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Take Care of Old Trees.

ONE of the most precious possessions of park and garden is some noble tree hallowed perhaps with tender memories, or is prized for its beauty. The monarch in its old age is a prey to disease, and no effort should be spared, if the tree is saved, to arrest what must be in a brief space of time, absolute collapse. Decay is not pleasant anywhere, and is both harmful and objectionable. There is one great source of decay—starvation of the roots, which is the outcome of an impoverished soil. The writer has more than once pointed out that such trees as Beech and Horsechestnut that root close to the surface of the soil—quite different to the Oak—may often be invigorated by covering the ground with a few inches of good soil or short manure. Artificial watering during prolonged drought, when thoroughly done, is also very helpful to the tree. Trees with large masses of branches are frequently seen thinly furnished with foliage and altogether sickly owing to unhealthy or insufficient roots. The balance between the top and bottom has been destroyed. To restore it in some degree the top growth may be reduced by pruning out and shortening back branches here and there, wherever it can be done without spoiling the appearance of the trees.

This requires careful judgment, but some old and sickly trees may certainly be restored in a measure by this help. It is of no value in the case of trees with decayed trunks, nor with those like the Oak, which will not break from old wood.

Old trees with secure branches can often be saved from destruction by fastening the main branches together or to the trunk. The practice of putting iron, as is often done in England, round the branch, is a mistake. The iron prevents the branch expanding naturally, and ultimately chokes it. A better way is to use a strong iron rod with a plate at the end, and instead of supporting the branch by encircling it, a hole is bored right through the centre of it, through which the rod is pushed from the other side. In this way the weight is borne by the iron plate, which should be removed sufficient bark, be allowed to fit close to the wood. New bark will gradually close over and hide the plate, and instead of an ugly collar cutting into the wood, the only evidence of artificial aid is the rod coming from the inner side of the branch.

Branches or snags that have to be removed should be sawn off close to the trunk or larger branch from which they spring. When a stump even not more than a few inches long is left, the new bark and wood are unable to close over it, and the wood ultimately decays, and acts as a medium for moisture and fungoid diseases. A coating of liquid tar over the wound, renewed once or twice until the bark has closed over it, is a sure protection against these evils.

There is no hope for trees that have decayed in the centre, but by filling up the holes in the earlier stages of decay and thus keeping out moisture, their term of life may be lengthened. Large holes may be filled with cement, the surface to be made water-tight and tarred over.

Horticultural Exhibition.

GREAT interest is being shown in horticultural circles in Great Britain in the international horticultural exhibition which will take place in the grounds of the Chelsea Hospital, London, next July. His Majesty the King who is patron has promised not only to open what is hoped to be a world-famous display of flowers, but to give a trophy of the value of \$550 in one of the principal classes. The orchid tent will be a fairyland of priceless flowers, and crowds of horticulturists from over the seas are expected to be present. Many of England's most famous homes will be thrown open by their owners, and the Lord Mayor of London will hold a reception of welcome at the historic Mansion House.

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