

work, or a great deal of it. It is a law of nature that action must be followed by rest. After exhaustion, resulting from work, there must be an opportunity for recuperation, and this rest, this recuperation, can only take place under favorable conditions. If we try to rest amid noise and bustle, we only half rest. If a plant tries to rest amid conditions which prevail when growth goes on, it is never able to attain to that degree of relaxation which must accompany the phenomenon of perfect rest. In this respect men and plants are alike. "All work and no play make Jack a dull boy," they used to say, and the truth of the saying is just as pertinent to-day as it was years ago, and it applies to all animate things. Overwork prevents full development. It interferes with good work. Every expenditure of vital force must be made up for by a period of rest, in which the system is given a chance to get back to the condition it was in before the effort was made which brought on exhaustion. This law cannot be ignored without disastrous results in any line of life. But this law we constantly violate, and the result is debility, if not positive disease, and it is but a question of time, if the violation goes on, when positive disease must set in.

Hundreds of complaints similar to this one come to me during the year. "What can be the matter with my geraniums? They have hardly had a blossom on them this winter. They are growing, but I want flowers instead of leaves. They are good flowering kinds I know, because they bloom profusely all summer." Such a complaint answers the question asked in it, but the questioner does not know this. The fact that the plants bloomed all summer explains fully why they failed to bloom in winter. They exhausted themselves then, and they are obliged to take the winter to rest in. If the owner had kept them from blooming in summer, and had given just

enough water to keep them from drying up and no fertilizer to excite growth, and all buds had been removed as soon as discovered, the plants would have been nearly dormant and would have remained so until giving more water started them into more active growth. Then some good fertilizer could have been given, or they could have been repotted into fresh, rich soil, and by Winter they would have been strong and vigorous and anxious to flower. This is the treatment all plants intended for winter flowering should have. Keep them as nearly at a standstill during the summer as possible. Of course they will grow some. But whatever growth is made will be sturdy and strong, if slow, and they will come to their winter's work in the best possible condition. Most amateurs will see that this is almost opposite to the treatment they give their plants in summer.

The production of flowers exhausts a plant much more than the production of leaves. Therefore, it is very important that all buds should be removed at once, that all the strength of the plant may go into its branches. The ends of new branches should be nipped off from time to time during the season, to force the plants to branch, and thus become bushy and compact. The more branches there are the greater the number of blossoming points. Geraniums will need especial attention of this kind, because they have a tendency, if let alone, to grow up, up, up, and form tall, leggy specimens with few branches. Such a plant is never very pleasing, and it will have few flowers. But a properly trained plant will be compact and symmetrical, and often it will have a dozen or twenty clusters of flowers on it at a time. The superiority of such a specimen will be readily apparent to any one seeing it alongside a specimen of the untrained geranium.

E. E. REXFORD,  
in *How to Grow Flowers*.

*(To be continued.)*