinct section, although not generally recognized), Australian briar, sweet briar, Scotch, and the several families of climbing roses. Of autumnal bloomers, the perpetual moss, damask perpetual, hybrid perpetual, and Bourbon families must be included in the category of hardy roses. Shall any especial order be observed in pruning these different sorts, or shall they be taken hap-hazard? I have seen it laid down in books that the moss, Provence, French, alba, Damask, and Austrian briar should be first pruned; then the hybrid China, and Hybrid Bourbon, and next the damask perpetual, hybrid perpetual, perpetual moss, and Bourbon. Now, I beg to differ from this view of the case. I recommend, whether large or small, to apportion the plants in three equal parts, taking care that the different families are fairly distributed among the whole, and to have three great prunings—namely, at the beginning, middle, and end of the month; or, supposing this to be troublesome, if a thirtieth part of the entire number (taken as they come) were pruned every day during the month, the same object would be obtained, that object being a prolongation of the blooming season. Now, simple as the operation of pruning a rose-bush may seem, it is really one requiring the exercise of considerable judgment. The truth is that, although general rules may be laid down, there will occur numerous exceptions. These can only be learned by practice; I can only pretend to give general directions, leaving the rest to be taught by the best of all school-masters—experience.

Rose-pruning is of three kinds, viz., close pruning, long pruning, and moderate pruning. The first method is applicable to all such roses as are of dwarf habit, and compact growth, producing shoots on which the bloom buds are closely set. In this list may be included the families of moss, Provence, gallica, alba, damask, and Austrian roses. All these require close pruning; that is, the shoots to be cut back to within an inch or two of the old wood, leaving only two or three buds at the base. Long pruning must be used for such sorts as are very vigorous growers, many of these produce shoots from six to ten feet long, and if these were subjected to the close system of pruning, not a flower would be produced. The sorts requiring long pruning include nearly all the hybrid China, some of the hybrid Bourbon, the more vigorous among the Bourbon, and a large proportion of the noisette tribes. In all these the shoots must be well thinned, taking care to remove those likely to militate against the production of a handsome, symmetrical head, the remaining shoots must be shortened to a foot or eighteen inches, according to the habit of the plant. There are a few of the hybrid Chinas, in which it is necessary to leave the shoots nearly all their entire length, merely removing a few inches of their extremities, of sorts requiring this treatment, the fine old varieties, Beauty of Billard, Brennus, and Fulgens, are examples. In the course of a few years roses thus treated will become straggling and unsightly, when this occurs, they must be cut back within an inch or two of the crown, when fresh buds will push, and a new head be formed. If this is done immediately after the plant has bloomed, there will be plenty of time (in ordinary summers) for the new wood to mature itself, and thus the loss of one season's bloom will be avoided. If the wounds are immediately covered with some styptic, there will be no bleeding, otherwise the plant might be much exhausted, if not actually killed, by the loss of its juices. Moderate pruning is a sort of compromise between the other two methods. It consists in shortening the shoots to within six or seven inches

of the old wood, and is the form of pruning best suited to the more robust-growing varieties of French, damask, and hybrid Provence roses, the most vigorous of the hybrid Chinas, and hybrid Bourbons, and those of medium growth among the Bourbons, and hybrid perpetuals. The pruning of the China, and tea-scented roses, together with such of the noisettes as claim affinity with them, should be deferred until April.

The main object to be kept in view in the pruning of roses, is to secure abundance of bloom; but there is another which also ought to be born in mind—the proper form from which the bush, or tree, may be desired to assume. Under this head, Mr. John Cranston has recorded some useful and suggestive information in his "Cultural Directions for the Rose." He states, "I know it will be found somewhat difficult to obtain a proper and uniform shape with all kinds; there are some which will, in spite of all pruning, grow as close in the head as a hem. Others will start off anyhow, one shoot frequently taking the lead, and, if allowed, will grow to such an extent as to entirely rob all the other parts of the tree, the plant soon becoming a one-sided, rambling-looking object. To avoid this, examine at pruning time all such trees as are liable to grow into this form, and cut out entirely any shoots which are observed to be gross, and over-robust. All shoots left after pruning should be as nearly equal in size as possible; this will ensure uniformity of growth upon all sides. If, however, as is sometimes the case, a vigorous and gross shoot should appear, which cannot be well dispensed with, it should be stopped when it has grown six or eight inches; the lateral shoots afterwards produced may be again stopped when two or three inches in length. The erect growing kinds are, again, somewhat difficult to bring into shape, as no pruning will prevent their growing into a close, compact head, with the flowers all at the top of the tree, so that they cannot be seen on a moderately tall standard; such sorts are best grown as low bushes, or as standards of medium height. During the growing season, where the shoots have become sufficiently hardened to bend without breaking, let the lower shoots be brought down and tied to small wooden, or iron hoops, placed underneath the head of the tree, and in like manner bring the middle and upper shoots down. After this has been practiced for about two seasons, the plant will have assumed a proper shape, and then can easily be kept so, and that without the assistance of the hoop, or further tying. Before commencing to prune, it is necessary to observe the habit of the plant, whether it be a vigorous, moderate, or dwarf-growing variety; also to determine what kinds are required for exhibition purposes, as these will want somewhat more careful pruning and thinning. Carefully thin out from the head, by clearing away all small, and crowded branches, likewise all gross, unripe shoots, leaving such only as are composed of firm, and well-ripened wood, and these at regular, and equal distances. Prune down according to the strength of the shoot, and habit of the variety, in some cases to two or three inches, in others, where the habit is vigorous, one foot, or even eighteen inches will not be too long for a shoot to be left; but, as this will depend upon the habit of the variety, and shoot to be pruned, no absolute rule can be given. In shortening the shoots, cut close to an eye, observing, where practicable, to leave well-swollen, plump buds, which invariably produce the finest blooms, likewise secure those having an outward tendency, and pointing in a direction proper for the handsome formation of the plant."—*The Field*.

The Winter Flowering of Zonal Pelargoniums.

Unlike many growers of these charmingly varied and useful decorative plants, I grow my collection mainly for autumn and winter blooming, instead of for summer flowering. It is during the months of October, November, and December especially that our conservatories are destitute of the cheering influences of flowers. I like bright colors during the dull leaden days of winter, when all is dark and gloomy without; and the rich hues of scarlet, rose, crimson, and red are abundantly supplied by zonal pelargoniums. In March last I obtained about two dozen of the newer varieties of zonal and nosegay pelargoniums, all of them growing in small 60 pots. As soon as the roots became somewhat pot bound they were shifted into 48 pots, and flowered; and though I had left the selection of varieties entirely to the nurseryman who had supplied them, I am bound to say it was so good that there was not one among them I cared to discard. During the time the plants were getting established in the 48 pots I allowed them to bloom, but as soon as there were signs of the plants becoming pot bound they were again shifted into 32 pots, and the plants cut back, so as to form nice "bottoms," as it is termed.

The plants are now thoroughly establishing themselves in the large pots; they are making a vigorous growth, and blooming well and freely, and by keeping them fairly dry I hope to have them in flower up to February. Nor is this all, for when the plants are cut back, the cuttings so obtained are inserted singly in thumb pots, in which they soon root, and are then shifted into small 60 pots. Many of these have developed into nice young stocky plants of a vigorous growth, and are throwing up tufts of fine flowers. In the case of both the young and old plants, as soon as they have done blooming they will be allowed to dry off, and in April the soil will be shaken out from the roots, the roots trimmed, and put into 48 pots, and again shifted into 32 pots as before, for autumn flowering. When the bottoms become too large they can be thrown away, and their place supplied by some of the cuttings struck as above stated. Some of the varieties, too, can be rejected as they become distanced by the superior merits of other types.

Some of my favorite varieties are—Wellington, Henry King, very fine crimson hue, flowers of splendid form; Richard Dean, very fine, Harry Turner, very fine brilliant red; Lawrence Heywood, Cham, Carrie Cochran, Marchioness of Hereford, Mercy Grogan, Forbury nosegay, Glitter and splendor—all shades of red, crimson and scarlet, Circulator, very fine; Charles Dickens, a beautiful salmon-rose nosegay, the petals distinctly margined with red, and Polly King, one of the finest salmon-colored varieties yet raised; these have shades of salmon. Master Christine and Mrs. Keck, both pink flowered varieties, the former very free of bloom. Of pure white flowers slightly blotched with carmine, there are Mrs. Sach, Reine Blanche, Alice Spencer, Margarine, a beautiful variety, Madame F. Hook, and souvenir de St. Etienne, the purest white zonal I have yet met with. I do not advance this as a model or complete collection; I have found the several varieties to be very distinct in character, and all are more or less characterized by great freedom of bloom. My last variety is one of the finest zonals I have flowered, it is named Purple Prince, and the rose crimson flowers, which are of very fine quality, are handsomely tinted with purple.—*R. D. in Field*.

New Flowers.

Among the new flowers of the spring of 1872, we found a rich deep rose colored Zonale Geranium, named *Beauty of Lee*, which was very pretty, and also *Lanthe*, a splendid shade of magenta, *L. P. Hyacinth* is also fine, and of a dazzling shade of orange scarlet.

The Echeverias are succulent plants which are becoming very popular now, they are of the same genus as the House-leek, with thick leaves, but their flowers are quite attractive, being red and yellow, and they make very pleasing window plants, as well as for bedding-out. *Echeveria metallica* is a showy plant, its leaves being of a peculiar lilac shade with a metallic tinge, and its flowers spring from a stem a foot in height. *Echeveria secunda* and *secunda glauca*, have a rich gray foliage with a silvery tinge, which contrasts prettily with the *metallica*, and make a very desirable edging to a variegated bed of plants. This genus of plants blooms finely under our hot suns.

There are new Hydrangeas which make a great addition to lawn plants. They bloom in immense cluster of light pink flowers, and their leaves are handsome and glossy. *Hydrangea Olaksa*, a variety from Japan, is a beautiful ornament to every garden. *Diplopappus chrysophyllus* (has syllables enough in its name to insure its remembrance,) is a new shrub with evergreen foliage, the lower side of each leaf being covered with yellow dust, such as is seen in the Golden Fern. It is said to be perfectly hardy, and also very ornamental.

The White Grapo Myrtle is a lovely flower, nearly hardy, and blooms profusely, and makes a lovely contrast to the dwarf Pomegranate James Vick, which grows like a thorn tree, and is covered with brilliant scarlet flowers.

A new monthly Carnation, the Peerless, is an exquisite variety of white, shaded to blush, a prolific bloomer with perfectly shaped buds and flowers which are very fragrant.—*Country Gentleman*.

DEUTZIA HERGES.—*Deutzia scabra* is a very attractive plant when in bloom; it is quite hardy, forms a dense mass of foliage, and appears eminently adapted for a hedge or screen. It bears the shears with impunity, puts out its foliage early and holds it late. Those who desire a neat little hedge or screen where animals cannot injure it, will find this excellent for the purpose.