

# Utilize the Back Yard

Succinct Suggestions for Successful Seeding

By HUGH S. EAYRS

THOSE readers who have decided to be amongst the people to take up the suggestion of the "Canadian Courier" and make the back yards of the city look a good deal more as if someone cared for them, besides making good on the proposition from a business point of view, will be wanting to get on with the actual work of seeding. There are three main necessities. First of all, the seeds must have warmth—lots of sun. Little is gained by over anxiousness to begin. An early beginning, before the ground is warm, and in the days when there is little warmth in the atmosphere, will as likely as not be disastrous. Well begun is half done, and a good beginning in gardening is very often a late beginning. It is still much too early to plant corn, or cucumbers, or beans, or musk melon. A fortnight's time will be about the right moment to plant the seed for these vegetables, unless, of course, you are planting in a sunny spot.

The second necessity is oxygen. Vegetables, like people, need as much oxygen as they can get. And here a word may be said about the foolishness of planting the seed too deep, where they cannot get a sufficiency of air. In the case of most vegetables the seed should be placed about twice its own diameter in the ground. For instance, the garden pea seed is about three-eighths of an inch in diameter, so that it should be placed about three-quarters of an inch from the surface of the soil. In the case of the turnip, which is one-sixteenth of an inch in diameter, the depth at which it should be planted is just below the surface of the soil, only about one-eighth of an inch. The pansy—and this word is for amateur flower gardeners—will be still less deep, since the diameter of the seed is not more than a thirty-second of an inch. Now, if seed is sown too deep in the ground, the oxygen in the air can't get to it. Moreover, seed sown too deep doesn't possess enough nutriment in itself to shoot its stem up to where it can get the light. It is important to remember that until the leaf comes the seed is dependent for its growth upon the nutriment in itself, and not upon the soil. This necessity for oxygen is another reason why the soil should be well prepared, well turned over and worked up till it is fine, and free from clods. Too much water, also, is not a good thing, for it makes the soil have the tendency to be sodden and clotted. It doesn't matter how good the seeds are, if the fundamental conditions are not right. Oxygen is absolutely essential, if the crops are to be good.

SO is moisture, in due proportion. It is well to remember that except in the very hottest weather, the soil contains nearly enough moisture of its own without being drenched in season and out of season. Most amateur gardeners find themselves hampered by the kiddies, who see a watering can, and are anxious to find out how it works. Thus, a little watering can is often a dangerous thing. Water sprinkling now and then is a help—now and then. What is useful is repeated pressing-down, or "firming," as the gardeners call it. This tends to bring the moisture out of the soil below by capillary action. Here again, the action wants to be light. If you put a garden roller on your soil the latter state becomes worse than the first. Doing things by halves is a bad principle, but it is no worse than that of going to excess, in gardening as in other things.

A common error in seeding is to put the seed in too thickly. If it is good seed, a little of it goes a long way. Some people get discouraged when they don't get very good results. Often this is because they put in far too much seed. If the seed is that sold by a reliable house, like, say Carter's, of London, it is standard and a moderate quantity does the trick. Too much seed means congestion, and conges-

tion means that some of the plants will be weak, and waste away, after detracting from the staying power of the more hardy. A lot springs from a little. And very often only a little springs from a lot. Excess of seed is to be deprecated.

Reference has been made to the depth at which seed should be planted. While a general principle was laid down, there are some vegetables that don't conform to it. Cabbages and peas, for instance, may be sown to a depth of four inches.

Most all the vegetables may be sown now. Parsnips, lettuce, radishes, carrots, vegetable oysters, kohlrabi—a little known greenstuff, midway between a turnip and a cabbage, which grows above the ground—and potatoes may all be sown now. Potatoes are in use all the year round. One is reminded of the story about the minister who was saying some very scathing things about new theology. He said he was sick of indigestible commentators. Next day, a farmer who was one of his parishioners, wheeled a sack of potatoes round to the manse, and said, "Parson, I heard you say last night that you were sick of these indigestible common 'taters, so I brought you round a sack of real 'taters!"

IN most cases, it takes a few days for the first sign of leaves to appear. As soon as opportunity offers the plants should be thinned out by a hoe, or with the fingers. The most promising shoots should be left in, and those of the others worth it, may be transplanted. Lettuce, for example, should be thinned out when the shoots appear, so that the plants left in are about nine inches apart. Radishes don't often need thinning, if they are sown thinly to begin with. In the case of radishes, they should be sown not in rows, as indicated last week, of about 12 inches in width, but in rows two inches apart, for individual plants. There are three varieties of this popular vegetable, the quick growing, round sort, the slower growing, olive shaped kind, and the long kind, slowest growing of all. Lettuce and radish seed might be sown at intervals of about fourteen days right through the season.

All of what has been said so far applies to vegetables. But in our plan last week room was left for flowers. It is now time to sow seeds of all the annuals. The point to remember is to sow in clumps, and not in rows; the appearance of most flowers is spoilt if they look like a regiment of militia. Sow the seeds thinly, and then separate to six inches apart, unless the flowers are dwarfs, like Virginia Stocks, for instance, used most often for borders. Give the tall flowers about twelve inches to grow in. Overlapping looks bad. Flowers to plant now are gladiolus, nasturtium, chrysanthemum, phlox, morning glory, scarlet flax, sweet pea—for climbing—and many others.

There is one point of importance. It spoils a garden to have people trampling all over it. In this connection there is a story told of a man who had some very lovely fruit and flowers in his garden, which attracted a number of boys. To stop the onslaught upon his property the owner put up a board: "Trespassers will be prosecuted." But the boys came more and more. Then the owner put some broken glass on the walls. Still his fruit and flowers disappeared. But one day he put up a board, "Ampelopsis Vechii Kept Here." And the boys were so scared of a sign they didn't understand that they never came any more—so the story goes.

Nothing So Common.—"Do you have matins in this Church?" asked the High Church visitor of the verger of the village church. "No, indeed," replied that dignitary, with scorn. "We has oil-cloth, and right up the chancel, too."—Christian Register.



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