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Among the Flowers.

Heralds of Spring.

There are many methods by which Spring announces her coming. Among all, perhaps, none are more cherished than the first appearance of the spring flowers. The three varieties most common to the prairies are the anemone, sweet coltsfoot and marsh marigold. In most parts of the prairie provinces the anemone, or crocus-cup is the first to make its appearance. Who has not seen the little purple, furry, modest-looking flower pushing itself up to the light almost before the snow has gone? In 1906, the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba passed an Act making it the floral emblem of the Province. In this action, Manitoba has taken the lead, but no doubt the other provinces will follow the example before long.

Almost contemporaneous with the anemone, comes the sweet coltsfoot. While the former is to be found only in dry spots, one must go to the low damp land and around the sloughs in search of the latter. Not being so handsome as the anemone, it is not so eagerly sought, except by cattle, a fact known to every fastidious milkmaid,—and to her sorrow.

Later the marsh-marigold puts in its appearance. In point of brilliance it outshines both of those already mentioned and is altogether a beautiful flower. It is of medium size, bright yellow in color, with large fleshy leaves, and is found on wet soil or beside well shaded sloughs.

It pays to cultivate a lasting interest in the wild flowers of our prairies and hills. To know their names and something of their habits, to learn when to expect the different varieties and where to look for them, and to look for the manner in which they are related, is to add untold beauty to every quiet stroll and open the door to treasures of thought and feeling which must otherwise remain forever shut.

Flower Chat.

Can you think of anything more pleasant these days than the flowery lawns and blossoming prairies soon to be found on every hand? There is a deep sense of satisfaction in this spring sunshine with its pruning of vines, its transplanting of bulbs, its shaping of plots and beds and its dreams of the wealth and color and fragrance which the summer must bring to us.

In the enthusiasm which we now feel it might be well to proceed cautiously and remind ourselves of some things so easily forgotten or overlooked. Our first feeling is one of regret that there are so many beautiful things we cannot have. But we should not forget that a few well-chosen flowers, carefully tended, give far greater satisfaction than a large variety, sometimes neglected. Flowers must be cared for and we should be very careful not to plant more than we can properly attend to.

Naturally we must select hardy varieties. The Virginia Creeper and Russian Honeysuckle are, perhaps, the hardiest vines we know. Then there are several varieties without which no garden seems complete. Such are the Phlox, Poppy, Pinks, Sweet Williams, and Peonies, the hardier varieties of Roses, and later the Tiger-lily. In transplanting from the hotbed to the garden the tender plants should go through a process of "hardening off," in order that they may become acclimated to the effects of the sun and wind. Hardening off is usually accomplished by ventilating freely and by reducing the amount of water applied to the plant bed. The plant bed should become so dry that the plants will begin to wilt. After a few days they may be left uncovered during the entire day and on a mild night. The plants should

be thoroughly acclimated to outdoor conditions before transplanting and few losses will result.

Proper care should be given to the arrangement. Give the smaller varieties a chance to be seen. Make borders of white or at least bright-colored flowers. Sweet Williams require a front place when associated with poppies or larkspurs. Place tiger-lilies well back, while pinks and pansies should be given a forward place or grown in separate plots.

Above all do not overcrowd your plants. How many gardens are to be seen everywhere with no fault but this one. Sometimes this is to a degree necessary for purposes of protection. Certainly the problem of protecting the plants is an important one in many places. Shrubs may be used to good advantage here. Cultivated fox-glove, for instance, gives surprising results when grown amongst ornamental shrubs. A background of green trees or bushes always forms a pleasing contrast with brightly-colored flowers and serves also as a barrier against the harsh winds and scorching sun.

The following is a list of the flowering plants most adapted to our climate and has been approved by the Western Horticultural Society: Peony, phlox, iris (German and Siberian), golden-rod, bleeding-heart, Iceland poppy, oriental poppy, tiger-lily, columbine, sweet rocket, campanula, dianthus and achillea.

Rose Culture.

How often do we meet people from the south and east lamenting that roses cannot be grown in this country! Right here let it be said that such people are sadly in error and are without basis for their statements. Roses, as a matter of fact, can be grown in this country and will when properly cultivated produce a bloom as well colored and heavily petalled as any to be found elsewhere. This may seem a startling statement to make, but it has been proven to be true. Some of the varieties that have been produced successfully for the past ten years in this country are: La Reine, American Beauty, John Hooper, Magna Charta, Paul Heron, and many others. One plant of the American Beauty variety grown in Winnipeg produced blooms from the first of June until the end of October. As for moss roses no difficulty will be found in growing the following varieties: Capt. Ingram, Common Pink, Glory of Mosses, Crimson Globe, and Henry Martin.

The plants should be in the dormant state on their own roots. However, plants on their own roots can be had only in the States. Besides the trouble incidental to government restrictions such as fumigation, duty, etc., the fact that their season is earlier than ours makes it difficult to get plants that have not already sprouted before they arrive, in which case they are almost certain to be destroyed by the fumigation process.

But in case plants on their own roots are not available, the next best are those grafted low on the Manetti Stock, and these should be planted so that the part where the bud is joined to the stock will be from three to five inches below the surface, and all shoots that develop from below the junction of the stock and scion should be removed. Planted in this way the rose will in time throw out roots for itself, and in many cases, the Manetti stock will die out. In case the Manetti stock should throw out shoots of its own, the soil should be removed and the stock cut away leaving the new plant upon its own roots, which no frost will ever kill outright. Should the rose not root itself, remove the soil, make a slight incision under the lowest eye or bud on the twigs of the rose itself, cover them, first with some river sand, and then fill in the soil again, tramping it down firmly after about ten days.

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