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PLANTS FROM CUTTINGS

Plant Propagation as Described by a Master Hand.

Be Your Own Developer of Geraniums—Light Fall Pruning of Orchards Is Safe—The Barberry Hedge a Spreader of Rust in Grains.

(Contributed by Ontario Department of Agriculture, Toronto.)

Toward the end of the summer, the amateur flower grower often wonders how the stock of geraniums in the flower border can be increased and preserved by some other means than by taking up the old plants in the autumn; the last named method not having, perhaps, proved successful in past seasons. By starting fairly early, toward the end of August, before cold chilly nights appear, a nice supply of young plants, more especially of all kinds of geraniums of the flowering kind, or those having fragrant leaves, or even the bronze or silver leaved kinds, can be had by starting cuttings or slips of these plants. First of all obtain a shallow box about three inches deep, ten or twelve inches wide, and from twelve to twenty-four inches in length; an empty huddle (fish) box will very well. It should have some small holes bored through the bottom for drainage. Pack this box firmly with moist, clean, gritty sand; sand that will make good stone mortar will do. Then take the terminal or top part of the young growth of plants about four or five inches in length, each shoot or cutting having from four to six joints where leaves are produced. Make the base of the cutting just below one of these nodes or leaf joints, making a clean cut with a sharp knife flat across. Cut off some of the lower leaves, leaving two or three leaves at the top. Cut off all bloom buds and blossoms where possible. Make a hole or drill in the wet sand deep enough to set fully the length of stem of cuttings in the sand. Water them well once, and keep the sand moist until cuttings are rooted, which should be in five or six weeks' time. The box can be set out of doors in partial shade until the first week in September when they can be taken into the window. When cuttings have roots about an inch in length dig them carefully from the sand without injuring the roots and pot them singly into small 2½ inch pots or set them about two inches apart in well drained shallow boxes in a soil made up of one part sand, one part leaf mould, and about six parts of light loamy soil enriched with one part of dry pulverized cow manure from the pasture field. This last is one of the best possible fertilizers for soil for pot plants. Set the young plants in the window in a temperature of 60 to 70 degrees Fahr. an ordinary house temperature. Salvia, Ageratum, Lady Washington Geraniums, Fuchsias, Iresine, Lobelia and many other plants can be started from cuttings in this way.—The late Wm. Hunt, O. A. College, Guelph.

Light Fall Pruning Is Safe.

Light pruning in fall is permissible, but heavy pruning is dangerous and likely to result in serious damage from winter killing, especially if the succeeding winter is severe. The injury is caused by drying out of the cut area and may be prevented by covering all wounds of any size with a good covering of paint made from pure lead and oil. Do not use prepared paints, as these contain injurious benzine or turpentine dryers. To make an effective covering it will be necessary to give not less than two coats, because one coat will not prevent checking and drying of green wood. Coal tar makes an excellent wound covering and is easily applied. This matter of covering wounds made in fall or early winter is frequently slighted by orchard men, but the writer has seen serious damage result from neglect of this precaution that he feels justified in warning fruit growers with regard to the practice. In experimental trials in the College apple orchard, varieties so hardy as Duchess of Oldenburg, Wolf River, Snow and Scott's Winter have suffered very serious injury following November pruning with the cuts left unprotected. The wounds dry out around the edges and by spring the dead area is greatly enlarged, frequently extending down the trunk or branch for a foot or more. The dead bark comes away later leaving a large dead area, detrimental to the parts above and certain also to decay later.

It is not likely that injury would follow the cutting of branches below an inch in size unless many were removed and there probably would be no necessity for covering such wounds. All above this size, however, should be thoroughly protected.—J. W. Crow, O. A. College, Guelph.

Barberry Hedge Spoiled Ten Crops.

Hundreds and hundreds of instances can be cited to show that the common barberry is the most important factor in the spread of rust in northwest states. In a Government bulletin on rust and barberry, Dr. C. E. Stakman of Minnesota University Farm relates the experience of a farmer at Crystal Bay, Lake Minnetonka, Minn., who had a barberry hedge of 635 bushes. He had tried to grow oats on his farm for ten years, but each year the black stem rust destroyed almost all the grain. Then one spring he destroyed the hedge before the bushes had become rusted. Ten days before the harvest the field was examined thoroughly and no stem rust could be found. The yield and quality proved to be excellent. It was the first time in ten years that a crop had been grown successfully on that farm. Every land owner should begin early in the spring to destroy the barberry for the protection of grain crops.

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