

PLANTS FOR TABLE DECORATION.



THE first essential to plants for this use is perfect cleanliness and freedom from yellow leaves; given this condition and any plant in bloom or out is better than none at all. If the pot is not ornamental, hide it in some way. I attended a banquet recently and on a table was a pot of beautiful white hyacinths, but a quiet investigation proved the pot to be an old tin can wrapped in a sheet of snow white cotton batting, banded down with white ribbon to imitate hoops. Tissue paper can be crimped by drawing through the hands and then arranged in various ways to cover an unsightly pot or can. There are many easy and inexpensive ways of making substitutes for the beautiful jardinières which are always ready, but which all do not happen to have.

One nice way of growing plants for the table is in the low round flaring hanging baskets. When these are placed on the table and the drooping plants arranged over the cloth, it makes a very effective arrangement. Remembering that yellow is one of the best colors to light up, have among the plants some of the beautiful Eclipse abutilon with its pointed leaves of brilliant yellow and green. It is always as beautiful as blossoms, and when in bloom it is exquisite. The small growing varieties of ferns if grown in low pots or on plates are among our best decorative plants, the maidenhair being a general favorite. I have spoken of plants in this connection because it is possible for anyone with even a few plants to have them on the table every day, while comparatively few can use cut flowers every day unless it may be during the summer season.

The arrangement is simply a matter of taste, but care must be taken as to colors, odors, etc., or the effect will be spoiled. Flowers with strong odors are never desirable on a table. One pretty arrangement is to lay a square or oblong piece of looking-glass on the cloth. Trail smilax, ferns or other suitable foliage around the edge and carelessly drop a spray or cluster of flowers on the glass. This is, of course, for the centerpiece; at each end, if the table is long, place a small doily and arrange the same kind of foliage to trail off over the cloth in a gracefully irregular way. Place the salt and pepper set, bonbon dish or other small affairs on the doilies to give them the appearance of being there for use.

Asparagus tenuissimus is a plant which should be universally cultivated for all kinds of decoration; the foliage is like a fern in some ways, although it is a climber like the smilax, and so fine and airy that it seems like a film, but its best point is its durability, as it will keep fresh longer after being cut than almost any other plant.—Farm and Home.