

The Culture of Sweet Peas

J. H. Bowman, Elmira, Ont.

THE sweet pea is one of the most popular of annual flowers, and deservedly so. I know of no other flower that will yield so much beautiful bloom over so long a period.

Disease has been very prevalent during the past few years, and appears to be increasing each season. The disease, commonly known as streak, is said by some authorities to be caused by root rot fungus. Light to dark brown streaks appear on the lower parts of the stem and on the leaves. The points of the shoots are often abnormally thick and of a yellowish color. The flowers often come malformed and are usually very poor in color, thin and flimsy. The stems are also weak.

Whatever the cause may be, I am convinced, after three years' careful observation and experiment, that heavy dressings of animal manure encourage the development of streak. If your soil is in fair condition, I wouldn't use any animal manure at all, but would advise the use of a phosphate and potash fertilizer.

Those authorities who hold that "streak disease" is caused by root rot fungus, *Thulavia basicola*, advise disinfecting the soil by one of the following methods: By heating to two hundred and twelve degrees F. This is hardly practicable where any quantity of soil is to be treated. By soaking with formalin—one per cent. solution, one part, to twelve and one-half gallons of water. By making holes all over the ground, twelve inches apart and ten inches deep, dropping half an ounce of petrol in each, and closing immediately to keep vapor in. This disinfection should be done at least two weeks before sowing or planting. Some writers also advise soaking the seed the night before sowing in permanganate of potash, a half-ounce to a gallon of water.

Dig your trenches about two feet wide and twelve to eighteen inches deep. Don't use any animal manure unless your soil is in very poor condition. After you have worked up the soil, dust on the following fertilizer, and rake in thoroughly: Two ounces bone meal, two ounces superphosphate, two ounces sulphate of potash per square yard.

It is important to get your sweet pea seeds in as early in the season as possible. Sweet peas do best if they have an opportunity to make good root development before hot weather sets in. Sow seeds in two rows, one foot apart, and three inches apart in the row. They may be thinned later to about six inches apart.

A trellis or support of wire netting or string should be provided before the plants make any tendrils. Sweet peas

never grow away so freely if the support is not provided in time.

After the plants are up a few inches, they should be cultivated thoroughly, and this cultivation should be kept up through the season at least once a week. The Buco cultivator is an excellent tool for this purpose.

If you have room for but twelve varieties, the following (selected as the best of over fifty Spencer varieties I grew last season) are recommended: Elfrida Pearson, blush; Etta Dyke, white; Hercules, pink; Mrs. Routzahn or Gladys Burt, cream pinks; Mrs. R. Hallam, deep cream pink; Clara Curtis, cream; Nettie Jenkins, lavender; Maud Holmes or King Edward Spencer, crimson; Queen of Norway, mauve; Nubian, maroon; Mrs. C. W. Breadmore, picotee pink on cream ground; Thos. Stevenson or Edna Unwin Improved, orange scarlet.

Making Flower Beds

P. D. Powe, Cainsville, Ont.

Making the beds for garden annuals is one of the most important steps to be taken in the getting of good flowers. In the city, where manure is hard to obtain, the scrapings from the road are good if mixed with a little prepared fertilizer (obtainable from all seed dealers) and worked into any fairly good garden soil. Where manure

is plentiful and soil abundant, a good bed may be made up of one-third manure, well rotted, and if the soil is dry, one-fifth sand. Remember, the richer the beds the better the plants if you can keep the weeds down.

When we have our soil well worked in a pile we must decide what shape our bed will take and its size. This depends greatly on experience. If you are not an expert and a true judge of beauty, you had better stick to the plain square, round, diamond or oval bed, and not try any of the more complicated designs. Leave these to the florist or landscape gardener.

The size of the bed should be determined by how much land you have at your disposal. We can only say that one large bed is far more beautiful and artistic than several small beds.

These points decided, turn again to your compost heap and after spading the bed you have laid out wheel your prepared soil upon it and with a rake round it up and make it to the size and form decided on. Remove all grass, weeds, stones and other matter, and make the whole firm and smooth, gently sloping towards the edges of the bed. Long, narrow beds may be made in the same manner at the foot of a trellis or along the porch, where vines may be planted. These beds are best prepared as soon in the spring as the ground is ready to work.

When trees are starting leaf take a stick and make shallow lines in the beds. Sow



An Arch of Dorothy Perkins Roses in Bloom (at entrance to Rose Garden of Wm. Hartry Seaforth, Ont.)

Fully one thousand choice roses are grown in Seaforth by some half dozen enthusiasts. They include all the standard varieties and many new sorts that promise to increase in popularity. Mr. Hartry keeps bees as well as roses. His honey house may be seen in the background.