



A Dwarf Iris and Lovely Phlox No. 1

and in the time of blooming. *T. pumilla caerulea*, a midget of only four inches high, with small flowers of a delicate mauve-blue throughout—preceding the others by nearly a week. There are yellow, white, and purple varieties, some with blooms as large as those of the German iris, some coming early and some only fading as *T. Florentina*, the forerunner of the German iris, begins. They delight in a well-drained soil and sunny situation.

The Virginian Blue Bells (*Mertensia Virginica*), with smooth glaucous leaves and drooping flowers of the softest plum-bago blue, deserves a well-honored place in the spring border, and so does the creeping Jacob's Ladder (*Polemonum reptans*) with soft grey-blue flowers and pretty leaves, nor must we forget the claims of the perennial Candytuft (*Theris sempervirens*), which lies like a patch of freshly fallen snow, in its dazzling whiteness; Snow Queen, a new variety, is the finest. A darling amongst the little creeping things is the Snow in Summer (*Cerastium tomentosum*) with its fine silvery leaves of almost wool-like texture, and comparatively large white flowers, which begin to open in late May and last until mid June.

Few plants are more charming than the Iceland Poppy (*P. nudicaule*) (see illustration number two). It is not only an early bloomer, but it is one of the few perennials that blossom all summer, provided no seed is allowed to form. Its long stems and airily poised flowers give it great decorative value both indoors and out, for unlike the majority of poppies, it does not drop its petals the day it is gathered. If picked in the bud stage it will often last several days in the house.

The original colors were pure white, pure yellow, and orange-scarlet, but the last few years have seen several intermediate shades added to these, and also colored flowers with delicate white edges (a la Shirley Poppy), which are exquisitely dainty. It, also, can be easily rais-

ed from seed, and will frequently flower a little the first year if sown in a hot bed in March or April.

With the flowers described, as well as those that bloom during March and April, one can have something coming on, to cheer and interest one, from March to the end of May, the three spring months. I do not wish you to infer that there will be much bloom in March, for that would be misleading, but even a few snowdrops are worth while after our long, cold winters, and the procession of the flowers is steady, if sometimes slow, in cold seasons. By the end of April you will find yourself going out each morning to see if there is not something more in bloom since the previous day, and you will be anxiously watching each little bud unfold.

From the first week in May things will run races with each other for precedence, and by the twenty-fourth the spring garden will be in the height of its glory, which will only be excelled by June's lavish display. All this time the average gardener is gazing at his empty beds and wondering if he dare have his tender bedding plants put in by the twenty-fourth, while the man who goes in 'or



Iceland Poppy (*Papaver nudicaule*) No. 2

annuals, "first, last and all the time," is nursing his tiny plants that will not reach blooming size until the end of June at the earliest—he and his bedding-out-plant rival having the pleasant thought to cheer them that their gardens will be in their prime when either they themselves or most of their friends will be out of town for their summer holidays.

The Perennial Border

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The following are a few short rules to follow in the making of a perennial border:

Prepare the ground for perennials in the early autumn, or prepare in the spring, and plant annuals in it for that season. The cultivation of these annuals will greatly improve the ground for the perennials. In preparing the bed, work in thoroughly plenty of well-rotted manure.

Underdrain the border if the soil is heavy. If it is very heavy add, in addition to manure, some sand or peat as well.

Order the plants from the nursery company in good time. This will ensure your getting all the plants you order, and it will enable you to plant early and to get the best results.

Order most of the plants in the summer for autumn planting, except a few that are best planted in the spring. These latter you may order during the winter.

Plant as soon as received and don't on any account let the roots dry out. Set the plants a little bit deeper than they were in the nursery, but don't smother them.

If you can raise most of the plants yourself from seed, do so. Sow the seed early in the spring, and the plants will be ready to transplant into the border by the fall.

A FEW DON'TS

Don't try after color effect until you know your flowers well.

Don't forget that quiet harmonies are often better than strong contrasts.

Don't forget to pick off the old flower heads and dead stalks. By so doing you will improve the general appearance of the border and encourage some plants to make a second growth.

Don't forget that a little water applied during the daytime is worse than none at all. If you give any give plenty.

Don't forget to stake and tie up the very tall plants.

Don't forget that in the early stages of a perennial border you can hardly expect to have a good balance of bloom at all seasons, but strive after that if you have a large border.

Don't forget that too much variation, even in a flower border, tends to monotony. Have big clumps of color if possible.

Don't forget that exact grading from the tall plants at the back to the dwarf plants at the front of the border will give a stiff appearance. To avoid this plant an occasional large and striking plant in the foreground.

Don't forget that the drip from large trees is harmful to most plants.

Don't be afraid to throw out plants you do not care for.