

## HARDY PERENNIALS SUITABLE FOR CULTIVATION IN ONTARIO.

By W. T. MACOUN, CENTRAL EXPERIMENTAL FARM, OTTAWA.

Flowers and fruit are so nearly akin that I think it is only right there should be one or more papers in connection with the Fruit Growers' Association on flowers. They are the most important, because if you had no flowers you could not have fruit. In travelling through Eastern Ontario and the Province of Quebec I noticed that our farmers have very few trees, shrubs or flowers growing on their farms. In olden times they began to clear away their woods, not thinking that the time would come when they would be glad of a few trees that they were so pleased to get rid of at that time. The result is that to-day in a great number of cases you will find that the farmhouse stands alone in a field without a tree for shade during the summer months, and with perhaps scarcely a flower to gladden the hearts of the wife and children and perhaps the householder himself. Now, I think this should not be, and it will be my aim always, whenever I have the opportunity, to impress upon farmers and fruit growers of the country how important it is to have some flowers in their place, and those of the best sort; so that I am going to bring before you this evening what I consider are the best hardy plants for this Province.

The plant which grows from the seed, flowers, produces fruit and dies the same year; or, in other words, an annual, does not possess, I think, the same charm as that which we have watched and cared for, perhaps for five years, and which, as time goes by, increases in size and beauty. Think of the old garden in which your younger days were spent, and there will come up in your mind's eye some favorite flowers and plants which had their places in some particular spot and which year by year appeared to gladden your heart and make your garden gay.

Many of the flowers which held a prominent place in the gardens of our forefathers are not to be surpassed to-day, but there are many more available since foreign countries have been opened up for exploration by our botanists and florists, and enthusiastic workers have produced others by selection and hybridization, until now we have a large and varied store of beautiful and many colored flowers. From this large number we can select those which please our fancy best and which are the most satisfactory.

It has been the aim at the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa, to test as many species and varieties of perennials as possible, in order that the hardiest and best kinds would become known and be recommended to the farmers and horticulturists throughout Canada. The perennial border there is now more than half a mile long. It is on the east side of an Arbor Vitae hedge, and is twelve feet wide. There are three rows of plants—the latter being three feet apart each way. In this border there were living this autumn almost 1,200 different species and varieties of perennials. Notes are taken during the summer on the time of flowering, growth, color and other characteristics of the flowers, and the most promising sorts marked. In my report for 1897 a list was published of 100 of the best species and varieties that had up to that time been tested. A select twenty-five of these were marked with an asterisk for the convenience of those who had small gardens. There is reason to believe that this list has already proved of considerable value to intending planters.

The snow has barely left our fields and gardens when the Spreading Pasque flower (*Anemone patens*) throws up its flower stocks, at the ends of which are those large, deep, purple blossoms, which in the month of April help to relieve the otherwise dull appearance of the perennial border. Following this, in about two weeks, is the little Ox-eye (*Adonis vernalis*) which, with its large lemon-coloured flowers and finely cut foliage, is very attractive at this early season of the year. The Polemoniums or species of Jacob's Ladder, closely follow and are all profuse bloomers with flowers of various and delicate shades of blue. They flower in the following order:

*Polemonium humile pulchellum*, *P. Richardsoni* and *P. reptans*. *Polemonium coeruleum*, or true Jacob's Ladder, does not bloom until the second week of June. All of these should be in every collection of 100 perennials.