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Garden and Flowers.

Pussy Willow.

O prim little pussies, so straight in a row,
Wee tails curled up, and wee heads bowed low,
You're asleep in your cradles, a-swing o'er the stream
And you're dreaming, a wonderful sweet little dream.

By-and-by, when the south wind's soft breath steals the snow,
And from haunts, the arbutus comes dallying slow;
When the crows in the elm hold a solemn debate,
And the blue-bird's sweet heart is trilled out to his mate,

Then, gray little pussies, you'll wake in surprise,
And blink all the sleepiness out of your eyes;
And some lovely morning when the woodpecker taps,
He'll find you all dressed in your yellow plumed caps.

Getting the Garden Ready.

Spring gardening operations are generally begun early in the season because of the enthusiasm which takes possession of the lovers of flowers at that time. In this country it is seldom possible to do really satisfactory work in the garden before the middle of May. Often it is necessary to wait until the 20th of the month. Bear in mind that it does not pay to be in too great a hurry to begin.

The first thing to do is to decide on the size and location of the beds. The simpler the form the more satisfactory the result. Elaborate work in making a flower-bed is sure to call attention to its details, and the flowers thus become accessories to the general plan, not the chief factors in it, as they should be. I would not advise wide beds; it is difficult to take proper care of them. They should be of a width that will allow you to work to the middle of them from each side.

The first thing to do in the line of active garden work is the spading of the beds. Throw up the soil to the depth of at least a foot. Never be satisfied with simply scratching over the surface with a rake. You cannot grow good flowers in that way. Loosen and mellow the soil so that the roots of plants will find no difficulty in penetrating it and reaching down to a depth where there is likely to be permanent moisture.

Do not attempt to pulverize the soil as fast as you spade it up. You cannot do that then. It will break apart into little lumps, but this does no good. Leave it just as thrown up from the spade for three or four days for surplus water to drain out of it. The sun and air will have a mellowing effect on it. After exposure to the elements it will crumble readily under the application of the hoe. Do not be satisfied with it until you have it as fine and mellow as it is possible to make it. More seed fails to germinate from being sown in lumpy soil than from any one other reason.

Few soils are naturally so rich that they do not require the addition of some kind of fertilizer. While it is true that fairly good plants can be grown in ordinary soil, it is equally true that really fine ones cannot be grown unless they are fed on rich food. You must aim, therefore, to secure the most perfect development possible, and this development must go forward steadily, and as rapidly as is consistent with the health and vigor of the plant. This cannot be done unless you supply it with all the elements of plant-life during the early stages of its growth.

Those who live in city or village will not find it an easy matter to obtain well-rotted cow manure, which is the only kind of barnyard fertilizer I would advise any one to make use of in the flower-garden. A most excellent substitute for it can be pro-

cured at the stores where agricultural goods are sold. There are many kinds of commercial fertilizers on the market, and nearly all are good. Let the dealer in your locality select the kind for you, and advise the proportion in which it should be used. Work it into the soil well, that it may be evenly distributed.

Many amateur gardeners make the mistake of having the paths between the beds so narrow that it is difficult to get about without trampling down the branches which reach over the edge of them. Four feet is none too wide.

In locating your plants be sure that you understand their habits, and are able to assign them their places intelligently. Keep the tall-growing kinds to the rear, where they will serve as a background for those of lower growth, and so graduate them in the beds that those given places in the immediate foreground will be those of nearly creeping habit, like the Portulaca or Verbena.

Every gardener ought to provide himself at the beginning of the season with an outfit of tools, consisting of a hoe, an iron rake, a transplanting trowel, and a weeding-hook. The best hoe for general use is one shaped like a V, with a handle fitting into a socket in the middle of it. This gives you practically two hoes in one—one having a wide blade, the other a point. This point enables you to work close to the plants without running the risk of cutting them off, as you are likely to do with a wide-bladed hoe. The best weeder is claw-shaped, and uproots weeds with great ease and dispatch. You can do more with it in half an hour than you can do with your hands in a day, and do it without much effort. It stirs the soil to the depth of an inch or two while pulling weeds, thus answering a double purpose.

In making flower-beds it is not advisable to elevate them above the surrounding level. Raised beds shed rain, and in consequence dry out more rapidly than level ones.

If the soil is hard and clayey, add sand, old mortar—anything that will have a tendency to make it lighter and more porous. A comparatively open soil will stand drought much better than a hard and compact one.

A Garden at No Cost.

In this article I want to tell people how they can have a garden that will be decidedly novel in its make-up, and will cost them nothing except the work and time of making it. The idea is to have a garden of native plants—plants obtained from the woodside, the pasture and the woodland. This can be done with but little trouble.

To make such a garden a success you must endeavor to give the plants you bring to it from the fields and forests a soil similar to that in which they originally grew, and to so place them that original conditions may be imitated as nearly as possible. By this I mean that shade-loving plants should be afforded shelter from the sun and that those which grew in moist places should be planted, if possible, where their roots can have more moisture than they would get if given a place on a knoll, or an otherwise exposed location, while those which are not particular as to the positions they occupy can be used any and everywhere.

Most native plants easily adapt themselves to conditions quite unlike those under which they formerly grew, but some of the most desirable sorts, like the Ferns and the Trilliums, insist on having proper attention paid to their fondness for shade, and will stubbornly refuse to grow if this is ignored.

Of course, if you plan your native garden on anything but the smallest scale it will be necessary for you to obtain considerable soil from the native haunts of the plants you use in order to make sure of their doing well. This may involve a little expense if you are not the owner of a