

A Page for Amateur Gardeners

The Summer Garden

Timely Hints on the Planting of Tender Flowers—Some Noble Plants Seldom Seen—Avoid Monotony

By E. T. COOK

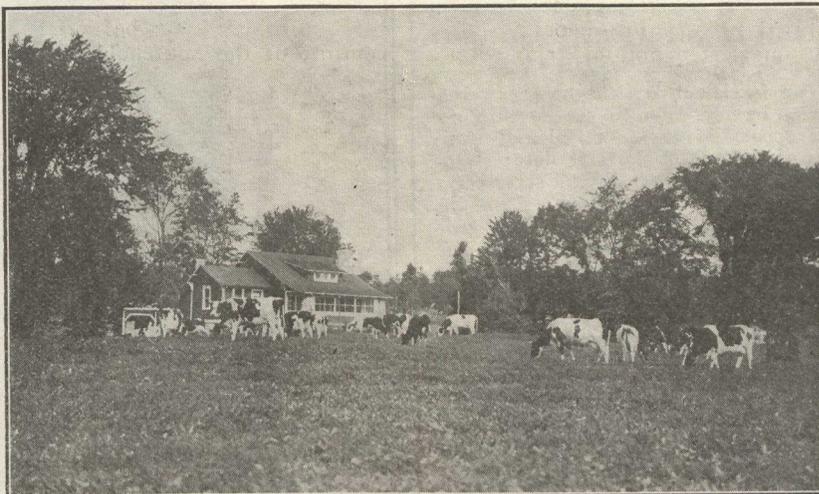
THE weather of the past few days has certainly not sent a thrill of exultation through the heart of the amateur gardener, but, perhaps, the cold spell is for the best. The torrid heat that came suddenly about three weeks ago caused much anxiety and the freezing temperature that followed in time to check a precocious development was generally welcomed. At the time of writing, weather conditions are decidedly wintry, but it is never safe to plant tender flowers until quite the end of the month, meanwhile "hardening" them off to adapt the growth to changed conditions. Many of the failures with tender plants may be traced to hurried development and their sickly shoots are not prepared to face, perhaps, cold nights and piercing east winds. Even in the early days of June when purchasers insist upon receiving strong plants that have not been nurtured in a forcing temperature, this advice applies equally to vegetables and flowers.

One of the cardinal virtues of thoughtful gardening is an avoidance of monotony. There is a certain sameness in the general composition of flower beds or masses of plants, and when repeated year after year an impression is formed that only a few types of plants are capable of supplying effective showing. Large green-houses, conservatories, and general accommodation for tender plants of marked vigour of growth are increasing yearly, and these, during the winter months, may well shelter the few kinds that are mentioned, or, if these cannot be spared wholly for that purpose, a cellar absolutely frost proof may be brought into service.

TUB GARDENING.

A simple form of gardening is appropriately described as "Tub gardening," and it consists of growing certain shrubby flowering plants in tubs and placing them about the garden from early summer until the frosty days. Palms are very beautiful in their cool leafiness, but they are friends we should value more if they were sometimes less in evidence. It is then the flowering shrub steps in, as it were, to give variety a welcome break-away from mere routine. What are these plants? It may well be asked. I shall confine the list to the African Lily or Agapanthus Nerium, better known, perhaps, as Oleander Orange, including Citrons, Abutilous, Myrtles, Veronicas and Hydrangeas. The sweetly scented Cape Geraniums or Pelargoniums might be added, but those named will suffice at first. There is nothing troublesome to overcome in their cultivation, and though the Agapanthus and Abutilon may not be familiar to many, that is no reason why we here should not enjoy these lovely flowers as well as those who have their habitation in other lands. The shrubby plants I have named, as many Canadians well know, are much used in Great Britain, France and Germany, and those who have visited the gardens of Mr. Leopold de Rothschild, New London, England, will recall the great tubs of shrubs, the chief attraction of which are the flowers. Oleanders are grown with great success in the Dominion, and it would be pleasant to see their popularity increased. The cultural details are simplicity itself. Two essentials to success are sunshine and abundant waterings. The bud dropping, so often complained of, is simply the result of a dry soil, which is only necessary when the growth is at rest. A coach-house, entirely frost proof, or a warm shed, will give them the required shelter during winter. When spring comes they should be removed to a glass house of some kind. This encourages the already quickening growth. Early in May cover over the surface of the soil, after it has been renewed to a depth of two or three inches, with the best horse manure, and give water copiously. This treatment applies also to the African Lily, which has the bluest of blue flowers perched in cluster-fashion on a long, soft, green stem. The graceful leaves bending over in the way some Irises are wont to do are an attraction in themselves.

One never tires of this fair flower from Sunny



A Pastoral Scene. Bungalow on Mr. A. T. Hardy's Farm at Brockville.

Africa. Its colour—a true blue—is unfortunately not too common, and when the tubs containing the plants are placed against a dark green, leafy background, there is no doubt about their beauty. It is known botanically as Agapanthus Umbellatus, and a white counterpart exists to the blue, but begin with the type first. I should enjoy seeing this flower as plentiful as the big flaming Canna, and wish that the same could be written of it here as in Europe. "The blue Agapanthus everybody grows in tubs." I had almost forgotten that the plants must be full of roots before a host of flowers comes to greet the summer and fall months, and never stint the water, supplementing it by a dose of liquid manure each week.

OTHER FLOWERING SHRUBS.

There is a class of shrub so easily grown that it is surprising it is not everywhere, the Veronica, and the wine red V-speciosa and the purple V-imperialis are the giants among the speedwells. They are of the same race as the sweet little speedwells that seem to blink in the summer sunshine. These shrub Veronicas will stand even rough usage, but must have shelter from frost, as in the case of the African Lily. Of the Abutilon I shall write little, because as far as I am aware it is very rare, but there is no reason why, as horticulture and an appreciation of fine gardening deepens, these beautiful flowering shrubs should not be grown in tubs by all who wish for striking effects in summer and



The Herbaceous Calceolaria. A Splendid Specimen in Sir Edmund Osler's Conservatory in Rosedale.

fall. The growth is not entrancing, but the wealth of flower bells drooping from the slender stems will captivate the almost callous. These bells are sometimes pure golden yellow and rich crimson, but the shades of colouring are innumerable and never unpleasant. These few notes will, it is hoped, arouse some interest in a class of shrub that is unknown to many, and there is happily small risk of failure if the most ordinary care is taken during the various courses of the plant's growth.

A Popular and Wholesome Vegetable

Notes about the Cabbage Tribe which is not so much understood as it should be

By GEORGE BALDWIN

THE Cabbage is too well known to need description, and constitutes one of our most valuable classes of vegetables. It is eaten in three popular forms, which vary much in respect of their wholesomeness. These forms are: the sliced raw cabbage, plain boiled cabbage, and salted cabbage, or sauerkraut, the favourite dish of the Ger-

mans. In the first form, raw cabbage is sliced fine and eaten with vinegar, either quite cold or hot enough merely to wilt the vegetable. It is one of the lightest and most wholesome foods in existence and cannot be too highly recommended. Boiled cabbage takes longer to digest, and sauerkraut almost as much so as boiled cabbage. The other forms of cabbage, such as the cauliflower, broccoli, kale, etc, supply the epicures of all countries with some of their greatest delicacies.

Much has been written of cabbages, and yet they are strangers to many a garden. I hope that this article will suggest some idea that may prove of practical value. As there are upwards of five hundred kinds of cabbage, it would be difficult to go into detail, so we will confine our remarks to the varieties most suitable for an ordinary garden.

THE SEED.

The first question of importance is the seed. Everyone is aware that to get good results you must procure the best seed. I have found from several years' experience that our seedsmen are reliable, although years ago you could not rely upon them. I do not recommend sowing seed for the very early cabbages, as very few people have the facilities, but the plants can be bought at a reasonable price. For the late or main crop, by all means sow your own seed about the end of May, either in a frame, or in the open, providing you have a warm corner. Sow seeds thinly, about half an inch deep, in rows 4 inches apart; thin out the seedlings in the rows to 4 inches apart. After they have formed the second pair of leaves plant them into their allotted place as soon as large enough.

THE SOIL.

It is a well known fact that cabbage, if properly attended to, will grow on almost any kind of soil, but the best is a rich clay loam. A stiff clay, which is frequently found in the gardens of new houses, where the clay from the cellar is incorporated with mortar, brick rubbish and building material of all descriptions, is certainly not an ideal place for cabbages. It must be cleared at once of all rubbish, and some manure and sand, if possible, must be well dug in. No matter how good the soil is, large quantities of rotten manure are very beneficial. In the event of being unable to procure manure, the next best thing to do is to get about fifty pounds of fertilizer (suitable for vegetables) from your seedsmen, who has it bagged up ready for delivery. Fifty pounds is sufficient for a garden 25 feet wide by 60 feet long. Throw this on broadcast, after the soil has been dug, then rake it in before planting, giving each plant from eighteen inches to two feet of space each way.

INSECTS.

There are two insects which infest the cabbage most, and they are the green cut-worm in the young plants, and the green caterpillar. I find from experience that these two pests are the most troublesome. At the stage when the plants are