

Fall-Work with the Flowers

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WHEN October comes to tint all growing things, it almost seems as if nature wished to remind man that we can still enjoy a vast amount of bloom indoors during the winter months if we would only pay a little attention to the needs of our plants.

Plants intended for winter blooming indoors, which have been summered out in the garden or on a shady corner of the verandah, will now be indoors. Give them all the air possible on fine days, for the change from outdoors is a trying one, no matter how vigorous the plants may be. With proper attention and atmosphere they should thrive, but how few do at all well. Perhaps you have tried to grow them and had your disappointments, despite your best efforts and attention. Perhaps you put the blame on the furnace, presuming that the gas killed them, as surely it would, but it was not really the gas, but lack of humidity in the atmosphere of the rooms, which was the cause of your failure.

The active root hairs of a plant are almost aquatic and must always be in contact with an adequate supply of water.

The stem and leaves are aerial, but their behavior and form are largely determined by the water in the air; that is, the humidity. The water supply is used by the root hairs, while the water loss is the result of evaporation by the leaves. The humidity of the air exerts a direct control upon the amount of water evaporated by the leaves, and it is evident that the evaporation will be greater when the air is dry. If this evaporation or water loss is greater than the supply, curling, drooping, and wilting of the leaves ensues.

Even when you water your plants faithfully, the excessively dry atmosphere of the house is apt to overwork them, by drawing up moisture through the stem and leaves, for dry heated air will take up what moisture it requires from every possible source. When you consider that the humidity outdoors on a summer day is about seventy per cent. you will appreciate what an unnaturally dry atmosphere obtains in our homes in winter, where if any water at all is evaporated it will be at the most but a few quarts, with a resultant hu-

midity of about eighteen to twenty per cent.

By all means evaporate water freely, both for your own good as well as for that of your plants, by keeping a pot or kettle of water steaming on the heater or by pans on the radiators. Another way to accomplish the same result is to elevate your pots on empty thread reels and fill the saucers with water. Elevated in this way, the air is able to pass through the hole in the bottom of the pot, which would not be the case if the pot were stood in the saucer when it was filled with water.

PROTECTING THE OUTDOOR PLANTS

If we would have the best from the outdoor garden next season we must give it some attention in the way of mulching the various beds and borders to help the plants withstand the rigors of winter. While it is not advisable to give any protection to the beds and borders until severe frosts are expected, yet it is advisable to get the mulching material ready. Strawy manure and leaves, held in place with pine boughs, make excellent material for this purpose.

As soon as the early frosts have cut down the plants, clean them off, and get out all the weeds. These latter pests are sure to drop some seeds that will give you trouble next spring. When cleaning off the old stalks of the plants, sever them four or five inches above the ground. This allows them to ripen better and prepare for the winter's rest. Carry away the old rubbish that you clean off and burn it. Don't use it for protection during the winter, for it is sure to contain larvae and cocoons of insects, which would hatch out in the warm days of next spring and give you

lots of trouble, to say nothing of the damage to the plants.

TREATMENT OF BULBS

Gladioli, Dahlias, Cannas, Caladium, and other tuberous subjects should be lifted and placed in a sunny place for a few days, when they should be stored in a frost-proof shed or cellar until the spring. When storing these roots and bulbs, artificial heat must be avoided or they will be spoiled. A temperature of from thirty-eight to forty-five degrees is the most suitable for these subjects during the winter.

Roses will require protection during the winter. If they have made long growths that are likely to whip with the wind, cut them back about one-third of their length. Protection may be afforded (if the bed is a round one) by running a length of wire netting round it and filling the centre with dried leaves, on which may be put some pine boughs or other brush to prevent them blowing about. Another method applicable to more isolated plants is to tie straw securely round them and earth them up around the base. Crimson ramblers and other roses growing on walls should be taken down and buried with soil to the depth of a foot or more.

Short Hints on Planting

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Do not begrudge labor in digging a hole for planting any tree or plant. Dig it deep and wide enough so that the roots can be spread out nicely over a surface of fine soil. Loosen the soil a spade's depth below where the roots are to be placed. The terminal points of all roots should point downward or in a horizontal direction, not upwards. Set the tree or plant a little deeper in its new



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