

The spring or early summer is the best time to repot cactus and succulent plants generally. Sandy soil not too rich in fertilizer with a liberal amount of drainage material such as broken flower pots and old mortar should be used for drainage. All of this class of plants dislike to be kept soddened with water at the roots. This last named condition often proves fatal to them.

### Forcing Lilacs in Winter

Mrs. W. F. Hardy, Oakwood, Ont.

Last winter I tried growing lilacs in the house, as I had heard that they could be made to bloom indoors quite easily. As it will soon be the time of year when branches should be brought indoors for this purpose, I thought that readers of THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST would be interested in learning of my success last winter.

I brought two good-sized branches into the house on the last day of December. These branches were about five feet long and about one and a half inches thick at the base. I set each of them in a bucket of water and placed one near a window in the hallway and the other some distance back from the window in a warm corner of the same hall, which was near a stovepipe. In about three weeks' time nearly one hundred buds were showing, and by the middle of February they began to open into flowers. The one near the window did not come out as fast as the one which was in the warmer situation, but the flowers looked healthier and stronger



Lilacs Blooming in Winter

as they came out. The illustration shows a few of the sprays which were cut when the bloom was at its best. These were cut just about two months after I brought the branches indoors. They would have doubtless been considerably better but for the fact that some of them were slightly frozen on a very cold night when the fire happened to go out.

The Chinese sacred lily is an easy plant to handle, either in water or soil. It will bloom in six weeks.



A Pleasing Portion of the Floral Exhibits at the Recent Horticultural Exhibition in Toronto

### My Favorite Flower and How I Grow It\*

A. V. Main, Ottawa, Ont.

In spite of the great increase of flowers of recent years, the geranium has kept its ground. It is to-day more popular than ever, and I designate it my "favorite" flower, for my garden without it would be incomplete. It justly deserves its place. As a bedding plant for borders, boxes, vases, and flower beds it is practically unbeatable. It is a perpetual bloomer and free of insect pests or disease, easily managed, simple to propagate, greenhouse accommodation is not essential, and it is within the compass of all to grow. I find September the most satisfactory month for propagation.

#### PROPAGATION

I would like to emphasize here that we do not propagate enough. To keep our plants in a young condition is the secret of massive bloom and healthy foliage. The cuttings or slips should be good, sturdy, ripened growths that have been made through the summer and between three and five inches long, generally possessing three joints. With a keen edged knife trim off the bottom pair of leaves close to the stem, then make a clean cut below the joint. Allow the cutting several hours in which to heal over the wound. Prepare some soil put through a quarter-inch sieve, one part leaf soil, one part loam, one part sand, mix together, and fill two-inch pots fairly firm with it, with a layer of sand on the surface.

\*Extract from the essay that won first prize in the competition held during the past summer for prizes offered by Mr. R. B. Whyte, of Ottawa, and Mr. Hermann Simmers, of Toronto.

First of all put some rough leaves or fibrous turf in the bottom of the pot. Before inserting the cuttings give the pots a good sprinkling, using a fine rose can. Put one, two and three geraniums in a pot and about an inch and a half deep. Have a small wood label in each pot with the name of the variety, date of insertion, and other useful information.

Set the pots outside in a cool frame on a bed of ashes, and use a glass sash or window over them in case of rain coming too early. Keep them moist and shaded from sunshine, and also let them have air to avoid decay, or the cuttings becoming damp. In four to six weeks roots will be formed and repotting into two and three inch pots, according to their vigor, will be necessary. Use the soil recommended for propagation. Put the little plants, all nicely labelled, into individual pots in a sunny window and shade for several days till the roots become active.

#### WINTER TREATMENT

In winter the best treatment is to give them all possible light, water them about once a week and clean off any bad leaves. Turn the plants occasionally. The temperature should not go below thirty-eight degrees. In March pinch or break off the top of the plant, to induce side growths and then obtain a bushy geranium. Repot into four and five inch pots. Keep the plants well watered, and admit air when possible at mid-day.

Manure for hot beds should be uniform in composition and texture.