

pounds per 100 square feet and twice the amount is frequently used by market gardeners. Nitrogen may often be added to advantage early in the season, as it stimulates growth and is valuable for lettuce, asparagus, etc. Potash, on the contrary, tends to harden off plants and bring about an early fruiting. For most gardens, a fall dressing of good manure, plowing or spading and raked in, will be found the most satisfactory treatment.

### THE SEED BEDS

The needs of a seedling are similar to those of a baby—protection, fresh air, assimilable food. The soil of the seed bed should be a light loam, preferably, mixed with sand, thoroughly worked and made fine to retain the moisture and give the slender rootlets a chance to penetrate it. Heavily manured soil here is as out of place as is rich food in a child's diet; when the seedling is well started and hardened it may be transplanted into more stimulating soil. Sow the seeds in rows and cover to four times their diameter, as a rule; the very fine seeds need hardly any cover—merely a firm pressing down of the soil. This firming of the soil in sowing and planting is the most important point in supplying the seedling with moisture; the pressure upon the surface compacts the earth and establishes capillary attraction from the moisture stores below; this tends, however, to dry the soil out very rapidly, and must be checked as soon as possible by raking or loosening the surface layer. Large seeds, such as beans, peas, etc., should be firmed in by a roller, or by tramping heel to toe the length of the row, after which the surface should be raked lightly, but thoroughly. With fine seeds pressing with a small board is sufficient, and the loosening must be delayed until the plants are started.

Of all the requisites in a well managed garden, none is so much needed as a hot-bed. If it is desired to raise a fair supply of early plants for the kitchen garden, such as Cabbages, Cauliflowers, Tomatoes, Peppers, Cucumbers, Melons, Herbs, etc., so as to have them ready for planting out earlier in the season, a hot-bed is indispensable. All the choicest varieties of flowers should, if possible, be sown in a hot-bed or under glass, early in the spring, so as to enjoy the longer their flowering season. The professional gardener already knows the full value of the hot-bed; as he also knows perfectly well how to construct and manage it; consequently he takes care early in the spring to erect as great a number of hot-beds as he possibly can. The following directions are, therefore, merely addressed to the amateur and inexperienced gardener, to whom we would desire to convey that the hot-bed is recommended in order to obviate the danger of our changeable spring climate, the unexpected spring frosts or droughts. It is easily managed, and may be got up at such a slight expense that it will soon repay all who would secure an abundance of kitchen and flowering plants early in the season. Besides the many advantages already stated, the observing mind will find a good deal of interesting pastime in the operation connected with its management.