

VIOLETS.

THESE "wee modest blue flowers" are never out of fashion, all the world loves them for their sweet refreshing fragrance.

Favored indeed are they who live in climates where the violet will live without protection and flourish out of doors. Among all violets, whether wild or cultivated, our choice for outdoor culture at least, is the Double Russian.

With us it is decidedly the hardiest double violet. The foliage is distinct, the flowers are unusually double, very large, and a lovely deep unshaded purple in color. For fragrance it is almost unequalled, and it is the only double variety that will survive the winter here in good condition without protection.

It is to be regretted that so fine a variety positively cannot be forced for winter flowers. With the aid of a cold frame they may be had in flower very early in the spring. This simple covering of glass starts them growing long before those in the open ground, bringing them into flower here easily by the 10th of April, and when grown in this manner, nice long flower stems are always secured. The double English violet of some catalogues turns out to be synonymous with this.

The single varieties are mostly quite hardy. There are dozens of varieties. European catalogues generally show long lists of them, but comparatively few of them find favor in American commerce. The variety California is at present immensely popular, it bears flowers of surprising size, and has the additional recommendation of very long flower stems, and robust growth. It forces admirably; the flowers have found a ready market during the past two winters, and the subtle violet disease, the nightmare of

those who grow the violet for winter flowers, seems as yet to have spared the California.

Luxonne, a new French introduction, is now heralded as having a larger, more open bloom than the above variety, and likely to eclipse it.

The double flowering sorts have a charm all their own, and excepting the Russian all are capricious here under outdoor culture, and many and ingenious are the devices we hear of to winter them safely. Water seems almost more fatal to them during their dormant season than frost.

We have seen plants growing in a real favorable situation, utterly destroyed by a quick thaw followed by frost surrounding the crowns by ice; plants beside them, enclosed by rough boards and covered with hot-bed sash, to keep off rain and snow, come through grandly. Again, if the sash were leaky, they have killed quite as badly, as those unprotected. Anything that holds much water like coal ashes or rotted manure, must be avoided, newly fallen tree leaves or evergreen branches are most satisfactory. To cover a bed in late fall with a simple frame of one inch boards and a well-glazed sash, is really very little trouble, and one may then always depend upon a profusion of flowers in the spring. Swanley white, a sport from Marie Louise, is really unique, it bears large, very fragrant pure white flowers. Marie Louise, the best known of all, very popular for winter flowers, has blue flowers with base of petals white. Neapolitan light blue a very pleasing color.

Lady Hume Campbell, is in color identical with M. Louise in color, excepting that it is a shade deeper, its constitution is stronger, and in many places