

A few hints on Garden crops.—(Continued.)

Endive.—This plant, a relative of the dandelion and of the well known chicory, used, too frequently, to flavour coffee, is, if properly grown and blanched, one of the best autumn and winter salad-plants extant. It is an instance of the truthfulness, or rather trustworthiness of the old saying: "Handsome is that handsome does;" for the fine, showy, curled varieties are by far the best flavoured and the most tender, and tenderness and crispness are the chief things to be considered in growing endive and all saladings.

Endive requires a sandy soil. At Joliette and Sorel, I have grown endive that was finer than any I ever saw in England; and the land in both those places is sandy enough in all conscience.

As no one would eat endive as long as lettuces are to be had in perfection, I do not advise sowing the seed before the end of June. Sow in rows, thinly, about six inches apart, and when the plants are forward enough to handle, prick them out, like celery, to three inches apart, and water with a fine-rose watering pot. The final planting should be at 15x20 inches—not too much room in this country, where, if properly managed, this plant will grow to a, comparatively, enormous size.

Endive, like the cos lettuce, must be blanched to be worth eating. Nothing is more surprising to a foreigner than the scarcity of well managed salading in the Montreal markets. The cabbage-lettuce, which closes in of its own accord, is fine enough there, but cos-lettuce—rare in any form in this province—and endive, when to be seen, are nothing but a mass of green leaves, the principal qualities of which are bitterness and toughness.

If you want to eat endive in perfection, do this: on a perfectly dry afternoon, gather the leaves together with your left hand, with your right, tie them loosely with a piece of bass, and mould them up as high as the knot. This answers well except in wet seasons, when the plant is apt to rot. A safer way perhaps is to cover the plant, after tying, with a large flower-pot; covering the hole with an oyster-shell, concave side downwards: the air gets in and the wet does not. Or the tying alone may be practised. The chief point to be attended to is to tie loosely, so as to give the heart room to swell. When blanched sufficiently, the endive should be eaten at once, as it is mighty apt to rot.

Herbs.—Where there is plenty of room in the garden, pot-herbs may be grown; but, as a rule, the bottled herbs of Crosse and Blackwell are so good and so cheap, that, in small gardens, I should not trouble myself about sowing them.

Sage must be sown in a hotbed and set out 12 x 8 inches apart. Marjoram, the two savories, &c., in rows wide enough to get the hoe between, and thinned out to 4 inches in the row. Chervil grows anyhow. All herbs are better in poor than in rich soils: they do not grow so large, but the flavour is stronger. Mint does no good in dry soils. Plenty of sun while growing, but perfect shade while drying, is the secret of having good herbs. Never mix the sorts before bottling. It is the duty of the cook to vary the flavour of her soups and sauces, and how can she do that if the herbs are all thrown together?

My mint-bed died out this winter (1), I always thought that this was an indestructible plant: cause unknown.

Horse radish.—Crosse and Blackwell's, bottled in vinegar, is very good, but if you grow it, try this plan:

Early in the season choose young straight roots, eight or ten inches long, each with a single crown, and plant them out

in deeply dry soil a foot apart each way. Thus treated, you will have something very different from the pipe stems one generally sees, grown from plants that have been allowed to occupy some neglected corner of the garden for years. Store in dry sand.

By the bye, I tasted, at St. John's, in 1861, horse-radish leaves cooked like spinach. It was in early spring, and they were really not bad, though rather bitter.

Corn.—Every body knows as much as I do about this plant. One thing I must observe: Sow Early Minnesota, and Stowell's Evergreen, on the same day in the same soil, and the latter will be just fit to eat when the former is finished.

Kohl Rabi.—This I have grown experimentally, but I do not recommend it as a table vegetable. It is excellent for cows, but for our use turnips are better and not so troublesome to grow.

Leeks.—I spoke of leeks so lately that I have nothing to add on this subject, except that a few left in the ground all the winter were quite sound when the land was bare this spring. Shorten the leaves before setting out in the trenches. (1)

Lettuce.—No one who has eaten a salad made of cos-lettuce alone, with a properly compounded sauce, cares for cabbage lettuce except as a cooking-vegetable. Ask Mr. Barnard, the Director of these Journals, &c., what he thinks of my cos-lettuces! Lettuce is said to be very wholesome; it may be, for ought I know, but it is certainly the best salad-plant we have, and so delicately flavoured that it bears no admixture with any other plant: the man that would insult lettuce by adding onions to it, like Virgil's horror:

"Atque idem jungat vulpes et mulgeat hircos." would harness wolves and milk he-goats.

Cabbage lettuces must be grown in all gardens, on account of their rapid arrival at maturity. Putting aside forced lettuce, as beyond our usual means, I advise sowing the first seeds in a moderate hotbed about March 20th. They should be sown thin, and have plenty of air—never allow them to be drawn up. When they can be handled without fear of damaging them, water copiously, and half an hour afterwards, prick them out three inches apart each way, in the same bed; water and shade them. When the weather is settled in May, put them out in rich soil in 15 x 12 inch rows. Hoe frequently, and water abundantly. If the season is dry, you may tie them with bass or strips of any stuff that will not rot them. The greatest care must be taken to keep all moisture out of the heart before and after tying, as the least drop will infallibly rot the plant: all watering, therefore, should be done at the root of the lettuce, the rose of the watering-pot being taken off.

For succession, rows of lettuce should be sown every fortnight, and the plants singled 15 x 12 inches. I do not care for the curled cabbage-lettuce; the best, in my opinion, for all purposes, is the old summer cabbage-lettuce for out-door work, and the Tom Thumb for the earliest, though, as its name indicate, it is very small.

Of cos lettuce, the only sort I can get in this country is the White Paris. In England, I used to grow a brown-cos, that stood the winter without protection, but I never found it here. I have seen lettuce growing in the spring in spots where neglected plants had shed their seed in the previous fall: why should we not sow lettuce at that season expressly to stand the winter?

(1) And more; I had a soup last week made with a leek that had been lying in my coach house all the winter.

(1) Apparently, only, it has revived.

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