

PEDIGREE IN SEEDS.



ENRI L. DE VILMORIN, of the great seed house of Vilmorin, Andrieux & Co., of Paris, France, read a paper before the Seedsmen's Session of the World's Fair Horticultural Congress, Chicago. The entire address may be found in the *American Florist*, of August 17: "Let any one who doubts the high value of selection look at our fine races of cabbages, kales, cauliflowers, kohlrabi and rutabaga, and compare them with the wild cabbage of our western shores of Europe; let him compare our fine garden beets and our mangels to the wild beet of the Mediterranean shores; let him compare the tomatoes and potatoes of to-day with the wild South American plants, and he will see proof that only human thought and skill have brought about such wonderful changes. Where selection is done with skill and care the improvement of many kinds of cultivated plants effected by its means is invaluable. The large pansies, the huge hybrid gladioli, the large flowered cannas were all brought from the state of small flowers to their present excellence in our own days by careful observers, who, watching every variation and keeping an exact record of the descent of all their plants, turn to the best account the wonderful action of heredity. Most of the variations induced in our garden plants are not in favor of the plant in a 'free fight' with its kind in nature. All our improved roots, as carrots, turnips, beets, make an early and succulent growth for our own benefit, but not at all for their own good. If left to their fate to struggle with their own wild forms, they would soon have to take a 'back seat,' and very likely soon perish. It follows then that varieties improved from man's point of view must receive kind treatment and richer food than wild forms of the same plant. The cultivated plant, like the domesticated animal, yields in a measure its powers of self-defence to adapt itself to our service. Man must in return provide for its safety and nourishment."

To Prepare an Asparagus Bed.—The preparation of an asparagus bed should be made with more care than for most vegetables, as it is to be a permanent crop. The ground should be thoroughly drained, naturally or artificially and preferably of a rather light sandy loam. This should be trenched and a heavy coat of well-rotted manure applied. Either one or two-year-old plants are set, which may be raised from seed or bought of nurserymen. Set in rows not less than four feet apart, six is better, and three feet in the row. Set the roots from four to six inches below the surface so as to cultivate over the crowns. The beds will last longer and stand droth better when set deep. The plants may be set in either spring or fall. If in the spring, as soon as the ground is dry enough to work; and if in the fall, as soon as plants can be obtained, which is usually early in October. Fall setting, where possible, is preferable for the roots have a chance to form and start earlier the next spring.