Horticulture.

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The Kitchen Garden.

Preparation for Planting.

The purpose for which the kitchen garden is intended, is the production of vegetables for the table. Only those vegetables are fit for human food which are tender, fine grained, sweet and succulent. When they are grown in such a way that they are tough, coarse, rank in flavor, or filled with woody fibre, they may be fed to cattle or swine, but should never be found in the kitchen. The instructions we have already given as to the selection of the garden ground, in its exposure to the sun, and its exemption from excess of moisture, and as to the selection of the most suitable soil, have all been given with a view to securing the growth of such vegetables as are suitable for food.

The beds having been laid out and the walks made, the next step will be to prepare the ground for planting. We fear that just at this point the most serious mistakes are made—mistakes that injuriously affect the results for the whole season. It is spring. The season is short. There is a great deal to be done. Work is pressing on every hand, and, in consequence, the preparation of the kitchen garden is not thoroughly done. In the first place, the ground will need to be manured with a liberal hand, for if it be not rich, very rich, the vegetables will grow slowly, and hence be tough and fibrous; and they will grow small, and therefore not possess their natural flavor. But all manures are not suitable for this purpose. The products of the barn-yard need to undergo a course of preparation before they are fit to be applied to the garden. If used in the coarse and crude condition in which they come from the yard, they will induce usually a coarse growth, and impart a rank flavor to the crops.

The first step, then, will be to secure well-prepared and thoroughly-decomposed manure. In order to secure a supply, attention should be given to this matter during the previous summer. The material of the barn-yard should be drawn out to some convenient place, in sufficient quantity to give the whole garden a liberal dressing and thrown into a heap. Adjoining this there should be another heap made up of sods from some old pasture field, or the parings of fence-corners, and, if convenient, the scrapings from some pond-hole in the bush lot. When the manure-heap begins to heat, it should be forked over, thoroughly shaking it out and building it up in a regular form. When the heap that will now be forming is about a foot high, throw over its surface a few inches of the soil, sods and muck from the adjoining pile. In this way, stack up the entire pile in alternate layers of about a foot in thickness of barn-yard manure with a few inches of sods and soil, covering it, when finished, with six or eight inches of the soil. This heap may now remain until spring, when it should be cut down and thoroughly commingled before it is spread over the garden beds. Prepared in this way, the manure will have lost its rank character; the soil will have absorbed the gaseous and liquid portions, and the whole will have become changed into that condition in which it is best adapted to support vegetable life, and impart to it a quick growth combined with a fine texture.

Having provided the material for enriching the garden; we are now ready to work up the soil In small gardens, this will be done with a spade, or better yet, with a digging fork. It enters the ground more easily than a spade, and the soil is pulverized better by striking it with the back of the fork, when turned over, than is possible with the spade. The accompanying cut will acquaint our readers with the form and appearance of the instrument better than any description.

Those who cultivate on a large scale for the supply of public institutions or for market will use the plough. But the work must be thoroughly done. The subsoil should be well broken up by the subsoil plough being made to follow the common plough in the bottom of the furrow, running it as deep as it is possible to make it work. The ground should then be cross-ploughed, still using also the subsoil plough, so that the soil may be deeply and thoroughly broken up.

The Window Garden.

Tea Roses.

Of all the various classes of roses, the tea-scented are the most desirable for house culture. The original tea rose was imported from China in 1812, and its descendants have yearly increased in beauty of coloring and in fragrance, until they out-shine all their beauteous sisterhood, and are, indeed, more beautiful than all others. For the past two years the demand for them has been very great, as no gentleman could attend a party unless a tea rose-bud decorated the button-hole of his coat, and every young lady must either wear them in her hair, or carry them in her hands, and loop her dress with them. So the florists have cultivated them, and no stand of flowers is complete without several varieties of them. They can be purchased in all shades—from the deepest purplish red to yellow and snowy white. They need plenty of sunshine, a very rich compost, and fresh air, to bloom in perfection.

A hot, dry temperature, with stifling air, is not adapted to their needs, and although they will live patiently in it, they cannot flower. They will, however, bud and blossom luxuriantly in a soil of leaf-mould, well decomposed horse manure, and sandy loam equal parts of each, and when the buds are forming, give all the sunshine that can be obtained, but when they are bursting into bloom their beauty will be more permanent if they are set out from the direct rays of the sun. They must be kept well watered, or the buds will blast.

When the flowers have fallen, we must prune thoroughly, if we would have fresh shoots put forth, and new blossoms form. So cut back the branches fully two thirds of their length, keep the roots a little dry, and set the pot away from the glass—not so far that it will receive no sun, but far enough to give it a little rest. In April or May re-pot in fresh compost, and when all danger of frost is past, set the pots into the garden borders, putting cinders or ashes at the bottom of the hole to prevent the roots from striking through.

If you wish to keep the plants solely for winter flowering, it is better to pinch out all the buds as soon as they appear, and this will send all the strength of its root into forming fresh wood.

Roses for winter flowering should always be kept in pots, for you cannot transplant a rose bush that has bloomed during the summer with much hope that it will continue to do so during the winter; but if the plant has been set in the shade, and not received enough water to make it put forth buds, it will produce an abundance of flowers during the winter months This rule also applies to fuchsias, geraniums, etc.

Roses are especially infested with insects; brown, scaly, and red spiders are all fond of them; but if the plants are well showered with water in which carbonate of ammonia and saltpetre have been added, one table spoonful of each to four quarts of water they will soon be routed.—*New England Farmer.*

The Fernery.

Among the inexpensive household adornments requiring little care, and yet affording constant gratification, is the fern case. To the lover of beautiful forms in plant life it is a source of rare enjoyment. The fern case itself is a most appropriate ornament for the parlor, sitting room or conservatory, and from a companionship of two years we are satisfied we should miss the one we have as much as we should miss any household pet—animate or inanimate—our children alone excepted.

Fern cases may be purchased or made. Those for sale at the stores have a bottom of terra-cotta, usually circular in form, with an oval topped glass covering. Our own we had made to our own fancy. It is of black walnut, eighteen inches long, and stands on legs about two inches high. It is one foot in width, and the bottom part—that containing the earth—is seven inches deep. The glass frame for the top is about sixteen inches high, slightly tapering at the top, so that the whole case stands about two feet high. The bottom part is lined with lead, and a half inch hole in the centre allows the superabundant moisture to be let off as necessary. The soil is composed of one part peat or muck, one part sharp sand and one part old, well decomposed barn-yard manure. Care should be taken that the case is not overstocked. We have had some disappointment of this kind, but have come to the conclusion that a case of the above dimensions will support in good health about eight varieties of ferns and lycopodes.

The care of a fern case is very simple. It wants the light, but not the direct sun. Ours sits on a shelf near a south window, but out of the reach of the direct rays of the sun. About once in six weeks remove the top, give the ferns a slight sprinkling of water and about ten minutes air. They are never troubled with dust and will look bright, moist and of a beautiful green throughout the year.—*Maine Farmer.*

Pleasure from Planting Trees.

Captain Basil Hall, while on a visit at Abbotsford, wrote:—"People accustomed to the planting of trees are well aware how grateful the rising generations of the forest are to the hand which thins and prunes them. And it makes one often melancholy to see what a destructive sort of waste and retardation goes on by the neglect of young woods—how much beauty is lost—how much wealth is wantonly thrown away, and what an air of sluttishness is given to scenery which, with a very little trouble, might have adorned and embellished, not to say enriched, many a great estate.

"I never saw this mischievous effect of indolence more conspicuously made manifest than in a part of the grounds here. Sir Walter's property on one side is bounded by a belt of trees, say twenty yards across. The march runs directly along the centre of this belt, so that one-half of the trees belong to his neighbor, the other to him. The moment he came in possession he set about thinning and pruning the trees, and planting a number of hardwood shoots under the shelter of the firs. In a very short time the effect was evident; the trees, heretofore choked up, had run into scraggy stems, and were sadly stunted in growth, but having now room to breath and take exercise, they hence shot up in the course of a few years in a wonderful manner, and have set out branches on all sides, while their trunks have gradually lost the walking-stick or hop-pole aspect which they were forced to assume before, and the beeches, and oaks, and other recent trees are standing up vigorously under the genial influence of their owner's care. Meanwhile the obstinate, indolent, or ignorant possessor of the other half of the belt has done nothing to his woods for many years, and the growth is apparently at a stand in its original ugliness and uselessness. The trees are none of them above half the height of Sir Walter's, and a few, if any, of half the diameter. So very remarkable is the difference, that without the most positive assurances, I could not believe it possible that it could have been brought about by mere care in so short a period as five years. The trees on the one side are quite without value, either to make fences or to sell as supports to the coalpits near Berwick, while Sir Walter already reaps a great profit from the mere thinning out of his plantations. To obtain such results it will be easily understood that much personal attention is necessary, much method, and knowledge of the subject. It happens, however, that in this very attention he finds his chief pleasure—he is a most exact and punctual man of business, and has made it his favorite study to acquire a thorough knowledge of the art.

"His excellent taste in planting has produced a very important effect. In laying out his plantations he was guided partly by a feeling that it was natural and beautiful to follow the 'lie of the ground,' as it is called, and partly by an idea that by leading his young wood along hollows and gentle slopes he would be taking the surest course to give it shelter. But though he had only the prosperity and picturesqueness of the wood in view, he has also, he finds, added to the value of the adjoining fields that remain unplanted. The person who formerly rented one farm came to him and offered to take the unplanted part again, and to pay the same rent for it as he had paid originally for the whole, although one-half of it is now a young forest, and effectually enclosed. On Sir Walter's expressing his surprise at this, the man said that both for growing corn and for the pasture of sheep the land was infinitely improved in value by the protection which his rising woods and numerous enclosures afforded."