

## Timely Topics for the Amateur Gardener

**J**ANUARY is the half way point between last year's garden and the garden that is to be. You can have a better garden than ever next summer by planning now. In devising improvements, if you have a lawn, or intend to make one, bear in mind that it is equally as important to the general appearance of the home as flower beds and borders, or the trees and shrubs. Some people think it is of even more importance, and like to have their places entirely green without any color to relieve them. Others give their undivided attention to the flower-borders. A few think trees and shrubs are all that is wanted.

Draw a diagram of the home grounds to scale. Don't say "It's too much trouble." It's not, if you approach the work in the right spirit. When you draw the plan, have in mind the effect that the proposed planting will produce in after years.

The home grounds should be modelled after Nature. Freedom from formality is best, but not a copy of Nature in her wildest moods. A lawn dotted with plants and trees in a haphazard, inartistic manner is not desirable, nor is it well to plan a set design drawn according to Euclid, nor are forest conditions what we want, or a tangled wild wood—we should plan a scheme resembling natural conditions, sensibly arranged.

Plan to place the trees and shrubs mostly in groups, seldom alone. Maintain an open expanse of green, and an open outlook. The junctions of the roads and walks should be planted with

shrubs. When the driveways curve, make the curve appear necessary by judicious planting. Arrange the plan so as to beautify waste places. Don't forget the value of planting trees, not only for ornamentation, but also for comfort and protection.

### PLANNING THE KITCHEN GARDEN

Every home should have a kitchen garden. You get better things than money can buy—fresher vegetables, better varieties. At home, one can select the varieties that stand for quality, not those that are grown for their ability to keep or to ship long distances.

Measure accurately the length and breadth of the plot of ground that you intend to devote to the growing of vegetables. Make a diagram of it. Then decide which way the rows should run. Some plants, like corn, potatoes and cucurbits require more space than others. On the diagram, draw a line for every single row that is to be planted and name each crop. In parenthesis, immediately below the name of crop that it is to follow, place the name of each succession crop. A diagram of this kind planned now will be of much value when planting time comes.

### THE GROWING OF HOUSE BULBS

If you took the advice given in our lawn and garden notes for September and October, you will now have a stock of bulbs in pots for bloom during the winter months. The bulbs will flower profusely if given half a chance. Failures are due to improper care and to inexperience on the part of the grower.

The most common fault is in the matter of irregularity in temperature and in watering. Bulbs will not do well in a temperature that is too warm in the day time and too cold at night. The temperature should be more uniform. The soil in the pots should not be allowed to become too dry. Water as often as necessary to keep moist.

### THE WINDOW GARDEN

Window plants are susceptible to cold drafts of zero weather. On cold nights place sheets of newspaper or similar material between the plants and the window.

Keep as moist a temperature as possible around the plants. Spray or syringe the foliage on fine, sunny days. When possible ventilate the room on warm days. This may be done by lowering the top sash of the window and thereby avoiding the entrance of direct drafts on the plants.

### FLOWERS FOR EASTER

With the exercise of a little care and intelligence, the amateur may force flowers for Easter with success. Among the plants that are useful to grow for this purpose are hortensia, the greenhouse spiraea and the freesia. Do not forget that the spiraea must be kept constantly moist. Buy the roots at once, and pot them. In the course of five weeks they may be brought into the warmth. The hydrangea needs similar treatment. Both of these plants require from 10 to 12 weeks to come into flower from the time they start to grow.

## The Cultivation of Hardy Flowering Shrubs

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**T**HE cultivation of hardy, flowering shrubs is worth the serious thought of those interested in that line of horticulture. This branch of floriculture has advanced in equal proportions with any other. The change that has taken place within the last 30 years is immense. At that time the number of varieties was very limited, but now many enterprising nurserymen have added considerably to the list of hardy shrubs, until there is an almost unlimited list at our disposal.

Before considering the use of deciduous shrubs for planting, let me urge on all planters, and on every gardener, the necessity of securing stock from some reliable nurseryman who has the reputation of furnishing good, clean, healthy stock, true to name. Otherwise all the work will go for naught. I have seen many failures in this line through pur-

chasing from unreliable firms who send out stock regardless of its fitness to stand the freezing and thawing they are subjected to in this ever changing climate. The nurseryman will be in strong evidence this spring, because the winter has been so changeable and so mild. Hardy stuff is bound to suffer from so many extreme changes. In my garden I had to gather snow to cover the roots that were exposed to the severe frost—a thing I never had to do before during my long experience in this country.

In starting shrubs I would urge on planters the necessity of beginning in the right way. The ground should be prepared thoroughly. Don't dig a hole half big enough and cram the roots into it. Dig out all the old soil to the depth of at least 16 inches, leaving a little to spare, rather than make a hole

too small. Instead of using the old sour soil, it is better to pay a carter a fair price for good rotten turf that has been stacked up for at least one year. With the addition of a little manure, success is assured.

It may be necessary in some locations to use drainage. In the case of a low, wet place a layer of broken bricks or slate should be put in the bottom. This will prevent the roots from entering the cold, wet soil.

There are several methods of planting, either singly or in groups. The most popular way lately has been in zig-zag borders. When this method is adopted a nice effect is produced. It is especially suitable for covering a fence or other unsightly objects. In this system the shrubs can be graded according to the height they grow. The following is a list of the newest and best