



DECEMBER NOTES

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PLANT PROTECTION.—The first or second week in December is usually early enough to attend to the matter of giving some protection to plants and shrubs of questionable hardiness in the garden. As a rule the tendency on the part of plant growers is to be too good natured in this respect. In many cases the covering is applied too early in the season before the wood has had time to ripen and partially harden, or the plant had time to attain its normal winter condition; and in many cases the covering is altogether too heavy and close for the well being of the plant which it is intended to protect. Take for instance some of the more tender varieties of out door roses of questionable hardiness, such as La France, Fisher Holmes, and others of that type that are more or less of a delicate nature, especially in northern sections of the country; or take the more tender varieties of the Altheas or Rose of Sharon shrubs, of the beautiful dwarf though somewhat delicate Spirea, Anthony Waterer, and similar kinds of shrubs, these

although tender do not require a very heavy covering during winter to protect them. A good heavy mulch of manure placed over the roots of the plant after the ground has become frozen slightly, and a light covering of straw or long sedge grass, bound loosely around the growth of the plant, will be found of much more benefit than a very heavy covering of the same material, which latter would effectually exclude any circulation of air around the growth, as well as induce and retain oftentimes an excess of moisture. This will bring rot and mildew into the growth during periods of alternate frost and thaw, besides affording—especially if applied too early in the season—a splendid harbor for rats and mice that will do a great deal more harm than severe frost will to the plants. Rats and mice usually seek out their winter quarters before severe weather sets in, and are seldom troublesome if the winter covering of plants is withheld until real winter weather sets in.

The winter protection of some of the more