

## SWEET PEAS.

to justify the claims made for it ; it is undeniably a dwarf, forming a mat of 12 to 18 inches diameter on the surface of the ground, and is interesting on that account ; but in every other respect it is a disappointment, four-fifths of the seed sown in this locality were unfertile, the flowers are small and the stalk short ; in every way it is inferior to Emily Henderson or Blanche Burpee.

The causes of the great popularity of the sweet pea are not far to seek. No other flower combines so many points of excellence, in beauty of form, beauty and variety of coloring, exquisite perfume, convenience for cutting, and durability after cutting—they can easily be kept fresh for a week—it is unequalled, and if properly cared for, the quantity that can be taken from even a small row is enormous.

A correspondent of *Garden and Forest* kept a record of the stalks pulled from a row 60 feet long, from June 11th to October 20th, when the last one was picked ; the total was nearly 50,000, besides a large number that were allowed to go to seed. From no other flower could we get the same profusion of color and fragrance.

The best soil for growing sweet peas is a good heavy clay loam, rich and capable of retaining moisture, as it is only by keeping the roots cool and moist that we can succeed in having them in bloom the whole season. If the soil is not very rich, put on a good allowance of well decomposed stable manure the previous fall, dig it deeply in and mix thoroughly with the soil, as they do not take kindly to manure in contact with the roots ; if not applied till the spring, bury it deeply several inches below the seed bed. If you want to feed them extra well, a dressing in the spring of a fertilizer rich in potash—or wood ashes—makes stronger and more vigorous plants.

Plant as early in the spring as the ground can be worked, they are quite hardy, and will stand several degrees of frost without injury ; indeed, in dry ground where water does not lie, they may be planted in the fall with perfect safety. Make a trench three inches deep, drop the seeds two inches apart, cover one inch deep at first and do not fill in the other two inches till the plants are well up above the ground. If all the seeds grow pull out every second one—or transplant to another place if wanted—after all danger from cutworms is over—as four inches apart is close enough for the best results.

If your soil is light and sandy it will be necessary to plant much deeper. Make the trench six inches deep and fill in a little at a time as the plants grow, taking care not to cover them with the earth.

The soil must never be allowed to become dry. The frequent use of a sharp rake keeps the surface open and prevents excessive evaporation ; but, in addition, water must be supplied liberally after the middle of June, unless in unusually wet seasons. Don't waste the soapsuds on washday, it makes one of the best fertilizers.

Some of the new varieties grow so tall—in good soil as high as 6 to 8 feet—that it is necessary to provide support for them not less than six feet high. The most convenient trellis material is poultry netting with a two-inch mesh, fastened to stout posts, firmly set in the ground, with a top rail to keep the posts rigid, so that the netting can be stretched smooth.

A very handy trellis can be made from seven or eight feet of netting, bent in the form of a cylinder and the ends twisted together, with a stout wire hoop at each end to keep it in shape. This set on end, fastened to a stake to keep it upright and the peas planted around