

combining well with almost all other kinds. They are very hardy, and increase rapidly.

The old-fashioned hollyhock is a showy and rather coarse flower, I admit, but I am always pleased to see it. It makes me think of an honest-hearted, substantial old country friend of mine who knows he lacks refinement and cultivation, but means to do the best he can, and does it, and is therefore entitled to high respect. The hollyhock is far preferable to some of our modern flowers, and I have produced a decidedly pleasing effect with it by planting it in thick clumps, in rich soil. This grown to the height of eight to ten feet, in dense masses, has been very highly praised by some of my fastidious floral friends, who had been half inclined to turn up their noses at it. The double and dwarf varieties are beautiful in masses, or as single specimens for the lawn, but must be kept well staked, or they are likely to be blown over by the winds.

Funk, or day lily, as it is more generally known, is a fine plant for the garden. It blooms quite freely, and its fragrance recommends it to everybody. It will live through our winters without any covering, but I find that it does much better when given a good covering of manure in the fall.

The perennial larkspur is very fine for late flowering. I know of no other herbaceous plant of so rich a blue as this. Its long spikes are something to light up any garden with brilliancy, and very fine effects can be produced by judiciously planting it with other tall growing plants. A bed of cannas, of the light colored kinds interspersed with larkspur, was greatly admired in August and September.

The European Larch—Its Value and Durability.

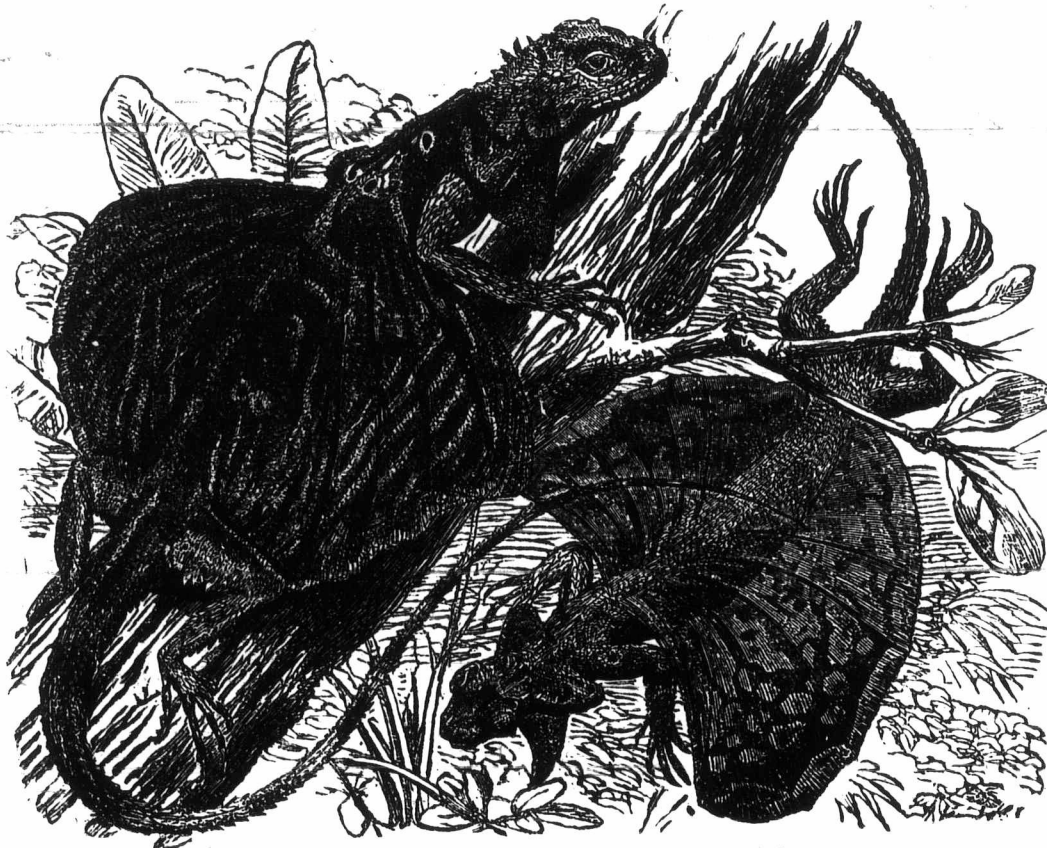
In the *Quarterly Journal of Agriculture*, there is an "account of the larch plantations on the estates of Athole and Dunkeld, executed by the late John, Duke of Athole." From which report the following is derived:—

Previous to the accession of the great planter, Duke John, in 1774, two Dukes of Athole had planted larches. In 1788 Duke James planted, at Blair Athole and upon the lawn at Dunkeld on the banks of the Tay, on a rich alluvial sand with open channelled subsoil, sixteen larch plants, the parents of the subsequent and famous crop which was sown on the same property. One of these original Blair Athole larches furnished the timber for the great planter's coffin. The height of the tree was 106 feet. Three of the five Dunkeld lawn trees were also felled, and two of these which were cut down in 1809 contained, at the age of 71 years, 147 cubic feet and 168 cubic feet respectively; and the last mentioned was sold in Leith, to a company of shipbuilders for 3s. per foot, or £25 4s. for the tree. Baltic timber at that time was selling at war prices. The two other original larches on the lawn still stand close to the ancient cathedral of Dunkeld, and not far from a fine group of their own offspring. They are still sound timber at 138 years old, though their period of growth had been reached some years since. The largest tree measures 98 feet 10 inches in height, and 14 feet 6 inches in girth at five feet from the ground. The trunk is perfect in shape, tapering gradually and regularly, until it ceases to be measurable timber at about 20 feet from the top. It is said to contain 423 cubic feet of timber. These two companion trees are eleven yards apart, and their branches meet and interlace without injury.

From this history of two larches, which probably attained their growth at about one hundred years, we learn much in reference to the quantity of timber which may be produced on good, light

land with natural drainage. To continue our general history:—It was by no means easy to obtain larch plants. The sixteen just noticed were brought from London by Mr. Menzies, of Migeny, who presented them to the Duke. Others were obtained by the same Duke James, who planted, in all, 1941. John, Duke of Athole, who succeeded in 1764, obtained about a thousand yearly from the cones of the first planted trees upon the lawn, and added in ten years 11,400 young larches to the growing crop. His successor, John the Planter, soon became a larch lover and an enthusiast, but previous to determining on the general planting of his estate, he felled some of the original larches, aged forty or fifty years old and tested their value. In a short time the Athole frigate, and a small fleet of merchant ships built of larch timber, were afloat, and, to his intense delight he soon discovered that the timber of the new fir from the Tyrol was equal, and in some respects superior, to the ancient pines of Scotland.

The greatest efforts in planting were made during the years 1816 to 1818, when 5,922,000 larches were planted, and from 1824 to 1826, when 4,038,880 were added. The great improver died in 1830, having planted 12,974,380 larches without mixture, and 1,122,339 in mixed plantations.



Fringed Dragon and Flying Dragon.

In this number we call attention to our Entomological Society and its works. We give you the accompanying illustration from the *Scientific American*. The appearance of these gentlemen should tend to make us complain less about the insects and pests with which we are troubled. These animals inhabit the Western Hemisphere, and are numerous.

The flying dragon is the most agile and daring of the winged lizards; and it can leap a distance of thirty paces, its so-called flight being similar to that of a flying squirrel or flying fish. The color of this reptile is variable, but is usually as follows. The upper surface is gray, with a tinge of olive, and daubed or mottled with brown. Several stripes of grayish white are sometimes seen on the wings, which are also ornamented with an angular network of dark blackish brown. When the dragon is at rest or even traversing the branches of trees, the parachutes lie in folds along the sides; but when it prepares to leap from one bough to another, it launches into the air and sails easily, with a slight fluttering of the wings.

It has been commonly supposed that these animals gave rise to the fabled dragons of the ancient mythologies; but the probability is that the real clue to the origin of the monster is to be found in the gigantic saurians of ancient times.

The Way to Cut Flowers.

The florists employ a pair of scissors, with which the stems are severed. But a writer in the *American Garden* says that the flowers should never be pulled off—nor should the stems be severed with scissors, but cut off with a sharp knife. The best time for cutting flowers is immediately after sundown, unless to preserve them from a storm, which would otherwise destroy or prevent their being cut in the evening. On cloudy days the time of cutting is a matter of much less difference. The explanation of these rules, as to the proper time for cutting, is found in the state of the sap at different times of the day and night. From the earliest dawn until sundown, the leaves are actively drawing upon the roots, and the sap is flowing freely. After that time the leaves are nearly dormant until morning. The plant is then resting, is asleep. A flower cut in the sunshine will wilt at once, and if not put into water, will quickly perish, whereas, if cut at sunset, it will remain fresh all night. In a cool place it will not appear to change for a long time, even if not put in water; yet, in a close, hot room it will fade in an hour. The usual manner is to cut all flowers with a long stem. Unnatural as it may seem, the true way (for the greater part of our flowers) is to remove them without a stem. Roses should be cut with a long stem—the longer

the better, provided other buds are not destroyed. The carnation and all plants that bear their flowers in clusters should be removed without stems. The heliotrope should be allowed a very short stem, and the verbena should only be cut as far down as the first leaf. A bit of wire or a match-stick will serve for a stem if it is desired to make of these stemless flowers a bouquet. If they are to be placed in shallow dishes—the best way to display them—the stems are of no consequence. Do not collect flowers in large bundles, or tie them together, as these processes also hasten decay. —*New York Herald.*

Poison Ivy.

Strange advice sometimes appears in our exchanges in regard to poisonous plants, and especially about "poison ivy." If what is called poison ivy (which, by the way, is not an ivy, but a species of sumac) was the only plant growing wild likely to poison

a person by contact, we might excuse some of the mistakes made by writers upon the subject. But the fact is that the so-called "ivy" is the most harmless of the two virulent species found in all our moist woods and low grounds. Even so good an authority as Dr. James C. White writes to a Boston medical journal, advising all "who are unacquainted with the poisons of ivy to avoid any vine or bush growing by rocks, fences and woodsides, and having glossy leaves arranged in threes." Now, this climbing or trailing species of sumac, or poison ivy, is the *Rhus toxicodendron*, and ninety persons out of every hundred can handle it with impunity.

But, growing in similar localities, and frequently side by side with it, there is another species known as poison elder. Poison sumac, or poison dog-wood, is botanically the *Rhus venenata*, which few persons can handle without being poisoned. This virulent species is not, however, "a vine having three leaves," but a shrub growing ten to twenty feet high, with long, pinnate leaves of seven to thirteen ovate entire leaflets. Pinnate leaves are those which have small leaflets on each side of the mid-rib.

Now, when any of our readers are searching for wild plants or fruits, in moist grounds, we would warn them to give this plant a wide berth, if they are at all susceptible to sumac poison. —*Rural New Yorker.*