

## The Flower Garden.

### HOUSE CULTURE OF PLANTS.

Trouble with plants in living rooms arises usually from too high a temperature or one which varies greatly, falling very low and rising high once or oftener during the twenty-four hours. Poor ventilation and an extra dry atmosphere add to troubles made worse by burning gas or lamps in the rooms during the long Winter evenings. Of the two lights mentioned the lamp is preferable, but those fortunate enough to use electricity have a light perfectly harmless to plants. To all these unfavorable conditions the want of sunlight is often added, hence we must not expect to grow specimens in this way equal to plants grown in the Summer gardens. In green houses in the State of New York during dark Winter weather, when the sun scarcely shows itself, some plants can be made to bloom until Spring. In some localities farther north than New York and where the Winter is more severe, as in St. Paul, Minn., the sun shines brightly through the Winter and plants which will not flower in New York there do very well.

The secret of success with house plants lies in overcoming these difficulties. To begin with, if you live where there is little sunshine during Winter, select only plants which thrive without sunlight. Where there is no lack of sunlight, make your selections according to conditions of heat and moisture required, choosing a window facing south, if possible, and as second choice either a window facing east or west. For a north window use foliage plants only, keep the foliage from touching the glass, and on very cold nights either place two or three thicknesses of newspaper between the glass and the plants or remove the plants from the window.

A rubber plant sprinkler, obtainable from any florist, seedsman or in rubber stores, is of great use in caring for a window garden. A piece of oilcloth should be spread under the plants; this will permit them to be freely sprinkled without fear of injury to the carpet. A shower every morning with the rubber sprayer washes the foliage, helps to keep back insects and moistens the air in the room. If oil cloth is not at hand, newspapers spread on the floor will catch the water, and, if removed promptly, the moisture will not soak through.

For windows reached by little direct sunlight or for northern windows, araucaria, begonias (particularly the rex varieties), cypripedium, farfugium grande, ferns, ficus or rubber plant, otaheite orange, cycas revoluta, palms, vinca and English Ivy.

For sunny exposures the list from which selections may be made is almost unlimited. Ageratum, antirrhinum, grevillea robusta or silk oak, mignonette, petunia, solanum, verbena, wallflower, sweet alyssum, candytuft, cyclamen, lobelia and mimulus may all be used and can be raised from seed started during the summer or from cuttings made at once, except the last five, which are raised from seeds. We have also the following which grow almost exclusively from cuttings or bulbs: Abutilon, amaryllis, azalea, bouvardia, coleus, fuchsia, hydrangea, geranium, jasminum, lantana, carnation, chrysanthemum, gloxinia, cineraria and roses. Of these the last five seem to particularly attract the green fly, but a little tobacco tea—tobacco steeped in water—sprinkled over the plants, wetting both sides of the foliage, will entirely

destroy the green fly, which, by-the-way, on chrysanthemums is black.

### GREENHOUSES AND CONSERVATORIES.

Of course, the most satisfactory and comfortable way to keep plants in a thrifty state in Winter is to have a conservatory attached to the house or a small greenhouse near at hand. A large collection and a great variety of plants can be handled with little trouble in this way. The cost is so moderate that what a few years ago was considered a luxury is now enjoyed by people in modest circumstances. The materials may be purchased made in the best possible way, cut to exact lengths, ready to be put together by almost anyone into greenhouses of any size desired. Carefully selected and thoroughly dried cypress is the best material, as it lasts for years, while other woods quickly decay when subjected to combined heat and moisture. The cypress is used only for the sash bars and the top and ends of the house, while the sides may be of any material that comes handy, nailed to the inside of chestnut posts outside the greenhouse to prevent rotting. On these posts rests the top of the greenhouse. Certain firms make a specialty of materials for greenhouses and by producing them in quantities have brought the cost down to reasonable figures. As a design is supplied with the materials, any one can do the work, with satisfactory results. Most florists now build their own greenhouses.

In a conservatory or greenhouse proper ventilation can be given, water used as liberally as is needed and just the proper light and temperature maintained, while insects and diseases can be much more readily controlled than in living rooms. If desired, vegetables can be grown with the flowers and plants and surplus flowers can be disposed of to advantage.

A conservatory is built on the south side of the house, but the east or west side will answer. If a greenhouse is to run east and west, the three-quarter span house should be used, with the long end to the south; but if the house is to run north and south, the even-span house is generally considered preferable.

As to heat, the amateur will find hot water best, not because, as some suppose, steam heat is dry heat, but because when once heated water retains its temperature longer than steam, thus avoiding fatal sudden changes; moreover, as long as there is any fire at all in the furnace the water will distribute its heat, while with steam, unless there is sufficient fire to produce steam, no heat reaches the greenhouse. The boiler will require attention night and morning and in severe weather a last look at the fire before retiring is advised. If neither hot water nor steam is available, a small stove may be placed at one end of the greenhouse, with the chimney flue of tile pipe running under one of the benches and out of the other end of the house. A conservatory may depend upon the heat which supplies the house, if this be either steam or hot water. If furnace heat is used, a steam fitter can arrange a coil of pipe around the inside of the furnace fire-box, just at the top of the bed of the coals, and this being connected with pipes running around the conservatory will supply hot-water heat without extra trouble or expense once it is in place.

## FASHIONS OF TO-DAY.

The skirts of coats are lengthening and the ripples have entirely disappeared. Sleeves are box-plaited instead of gathered into the arms' eyes of coats.

A double-breasted jacket combines loose fronts with a close-fitting back.

The single-breasted coat is glove-fitting.

In a fly-front jacket bust darts are introduced to effect a perfectly snug adjustment.

The Empire box jacket flows to the waist-line in box-plaits at the back and straight in front; it may be worn open or closed.

The demand for variety in top garments is supplied by blouse-jackets. Though the back of one of them has shaping seams, it droops at the bottom, with a trifle less fullness, however, than at the front.

Short skirts and belts are interesting features of blouse-jackets.

The Cossack blouse-jacket is distinguished by a box-plaited back and a front closed at the left side.

The fronts of an Eton jacket may extend in points just beyond the line of the waist or in straight-around style.

Both circular and gored capes are popular.

A pointed hood and a turn-down, standing or storm collar may accompany the circular cape.

Either a Medici or a ruche collar may be the selection for a gored cape.

All the new skirts have fan backs.

A slight ripple below the hips is still perceptible in skirts.

Four, five, seven and eight gores are embraced in skirts and the width of the fan varies.

A narrow side-gore is the point of interest in a five-gored skirt.

A fan-back circular skirt fits equally well whether made with darts or scanty gathers at the belt.

Organ folds vary the contour of an eight-gored train skirt.

A renewal of the Princess skirt with its pointed bodice is welcomed; below the waist-line it possesses the characteristics of other skirts.

Gracefully draped folds appear below a fanciful yoke in the front of a basque-waist.

Either a standing or turn-down collar is applicable to a perfectly plain waist with the regulation shaping seams.

Fullness escapes becomingly between battle-mented fronts in a basque-waist with sleeves wrinkled only from shoulder to elbow.

Pointed, close-fitting basques are made with curved or straight closing edges and a standing or a turn-down military collar.

Short pointed boleros are attractive features of a basque-waist with very full fronts.

In a new and modish basque-waist just the merest hint of a droop, as given alike in the vest and the fronts framing it.

The full, loose fronts of a blouse shirt-waist are in marked contrast with the plaited and smoothly adjusted back.

A new type of blouse in which the back and fronts droop, the latter rather more than the former, is furnished by the Alexis, the Sultana and the Dagmar blouse-waists.

The Alexis blouse is distinguished by a central box plait covering its closing edges and epaulettes having round corners.

A chemisette and its usual framing of lapels and rolling collar confer a smart air upon a blouse-waist with an all-round droop.

In the Czarina blouse, which displays tucks, the back is drawn closely to the figure and only the front is pouched and closed at the left side.