

Value of Bees in Wet Weather

The following extracts from an address entitled "Beneficial Results from the Fertilization of Fruit Blossoms by Bees" in the British Bee Journal, will be of interest:

Rain during the blooming season is a frequent cause of unfruitfulness. Continuous rain may wash away the pollen, and it may lose its vitality, but the principal cause of unfruitfulness at such times is due to the fact that insects, and particularly bees, which promote cross-fertilization between varieties are absent.

Unfruitfulness may be due to a scarcity of bees. I could mention several instances where orchards had proved unprofitable until bees were introduced.

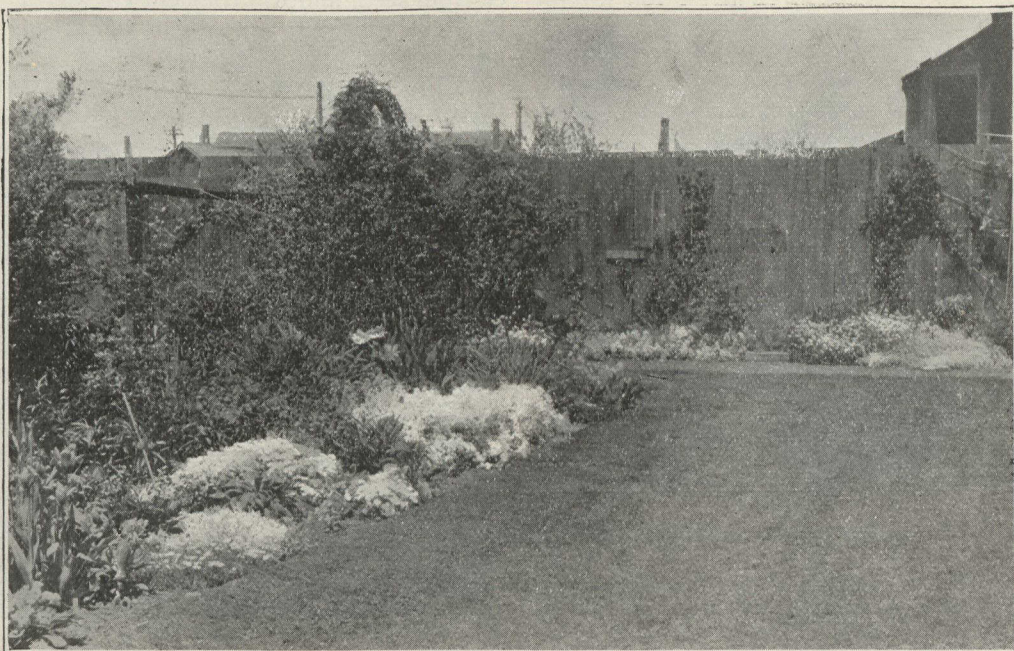
One in particular, a forty acre block of Alexander peach trees, had never borne profitable crops and the owner was about to cut them down. When asked where the nearest bees were kept he said five miles. Those bees were no use to him at all, and I advised him to give the trees another season's trial, and to get some bees at once. He obtained two colonies of bees, which he placed in the centre of his orchard. Of course, by that time more than half the blossom was over, but for all that he got a fair amount of fruit, the trees nearest the hives having the most on them. The next year he bought more bees, with the result that the trees were so laden with fruit that, although they had been thinned, the branches had to be supported by strong wooden props. Needless to say, there were no more complaints, for here was ample proof that all that was required to make the trees fruitful were bees to fertilize the blossoms.

Another fruit grower found that when he brought his hives into the orchard the first year's yield showed a fourfold increase of fruit, independent of the honey crop, showing the importance of having the hives near the trees. Apples this year in his district had been very scarce, excepting his own orchard and those immediately adjoining it.

Cross-fertilization produces very much larger and better flavored fruit than the self-fertilized does. This cross-pollination is almost entirely dependent upon insects, the chief of which are bees. There should be a sufficient number of bees in vicinity, that no matter how unfavorable the weather, the blossoms would be visited often enough to fertilize them perfectly.

BEES PREVENT FROST DAMAGE

If bees are plentiful fertilization takes place as soon as the blossom is ready, and the blossom is the better ready to stand a hard frost. If through lack of bees or bad weather fertilization is deferred, a frost may come in the meantime and result in great loss to the fruit grower.



A Corner Where Spring Flowers Bloom in All Their Sweetness

This glimpse of a corner in Miss Blacklock's garden, Toronto, shows a Polyanthus in bloom. Next to it, at the extreme left, is Snow-in-Summer, then Moss Pink and behind it Phlox Amoena (Lovely Phlox). The large clump to the right of them is the double Arabis (Rock Cress).

A Plea for the Spring Garden

Miss M. Blacklock, Toronto

AFTER the snowdrops, squills, hyacinths and other spring flowers of March and April have gladdened our hearts by their sweetness or wealth of bloom, primroses and bunch primroses (Polyanthi), the well beloved of all England's children, begin to add their quota of delight about the end of April. The primrose, which reaches perfection here during May, comes now in nearly all the shades of crimson and yellow that the polyanthus does, but it seems sweeter and more appropriately dressed in its old-fashioned primrose gown.

The polyanthus is most attractive in the rich, velvety crimsons that it delights to don, although it is beautiful in the rich yellows, creams, and many "art" shades of pink also. It is a very showy flower, and one that is perfectly hardy and easily grown, provided it is kept sufficiently well watered and sheltered from the blazing midsummer sun. It is easily raised from seed, and a strain known as Dean's Hybrids is excellent.

One of the daintiest Barrenworts (*Epi-medium rubrum*) joins the happy throng the first week in May. It is difficult to decide which to advise most, its quaint little cream and crimson flowers, springing from the axils of the leaves, or the beautifully tinted leaves themselves. Both are quite unique. *Corydalis nobilis* (the Noble Fumitory), with its stout flower stalk, closely packed with yellow and black blossoms; *C. bulbosa*, with smaller flowers of a somewhat dull magenta-crimson; and *C. rubrum*, also of

a magenta tint but decidedly pretty, make their debut with the daffodils and narcissi. Golden Tuft (*Alyssum saxatile*) is always in time to spread its golden mantle beneath the tulips and to consort with the double Arabis.

The Leopard's Bane (*Doronicum*) is the first of the daisy-like flowers to bloom. The variety named Harper Crewe (*D. plantagineum excelsum*) is the finest one and goes on blooming through a great part of the summer. The flowers are a bright yellow and about the size of our wild oxeye daisy. They last well when cut, which is probably why one sees so many little bunches of them at the street flower stalls in London in the spring, and every house that has a foot or two of earth in front of it boasts at least one plant inside the little iron palings. The plants grow quite tall and are very showy.

The low-growing phlox (*P. subulata*), often called moss pink, gives great masses of color. There are some new varieties, notably the one named Vivid, that are a purer pink than the type, and some very fine white ones. The Lovely Phlox (*P. amoena*) is a beautiful rose pink, and as it forms cushions, about six inches high, it is even more striking than the moss pink, which is of prostrate growth. They bloom about the same time and are both very desirable. The Dwarf Iris (see illustration number one) is another early flower that deserves special attention. There are a number of varieties differing greatly in size, colour,