

Why House Plants Fail

An attempt to grow plants in the living-room of the home frequently results in their speedy death and a keen disappointment to the grower. Success demands that a temperature of sixty-five to seventy degrees be maintained during the daytime, with a drop of ten to fifteen degrees during the night; fifty degrees is as low a temperature as most plants can successfully stand. Incidentally, these temperatures are the best for the health of the family.

Too often the temperature of the living-room reaches seventy-five or eighty degrees during the winter months. Such temperatures are almost invariably accompanied by a low percentage of humidity in the atmosphere, and the soil in the pots dries rapidly in consequence, for not only are the plants transpiring much water through their leaves, but water also evaporates from the surface of the soil and through the porous clay of the pots. Rapid fluctuations of soil moisture are extremely bad for the health of plants. The worst result of this condition is dry soil in the bottom of the pot, for too frequently house-plant watering consists merely in pouring a little water on the surface of the soil, not enough to reach down to the bottom.

Dryness of the soil is best determined by the gardeners' method. Hit the pot a sharp blow with the knuckles of the first and second fingers. If the sound is hollow,

Artificial Milk

A discovery which should prove of great interest to housewives and mothers has recently been brought to perfection in a London chemical laboratory. This is a process of manufacturing synthetically a pure and wholesome milk of high nutritive value, possessing all the virtues of the original article, none of its many dangers.

The discovery (says the "Times") originated many years ago as the result of the ingenuity of a Chinaman who saw a possible substitute for milk in the native drink prepared from the soya bean. His efforts, however, met with only partial success, owing to the fact that the fluid prepared by him had an exceedingly penetrating and—to Western palates—disagreeable taste. It was left to a German chemist to lay the foundations of the present synthetic milk by suggesting a composite fluid, made up of all the ingredients of cow's milk in correct proportion.

This suggestion was widely discussed about two years ago, but the many obvious difficulties standing in the way of its realization caused the public to regard it more as a dream than a possibility. One or two chemists, however, attracted by the idea, continued to work at the subject, with the result that synthetic milk is now an accomplished fact.

CROP RETURNS FOR FIVE YEARS

The following table gives the average yields of spring wheat to the acre in the Provinces and Dominion of Canada, and the wheat-producing States and the U.S. as a whole for the past five years.

CANADA.	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.
Prince Edward Island	17.45	19.26	18.39	19.62	25.28
Nova Scotia	18.29	21.05	20.19	20.50	21.87
New Brunswick	18.19	20.39	18.11	20.72	18.57
Quebec	14.85	17.73	16.17	18.17	18.00
Ontario	23.50	20.95	20.63	23.91	21.51
Manitoba	12.35	20.22	22.20	19.01	14.75
Saskatchewan	11.66	22.00	21.56	23.57	15.50
Alberta	11.35	25.28	21.83	21.00	21.30
British Columbia	21.40	26.73	30.33	26.67	27.77
Canada	14.16	20.04	20.32	20.81	15.07
UNITED STATES.	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914.
Iowa	20.9	13.8	17.0	17.0	13.5
Kansas	8.4	4.2	15.0	8.5	15.0
Minnesota	16.0	10.1	15.5	16.2	10.5
Nebraska	13.9	10.0	14.1	12.0	11.5
North Dakota	5.0	8.0	18.0	10.5	11.4
South Dakota	12.8	4.0	14.2	9.0	9.3
United States	11.0	9.4	17.2	13.0	12.1

the soil is dry; if dead, there is sufficient moisture. When the soil is thoroughly dry, the only sure way to water the plant is to place it for several minutes in a pail containing enough water to cover the pot.

Moisture can be supplied to the atmosphere by keeping a dish of water on or near the stove, where it will evaporate readily. Most furnaces have a place for water in the jacket which will need filling daily. Plants usually thrive in the kitchen because of the moisture the atmosphere derives from the steam of the teakettle and the pots.

Gas is an enemy of house plants—either coal or illuminating gas—and it will retard growth and prevent the opening of flower-buds even when present in such small quantities that it cannot be smelled.

Fresh air is essential. Ventilate the room by leaving a door or window open just a little, but never allow a draft to cross the plants. Like gas, drafts cause "blasting" of the buds as well as browning of the leaves.

The leaves are plants' lungs, and they must be kept clean. The surface of each leaf is filled with minute pores through which respiration and transpiration take place. Sponging the leaves frequently with clean water will be sufficient with, perhaps, a weekly syringing, which should be done with the plants in a sink or bathtub. Rubbing the leaves with any oily substance to make them shine is unnecessary, for a clean, healthy leaf will have abundant gloss. The grease clogs the pores, preventing the leaves from performing their proper functions.

To obtain a well-balanced plant, turn it half-way round each day, for plants in a window grow toward the light.

The fluid, as far as its appearance is concerned, is quite indistinguishable from rich cow's milk. It is delightfully smooth on the palate. On the other hand the taste seems to some persons slightly different from that of ordinary cow's milk. It is said that even this slight "taste" can be removed at will.

Introduction of Bacteria

The new milk has been built up from a basis of casein obtained from the soya bean. The beans are treated by a special process whereby all oil and waste matter are removed and only the pure casein left. To this basis are added in exact proportions fatty acids, sugars, and salts, and emulsification is carried out.

The difficulty of producing a perfect emulsion (milk is one of the most perfect emulsions known) has been completely overcome, the new fluid satisfying every test in this direction, even to the extent of refusing to "cream."

Milk, however, is something more than a food substance; it is a living fluid containing a definite strain of bacteria which assist in its digestion. In order that the synthetic milk may approximate in all respects to the real milk, bacteria of the required strains, including the lactic acid (sour milk) bacilli rendered famous by Metchnikoff a few years ago, are introduced to the fluid and permitted to act upon it until it reaches exactly that state of what may be termed maturity at which fresh cow's milk is obtained. That it is indeed a real milk is proved by the fact that excellent cheese and "butter" can be made from it.

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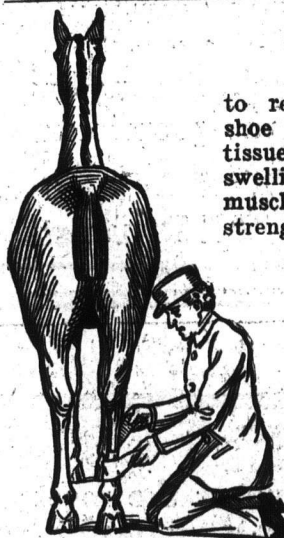
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