

Farm and Garden

HOW TO BUILD HOTBEDS.

The Sunken Type Best For Raising Early Plants From Seed.

Of the several types of hotbeds in general use the sunken or pit type is, all things considered, the best for the raising of early plants from seed. This style of bed is constructed by excavating a pit six feet wide and two and one-half feet deep and as long as necessary to accommodate the number of 3 by 4 foot sash it is desired to use. The sides of the pit are boarded up with rough lumber nailed to posts which may be placed three feet or more apart. If some degree of permanency is desired good material will need to be used. Chestnut lumber is very serviceable and reasonably cheap; spruce comes next in point of durability and cheapness. The sides of the pit should be raised above the surface of the ground twenty inches at the back and twelve inches in front. This will provide ample pitch to the sash for shedding rain and also be of sufficient angle for good construction of the sun's rays and heat. Good sash should be used.

The location of the hotbed should be chosen where the natural drainage is good and, if possible, where there is a good windbreak at the north side. If a suitable sheltered spot is not available then a tight board fence six feet high and extending several feet beyond each end of the hotbed should be



HOTBEDS IN CONSTRUCTION.

erected to break off the cold north winds. Without such a windbreak it will be almost impossible to raise early plants successfully in the hotbed. The windbreak should be about five feet away from the north side of the frame.

The heating material for the hotbed should be horse manure (fresh from the stable, to which should be added, when accessible, one-half its bulk of forest leaves. If these are not available straw or hay may be used. The manure and added material is to be thoroughly mixed and formed into a conical heap to undergo fermentation. In the formation of this heap it should be trodden down in successive layers of a foot in depth until the heap is four feet or more in height. The base of the heap should be of sufficient diameter to insure good fermentation in the severest winter weather. All the material used for heating should be well damped before putting it in the pile or the fermentation will not be evenly distributed. Care must be taken that no frozen material is put in the heap or fermentation will be slow and may greatly interfere with the operator's plans of an early sowing of seed.—Rural New Yorker.

Celery Storage.

Hotbeds and cold frames are quite satisfactory for storing celery. They may either be dug out deeper or have another set of boards on top to give the required height. The plants are set in the frame close together and then covered with boards lapped to shed rain. In very cold localities such frames are covered with saws, over which are mats covered with boards. Ventilation must be given on warm days by blocking up the sash. Celery is also stored satisfactorily in trenches, with the boards used in blanching nailed in V shape and placed over the top. If warm weather follows the trenches are blocked up to admit air. When frost comes a light furrow is thrown up along the boards and later manure is thrown over them, but this trench plan is usually adopted when the crop is to be sold early in the winter. Trenches of celery should always be dry when it is stored, and some soil is lifted with the plants. It must be stored before and freezing.

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When a written contract is made do not allow the other party to carry it away. Have it made in duplicate, so that each party may keep a copy.

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Forest Supervisor.

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