

SOWING OF SEEDS MOST IMPORTANT FOR GARDENERS

Professor L. B. Judson of Cornell University Gives Some Valuable Hints as to Best Methods of Sowing.

The lack of concise information as to the sowing of seed deters many from proceeding with the installation of home and farm gardens. The following valuable hints are compiled from the work of Professor L. B. Judson of the department of agriculture, Cornell university. Three times the diameter of the seed is a good general rule for sowing. Early peas, however, should be covered two inches deep, and the main season sorts four. Fine seeds are best not covered at all, but merely sown on the surface of very finely prepared soil, and pressed in. In sowing small seeds with a drill, there is always danger of burying them too deeply; lettuce, for instance, can readily be planted so deeply it will never come up. Where the soil is stiff all seeds should be covered more lightly than in light, mellow soils.

Preparing Seed Bed.
Deep and thorough must be the preparation of the soil if speedy and uniform germination are to result. Deep plowing or spading is essential to provide a proper reservoir for moisture and abundant pasture for the roots. After the soil is finely pulverized and level down with a rake or other tool, the top soil will be left fine and free from lumps. Scatter fertilizers thinly and evenly over the bed just as you are finishing and rake in. Never allow seeds to come in contact with stable manures.

Seeds are often sown too thickly, making the labor of thinning very great and attended with loss to the remaining plants. Thinning is advised only where crowding is expressly sought, as in lawns, or where the seeds are known to be partly worthless. Stock purchased from a reliable seedman is above suspicion. The germination of many seeds is hastened by soaking them in water till they begin to swell, but this treatment is seldom advisable for small seeds because they may be injured. Early planted peas often go into soil too cold to induce prompt germination, and a previous soaking brings them up much sooner, and still more advisable in the practice if one has postponed sowing till the best season is past and wishes to make up for lost time.

Sowing in Shallow Box.

It is very convenient to sow seeds in a shallow box or "flat" four inches deep and any convenient size, from 12x16 to 18x24 inches. The box is filled with good garden loam, not over rich, and the seeds sown rather thickly in shallow drills one inch apart. Such seeds as lettuce and asters are frequently sown broadcast. If several varieties are sown in the same flat, press a small stick in the soil to show the dividing line. Cover the seeds by sifting a little soil over them and then water thoroughly, using a sprinler with fine holes so as not to wash out the seeds. Washing can also be effectively prevented by laying a piece of muslin over the soil and watering on top of the cloth. Leave the cloth on till the plants appear and less watering will be required. The flats should be examined each day to see that the surface soil does not dry out. After the plants are up great care must be taken in watering not to keep the surface wet and the soil underneath dry, as this is most certain to result in an attack of "damping." The fungus producing this disease attacks the stem of the seedling near the surface of the ground, brown and shriveling the stem until the plant tops over and finally dies. Water thoroughly and then wait till the subsoil plainly needs more. Try to keep the subsoil in moist condition and at the same time have a thin layer of soil on the surface decidedly dry.

Time for Transplanting.

Choose a dull day if possible for this work, but if the plants are of good size and becoming crowded do the work anyway. The very best time for transplanting is a few hours before a good shower, as the rain settles the earth firmly about the roots and the wetting keeps the plants from flagging. Some wait for a rain and set out plants as soon afterward as possible; but this is a far less favorable time than before, as the ground is either too muddy or too hard, unless reworked and the earth is not well settled until another rain. If plants are set in hot, dry weather they should be watered in, giving at least a pint to each plant. Where only a small number of plants are to be put out, begin operations in the latter part of the afternoon, so that they may have the cool air of night in which to recover. Plants will flag much less if shaded a day or two by a shingle stuck on the south side or a handful of lawn clippings placed over them. Plants from pots, of course, get no check and need no protection.

One must be careful not to expose the roots of the plants to the air and sun any more than necessary. Keep the plants covered with a wet gunny sack from the time they are taken from the seed bed until watered for planting. If some time is likely to elapse, have been taking them up and setting them out, the roots may be further protected by dipping them in clay water.

Work the Hotbeds.

From the Garden Magazine.
Make hotbeds at any time, using clean, fresh manure—a layer two feet thick tramped down hard. Be careful not to let the heat get too great. Put a few inches of soil over the heating material and after the first fermentation seeds may be sown. Give air on all fine days when the weather is warm, and remember the bed must be kept moist. Better use the thermometer—one for the air and the other for the soil. In here you can sow all seeds of annuals and perennials for transplanting in the open, all tender vegetables, and propagate hardy perennials in quantity. By sowing a pinch of lettuce seed every 10 days a succession of salad can be kept running ahead until the outdoor crop matures.

Royal Autographs on Glass.

King Haakon of Norway has presented to the Copenhagen Museum a pane of glass bearing a collection of imperial and royal autographs. The pane was taken from the Danish royal train, and the series of autographs was started by the Czar Alexander III, who scratched his name on the window with his diamond ring. His example was followed by the present czar, the late King Christian, King Edward, Queen Alexandra, King Haakon, King George of Greece and Queen Victoria of Spain.

PLANTING TIME

HIGH AND LOW TERRACES AND BEST METHODS FOR SODDING


By Roberts Conover in Beautiful Homes.
The owner of a home site whose elevation makes its frontage a problem, must bear in mind that while low embankments with an incline greater than 45 degrees may be maintained quite easily in sod, the high embankment of steep incline requires special care and usually needs the support of a wall for part of its height at least. Failure in sodding an embankment or terrace is due as much to the quality of the soil as to the severity of the incline, as loamy or rich soil strata seldom extend to sufficient depth in any but low embankments. For sand, clay or gravel banks a good top soil should be applied to a thickness of an inch and a half before any attempt is made to secure a sod from seed. Sodding is the quicker and surer, if more expensive method for embankments, the sods simply being placed in position against the even incline, spritzed freely when the sun is not shining and given a thorough wetting each night until the growth is established. Where a fine sod is to be obtained, by seeding, the incline should not be greater than 60 degrees for low terraces, and here the top soiling is absolutely imperative. Having obtained an even, porous surface, unflattened by any instrument, moisten it thoroughly by sprinkling with a water pot, then holding the seed in the closed right hand, slightly separate the fingers and kneeling above the terrace fling the seed gently with a regular rotary motion. Sow a little heavier toward the top. Very high banks must be reached by working both from top and bottom. After sowing, press the seed gently into the soil with a smooth board or the back of a spade. It is now important to keep the soil moist until germination without washing out the seed. Procure canvas bags, such as commercial fertilizers are sold in, split them down the sides and lay them along the bank, holding them in position by board or stones at the upper edge. The bagging may be wet occasionally if the soil beneath it is too dry. Usually this is not necessary.

should be laid below ground from 13 to 20 inches. Walls supporting embankments are never built plumb but incline toward the bank. That the mortar may become thoroughly dry before it is subjected to strain, walls are built four or five inches from the bank, the space being filled afterward with earth. Protect the top of the wall with a coping of cement or stone. The crumbling of a wall is due to the action of freezing and thawing upon the mortar. Where any defects are noticed after a severe winter, they should be pointed up with cement.

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