

GARDEN AND ORCHARD.

TOADS IN THE GARDEN.

We hear and see a great deal about protecting the insect-destroying birds; we even see occasionally a piece in the agricultural journals headed "A Plea for the Mole," followed by an argument to prove that the villainous little blind creature does not injure vegetation; but we seldom hear or read of the services rendered the farmer and horticulturist by the despised little toad, while we will venture the assertion that in any given area in this country the toads destroy more insects injurious to vegetation than do the birds in the same area, and that too without doing any mischief, as the toads live entirely upon insects, while the birds, with few exceptions, do not; and as to the mole, we will guarantee that if his case should come before a jury of intelligent farmers or gardeners, he would be found guilty of criminal destruction of vegetation, and especially of seeds. Not so with the toad, which subsists entirely upon insects. Not only do they subsist upon insects, but they destroy those which the birds cannot reach—those which depredate at night, when we and the birds are asleep. So highly are they appreciated in Europe, that they are there an article of merchandise.

The market gardeners near London, England, purchase toads from the Continent at fourpence each.

A toad put into a hot-bed will effectually protect the plants from the ravages of insects, and a number of them in an ordinary garden will materially reduce the number of insects, and thus protect the plants from their ravages.

So far from participating in the common feeling of contempt for the humble little reptile, we have a profound respect for him on account of his friendly services in aid of our perpetual warfare upon insects injurious to vegetation. Instead of being kicked and trod upon, he should be protected by all good citizens. Any one who will take the trouble to watch a toad for one hour some summer evening, will be astonished at the skill and celerity with which the little apparently slothful creature captures its unwary victims. Very close attention is necessary to see the operation, so quickly its long tongue is whipped out after its prey.

CHILDREN'S GARDENS.

I wish every mother in the country knew the great satisfaction to be derived from the little plots of land the children cultivate as their own. No matter how small, it has a peculiar charm, and its mixed and incongruous plantings often yield astonishing results. No radishes so crisp as those your little son will lay beside your plate, the reward for his toil and care. No flowers so beautiful as those your loving daughter brings in some bright spring morning, nurtured and tended by her own hands. The earliest hepatica of the woods grows serenely in the shadow of a "May tree," and wild violets flourish in Annie's gentle care. In our home each child has a plot of ground and an apple tree, the fruit of which, always fair and beautiful, is shared generously, and the surplus sold for pocket money. Sometimes an early melon finds its way to our table from the garden of one of our industrious boys, and is praised and appreciated as a reward for his labour.

Little two-year-old has a garden too, and while we try to teach him not to pull up the happy family of flowers and vegetables that thrive there, we delight in his glad murmur as he roams like a true Bohemian in the summer sunshine, saying, "My gardee, my gardee," and taking a whole

potato from the cellar where his restless feet often wander he plants it just deep enough for the hens to pick out, and, nothing daunted, sows a handful of peas over it. But as he grows older he will learn that this is not the road to success, and try to copy the care and vigilance displayed by his elders. Even "Baby Hope" has a little circle filled with sweet wild flowers brought from the woods this spring, "to be ready when she can gather them," the children say—and our eager young botanists are ever ready to search for a new flower to transplant into "Hope's garden." By such innocent pleasures is home made happy and beautiful.—*Ex. Cor.*

INSECT REMEDIES.

As timely to the advent of the insect corps, we present the following remedies, most of which we have tried and found efficacious:

For the striped cucumber bug, so destructive to melon, squash and cucumber vines, light sprinklings daily of fine soot from the fireplace and hand picking. The bug will be found secreted under the clods, etc., near the vines in the day time, and may be crushed between the fingers. Fresh gas house lime scattered around the hills helps to keep them off. It should not be put upon the plants.

For the little flea beetle or cabbage and tobacco plants use soot, as above, or fish brine sprinkled over the plants. Also plaster and phosphate.

For the cabbage worm or larvæ of the cabbage butterfly, soot, cayenne pepper, copperas water, salt, plaster, and incessant hand picking. Also a ruthless war on the butterflies. This pest is fearfully on the increase in our midst, and calls for stringent preventive or exterminating measures.

For the Colorado beetle, another very troublesome insect, London purple, Paris green, both with caution and after every rain. Ceaseless hand picking is often the best remedy.

For the squash bug, hand picking and crushing.

For the cut worm, lime, salt, thorough drainage, swine.

For the tobacco fly, cobalt, turkeys, hand picking, night fires. The latter might be made very effective in cases of hurtful insects that fly at night.—*Rural Messenger.*

SUNLIGHT AND FRAGRANCE.

Attention has recently been called to the marvellous fragrance of the flowers and fruits that grow in Siberia and the more northern portions of the various countries of Europe. The few fruits that grow there are also very highly flavoured. The like is also true of the flowers and fruits of the upper peninsula of Michigan. The finest strawberries found on this continent are raised on the southern shore of Lake Superior. They are of very large size and have a very high flavour, and are so fragrant as to render them desirable for the aroma they throw off. Observation shows that continued sunlight produces aroma and high flavour the same as a high temperature produces the quality of sweetness. In a high latitude the days during summer are very long, and it is at this season that the flowers blossom and the fruits ripen. The addition of two or three hours of sunshine has a wonderful effect in producing flavour and fragrance. The quantity of essential oil that can be extracted from flowers grown in Sweden is much larger than can be obtained from the same kind of flowers raised in the south of Europe. Flowers raised in houses are less fragrant than those raised out of doors, as they get less light. It is believed in England that the electric light may be made useful not only in increasing the growth of plants, but in adding to the fragrance

and flavour of fruits subjected to its influence. Experiments already made show that flowers grown in houses lighted by electricity during the night are much more fragrant than those which grow out of doors.

PREPARING FOR WINTER FLOWERS.

Those who have small greenhouses or cultivated flowers in their windows, have set out their geraniums and other quick-growing plants for the summer. Many make the mistake of taking up these plants in autumn, after they have grown all the season in the open ground, and potting them, to be replaced in the window or greenhouse. The result will always be "long-legged," misshapen plants, which, instead of blooming satisfactorily during the winter, will take a long time to recover, and never be worth as much as new plants from cuttings. Such plants may be prepared for, this month and next, and with very little trouble. Of course those who have greenhouses with appliances for propagating need no directions, but many lovers of flowers have to content themselves with such plants as may be grown in the windows of the living rooms. These become attached to their plants, and when one is set out in the bed they expect it back again. When such a plant goes out, consider it thrown away, for it may as well be, and set about replacing it. The following method will give a few plants with little trouble. Take a common store box, such as a starch or soap-box, knock off both cover and bottom, and if need be strengthen it with extra nails. Tack over this a piece of cotton cloth and the frame will be ready. Select a place where the soil is light and sandy, or if the ground is all stiff, spade in some sand or coal-dust to make it light and open, and place the frame over it. If cuttings of geraniums, cupheas, verbenas, or other such plants are placed in the soil and covered with the frame they will soon take root and form nice specimens, which, when they begin to grow, may be potted and be ready for winter. If the frame is where it will be shaded in the middle of the day, all the better; if not, it may be tilted a little when the sun is very hot, to give ventilation and prevent overheating.—*American Agriculturist.*

COMPOST FOR THE GARDEN.

Vegetables need a cool, loamy, moist soil, deeply broken and thoroughly pulverized. All observant Southern gardeners have noticed the beneficial effects upon the soil produced by the very heavy mulch used on Irish potatoes after it becomes partially decomposed and incorporated with the soil. It darkens its colour, thus increasing its power of absorbing heat; it improves the mechanical condition of the soil, rendering it more pulverulent, and enabling it to better absorb and retain moisture; it adds to the supply of plant food in the soil whatever the substance used for the mulch contains, and in a readily available form.

Now, let us learn a lesson from this observation, and utilize otherwise wasted material in preparing a most valuable vegetable compost for the garden.

Select some convenient point readily accessible from the garden and house. Dig out a space ten feet in diameter and two feet deep. Into this pit collect the weeds, grass, trash and scrapings of the walks in the garden, sweepings of the yard, scrapings from the fence corners, and occasionally scrapings about the horse and cow lots. When any considerable quantity of green vegetable matter is thrown into the pit, sprinkle air-slacked lime over it and throw in a layer of earth. Empty all slops from the house and kitchen over the heap. Throw the ashes and soap-suds, sweepings from