

GLOXINIAS AND GESNERIAS.

These beautiful plants are not very common in Canada, nor do I suppose they ever will become so in the same degree as the Geranium and a few other plants which can be grown with a measure of success under very varied conditions, and which I am pleased to know can be seen in nearly every real home in our country. I am quite aware of the fact that neither Gloxinias nor Gesnerias will ever become such universal household necessities as these plants I have just alluded to, but there is no reason why they should be so very rare and uncommon as they are. Well grown, perfect specimens of either are nearly as beautiful as it is possible for anything in the floral kingdom to be. And the Gloxinia in particular, by its neat, compact form of growth, freedom from insect pests, and long continuance of bloom, has, with the Gesneria, much to recommend it for the conservatory. After several failures I have had my efforts to grow these beautiful plants crowned with perfect success. Last season my Gloxinias were in bloom from May until September, and sometimes a dozen and a half of fine blooms on a single plant.

I will give a brief outline of the treatment required (or what was successful with me) in the culture of the Gloxinia, and this will in the main answer for both.

In the first place get bulbs (if you can) which have been kept right; that is, which, while resting, have been kept dry, or nearly so, and at a high temperature. Pot in soil composed largely of leaf mould or something light and porous. Do not fill the pots within an inch of the top, as later on the plants may need filling in with earth to make them firm. Cover the bulbs about half an inch deep with soil, and place the pots in a frame or case in a warm part of the conserva-

tory. It is best to have considerable bottom heat at first. Water sparingly till after growth commences. Do not, if possible, at this stage, or at any time wet the leaves or subject them to bright sunlight, as either of these mistakes will destroy the velvety beauty of the foliage. After the plants have become well established, water can be given freely. Keep an even but high temperature and a humid atmosphere until the plants commence to flower. The temperature may then be lowered as it lengthens the blooming season. After bloom has ceased withhold water and place the pots in a warm place to rest the bulbs until again required. The Gesneria requires the same treatment with the exception that I find it best to plant several bulbs of some varieties in one large pot. A pot of Gesneria zebrina, treated as advised, will form a great bush nearly three feet high, and at blooming time will be spangled with from fifty to a hundred bright red and orange colored flowers, which, with the rich velvety purple and green of the leaves beneath, makes an object of rare beauty.

I think among Gloxinias that the drooping kinds are the most beautiful, although I know it is considered proper to admire the erect kinds the most. The erect Gloxinia is a somewhat late introduction, and has been produced, I believe, by the skill of the florist, and is considered by some as a striking example of the way in which art can mend nature; but I cannot help feeling that much of the grace and beauty of a bell-shaped flower, such as this is, is lost by turning it stiffly upward at a correct angle of just so many degrees. I would advise no one to attempt the culture of either of these plants if not thoroughly in earnest about it; for an ill-grown specimen of either is a poor object, and bears about as much resemblance to a well-grown and perfect