

RHUBARB.



HE garden rhubarb, or pie plant, is a perennial of the same natural family as the common dock. The varieties now cultivated are hybrids and have supplanted the original species, *Rheum rhabonticum*, *palmatum*, and *undulatum*, excelling them in size, earliness and delicacy of flavor. The best sorts are the Early, which is of but medium size; Myatt's Linnæus, rather early, and yielding large crops of large leaves, and the best flavored of all, Myatt's Victoria, which is two weeks later; stalks very large and good; Downing's Colossal, and Cahoon's Mammoth. very large varieties of good flavor.

Rhubarb is remarkable for the quantity of phosphates and soda it extracts from the earth. Crude soda might be added to the soil. Guano and bone dust are very beneficial. Rhubarb succeeds best in a rich, deep, rather light loam and in a situation open to the air and light. It may be raised from seed, but thus grown, sports into new varieties. It is best propagated by dividing the roots, reserving a bud to each piece. These may be set about two inches deep, in rows three feet apart, and from eighteen to thirty inches (according to the sort) in the row. All the culture required is to keep the surface soil light and free from weeds. The plantation may be made in the fall, after the leaves are killed by frost, and protected by litter, or as early in the spring as the weather and soil permit. It should not be disturbed after growth commences. Pluck no leaves the first year, after which the crop will be abundant. Make a new plantation about once in five years. If a plant or two in summer dies out, as it is apt to do in the South, it is best to remove next autumn the old plant, together with the soil in which it grew, and supply fresh soil. New plants to reset the vacancy can be obtained by uncovering an old crown and cutting from it a bud with a piece of root attached.

To obtain the largest product, the flower-stems should be broken off when they appear, for the plant is weakened by permitting it to seed. A yearly surface dressing of well-rotted manure should be given, for the stalks to be good must be quickly grown.

This plant is forced by placing a large flower-pot over the roots, and covering with stable manure. The more common way is to surround the plant with a small barrel without a head; a cover is placed over it at night and in cold days, and it is then surrounded with a pile of stable manure built up in as sharp a cone as it can be made to form. If the root is good, it will soon fill the barrel with shoots. The plant should be permitted to rest after this crop through the season, and others be selected for the purpose next year. This operation at the North, is common enough, but at the South it is generally death to the plant.—White's Gardening.