

WORK IN THE HORTICULTURAL DEPARTMENTS FOR MARCH AND APRIL.

ORCHARD AND NURSERY.

Planting, in some localities, can be done, so soon as the frost is out of the ground; but at the North, generally, it is better to wait until next month. A young tree, put into cold soil, and exposed to drying March winds, has a hard struggle.

Shrivelled Trees, that have become dried during transportation, are to be placed in a trench, and covered, root and branch, with fine, mellow earth. In about a week they will be found to have regained their original plumpness, when they may be taken out, properly pruned, and planted.

Heeling in should be done with trees as soon as they arrive, if there is to be the least delay in planting. The importance of keeping the roots of trees from drying cannot be overestimated.

Grafting may be done first on the cherry, and later on the plum. Apples and pears do better if left until the buds commence to start.

Cherry Stones, for stocks, start very early; plant as soon as the frost is out of the ground.

Stocks budded last year are to be headed back.

Evergreen Seeds—Many inquire about raising evergreens from seed, and some complain of failure. It is useless to look for success unless some provision is made for shading the young plants. On a small scale, the following plan, suggested by Meehan, is said to work well. "A common board frame is placed over a carefully-prepared bed of light mould, and covered with shaded, hot bed sash. Under each corner of the frame is placed a prop, raising the bottom about three inches above the surface of the ground. The advantages of this contrivance will at once be appreciated when we consider that the most essential conditions in raising evergreen seedlings are a moist atmosphere, protection from the rays of the sun, and, at the same time, a free circulation of the air through the plants."

FRUIT GARDEN.

Strawberries may be set as soon as the ground can be worked. Take the country through, and the Wilson will be found to be the favorite; there are better varieties, but this is the most generally reliable. Set the plants eighteen inches apart, in rows two feet apart; keep the ground clean, remove all runners and blossom buds, and next spring there will be a good crop.

Blackberries and Raspberries are best set in autumn. Spring planting should be done as early as the season will admit. Cut the canes down to the surface of the soil. Blackberries are usually put in

rows eight feet apart, and raspberries from four to six feet, according to the variety.

Grape Vines.—Prune those that were not attended to last autumn as soon as the frost is out of them. Keep young vines to a single cane, or two canes, until good strong ones, half an inch in diameter, are secured as the basis of the vine.

Currant Cuttings should have been put out last fall, but they will do fairly if set now. Pack the earth well about their lower ends.

Currant and Gooseberry bushes start early, and should be transplanted as soon as practicable. Prune those that need it.

KITCHEN GARDEN.

Preparation and forwarding are the order here. Every one likes to be just a little ahead of his neighbors with early crops, and if one markets his produce it is well known that a few days in earliness makes a great difference in the receipts.

Hot-beds are of great use in getting seedlings, and there is scarcely any subject concerning which we have more letters of inquiry. The requisites for making a hot-bed are boards, glazed sashes, manure in a state of active fermentation, and a supply of light, rich soil. The old way of making a manure stack on the top of the ground, and putting a frame over it, is well-nigh abandoned. It is more economical of manure and other materials to make an excavation. All the operations depend upon the size of the sashes. Six feet by three is the regular size, but any other will do. Select a well drained place, facing to the south, and sheltered by a fence, building, or hedge, from prevailing cold winds; make an excavation two feet deep, of a width and length to accommodate the sash. Drive down stakes, and board up the pit, having the boards at the rear 18 inches, and those in the front 12 inches above the surface. The manure to be used should be in a state of active fermentation—a condition that may be secured by turning over stable manure two or three times, at intervals of a few days, according to the temperature, watering it if it becomes dry. A good rule is to form the manure into a compact, conical heap, and when it "smokes" turn it over. Fill the trench with fermenting manure, pack or tread it rather firmly, cover it with six inches of light, rich soil, and put the sashes in place. Put a thermometer in the soil, and when the heat declines from 100°, the sowing may be done. Sow Tomatoes, Egg Plant, Peppers, Early Cabbages, etc., in rows four inches apart. The soil covering the seeds must be both rich and light. Where plants are forwarded to the best advantages, a milder bed is in readiness, to which the plants are transplanted, when large enough to handle.

Cold Frames, properly arranged, are nearly as quick as hot-beds. Place a

frame covered with sash over well-prepared soil. Let it be well exposed to the sun during the day, but before its heat declines in the afternoon, cover the sash with mats, in this way a patch of warm soil will be secured, in which seeds will germinate rapidly. Airing and other care must be observed, as for hot-beds.

Preparation of the soil must be pushed as fast as its condition will allow. Use an abundance of manure, and spade or plow deeply.

Sods are most admirable for hot-bed work. Lay a good bit of pasture sod, grass side down, and cut it into pieces three inches square. Plant in the soil of these pieces seeds of such plants as do not bear transplanting kindly—cucumbers, squashes, and the whole of that family, corn, and even early potatoes. Put these sods in the hot-bed, or cold frame; the young plants will fairly revel in the fresh earth, and at transplanting time the sod can be placed out without disturbance of the roots.

Window Boxes are to be commended to those who operate on a small scale. A box four inches deep, filled with light, rich soil, and placed in a sunny kitchen window, will afford early plants for the family garden. Have a similar box in reserve for the young plants, when they need transplanting.

Cabbages and Cauliflowers that have been wintered over in cold frames may now be fully exposed.

Roots.—Dig parsnips and salsify before any growth commences.

Asparagus and Rhubarb Beds, that have been covered during the winter, may have the coarse manure removed, and the finer portions forked in.

Peas.—Sow for early crop, putting the seed at least three or four inches deep. Try the dwarfs.

Potatoes.—Plant early sorts; it is best to have some litter at hand, to draw over in case of frost.

Onions.—Potato and top onions, as well as sets, are to be put in as soon as the soil can be worked. Plant 4 or 5 inches apart, in rows a foot distant.

Seed Raising.—All roots saved to produce seed should be set out early. In warm and dry soils, this may be done this month. Soil may be drawn towards them, to protect them from frosts, which is to be removed after danger is over.

Hardy Vegetables include carrots, beets, spinach, salsify, onions, leeks, early turnips, &c.; these may be sown for the first crop whenever the soil and season will allow. Sow in rows fifteen inches apart. Cress and lettuce may be put twelve inches apart. Radishes may be sown broadcast with beets, &c., or have a bed by themselves.

FLOWER GARDEN AND LAWN.

Roads and Walks need thorough work. Drainage is essential, and solidity should