

## THE PEONY.

It is Reputed to Be the Coming Fashionable Flower.

An enthusiastic admirer of the peony writes as follows:  
Don't let autumn go by without planting the sooner the better—a good lot of these best of all hardy herbaceous perennials. Anybody can grow peonies, and you can get the most glorious results with one-half the trouble that you would have to expend in getting roses that were merely good. I believe the peony will become the typical flower of our American gardens and occupy the place with us that the rose does in England or the fleur-de-lis in France. It certainly has no competitor when the standard is the best results for the labor expended.

Do you ask, "Can I grow peonies?" I ask you, "Do apples grow in your neighborhood?" Wherever the apple will grow there, too, you can plant the peony. Having once set it out, you can shake hands with yourself, confident in the knowledge that it is there to stay, without any necessity of disturbance, for twenty years at least. Sometimes a clump will remain undisturbed for fifty years. No wonder it gives that comfortable, old-fashioned garden atmosphere that everybody wants around the home. The up to date peony fancier who wants to keep his plants at the highest standard all the time and does not mind the trouble will dig up the clumps, separate the roots and replant them (doing all this in September) every seven or eight years. Perhaps you have an old peony clump in your garden that has died out in the center so that it forms an irregular ring. Dig it up now, divide it and replant. Two years from now you will have such peonies as you never dreamed of.

Let me tell you how I plant my peonies, because I am sure that you will want to buy some and do likewise. To begin with, let me say that, although the plant will grow in any reasonably fertile soil, yet, like everything else, it will pay you well for extra attention to its wants. Ideal peony soil is a heavy moist loam. Some people have made the mistake of thinking that because the peony will take up a great quantity of water and because it prefers a moist loam it is also more happy in a continuously wet soil. This is true with certain limita-



THE CHINESE PEONY.

tions. It likes constantly moist soil, but it must be well drained, never stagnant. The ideal situation is the side of a slope leading down to wet land.

Dig a hole in the ground with a fork or spade, set the plant into it, then cover with soil and press the whole firmly with your hands and your feet to make everything firm and to be sure that every part of the root is in close contact with the soil. Water it, then go away and wait till spring, bearing in mind just one thing. If in your latitude zero weather is the rule in winter cover the bed with some leaf mold, sawdust, stable litter or anything to prevent the frost from getting out after it once gets in.

### Autumn Notes.

Most trees are better planted in spring, but it is often a good idea to buy in fall and heel in well so as to have them ready for early planting in spring.

The asparagus tops should be cut off and burned before the ripened seed scatters. Some persons destroy the seed bearing plants entirely. It is a good idea to cover the plants with coarse manure before winter to be dug into the soil in spring. This prevents deep freezing.

A furnace heated cellar is a poor place to keep most vegetables and fruits. By packing in sand, which may be sprinkled with water occasionally, the drying effects of the air may be partially overcome, and the produce keeps better.

Illustration of peony flowers from Fair

to five years to become attractive and useful, while a rough stone or concrete wall may be well covered with ivy in two summers. Ampelopsis, or Boston Ivy, is undoubtedly the best suited for this purpose, being a very rapid grower and absolutely hardy, flourishing under the most unfavorable conditions. Its shiny leaves are not injured by the dust and in the autumn turn to a brilliant orange and scarlet hue. There is no better time in the year than early October to set out new plants, which gives them a chance to get well rooted before the cold weather overtakes them. The young plants may be purchased of any nursery at 15 cents each, or \$10 per hundred. When planting they should be set fifteen feet apart.

Spring is such a busy season and there are so many things which must be done at once on the country place that it is wise to do as much work in the fall of the year as possible in the way of building, fencing, grading and getting ready generally.

### TOMATOES IN WINTER.

The Best Way to Keep Them Safely in Winter.

The most important condition for forcing tomatoes are: A warm, light house, the having a two-thirds span facing the south, being preferably strong bottom heat, rich soil, careful training, uniform temperature, care in watering and pollinating and, as before suggested, good judgment and constant watchfulness on the part of the grower. Bottom heat is not absolutely essential to success, but the crop matures more quickly if given this condition.

To make the best use of the house two crops should be grown during the



TOMATO TRIMMED TO SINGLE STELL.

season. This will bring each crop out at a season when the expense of heating during a part of the time will be slight. Plants for the first crop should be started as early as August. If two or more houses are available a second sowing should be made in about three weeks to give a succession. For the second crop seed should be sown during the latter part of October.

The plants are treated in every way as for outdoor culture till handled the last time. For fruiting some prefer benches, with about six inches of soil, but in the experience of others the best results have been obtained from the use of boxes eighteen inches square and twelve inches deep. In the bottom of the boxes is placed a layer of charcoal, broken pots or clinkers from the furnace, after which soil, consisting of three parts good garden loam and one part well rotted stable manure, is filled in to within two or three inches of the top. Each box will hold four plants, and the check caused by the partial confinement of the roots seems to be of value in hastening maturity. If the solid bed is used instead of the boxes the plants are set about sixteen inches apart each way, thus occupying a little more than one and one-half square feet of floor space for each plant.

Best returns usually follow where the plants are trained to a single stem, as shown in the illustration. Flax cords about the size of wood twine are fastened to the corners of the boxes or to wires placed parallel to each row for that purpose and attached above to wires running lengthwise of the building on the rafters or south bars. The plants are secured loosely to this support by means of short pieces of twine. All side shoots should be pinched out as soon as they appear, and when the plants are about five feet high or when four clusters of fruit have set the terminal buds should be pinched off. The vitality of the plant will then be expended in the development of fruit. If the plants

are not headed back other fruit clusters will form, but these scattering later clusters will unduly prolong the fruiting season without giving sufficient financial return to warrant delaying the removal of the old plants.

As the fruit sets the clusters should be supported by means of a small cord or piece of raffa passing around the main stem above a leaf, thus forming a sling. At this time, too, it is well to stir the surface of the soil and work in a quantity of well rotted manure or to give frequent applications of liquid manure.

The temperature of the house should be as nearly uniform as possible—about 60 degrees at night and 70 degrees in dark weather, but 80 degrees or even higher on bright, sunny days. All cold drafts and sudden changes of temperature should be rigidly avoided.

### Cobs For Kindling.

First, provide a large substantial dry cove. Place it in wood shed and fill it with old cobs. Second, take any old pall holding about two and a half or three quarts. Fill that about a quarter full with kerosene oil and hang on a stout nail conveniently near the large box. Then fill the pall with cobs, standing each on end so that the ends will be submerged in the oil. In the morning take six cobs from the pall, place in your stove, lay your large wood on the cobs and touch cobs off with a match. You will soon have a roaring hot fire. Nor need you entertain any fears about it not going, for the cobs have absorbed some of the oil and will burn for a half hour or more with intense heat. Even green wood may be used if baked in oven for an hour or so before the fire is allowed to go out the night before. But everybody knows that green wood is not as easy to kindle as seasoned wood. The good wife always appreciates a supply of dry fuel.

Of course when you take any cobs out of the pall others must be put in to take their place. In this way a very valuable supply of excellent kindling is always on hand, and you always know exactly where to find it. If you have no cobs, any miller is usually glad to let you have them for carrying them away, or at the most a miller will charge you only 25 cents for a two-horse double wagon, and he will, and since it is only necessary to use six cobs to start one fire they will last a long time. Besides, they are very handy—no muss or dirt, already split and ready for use.

### Waste of Silage.

The following is a Canadian farmer's method of preventing waste of silage.

"Each year as frequently as silos are filled there is considerable waste owing to the surface layer coming in contact with the air. The loss varies with the condition of the corn and with the attention it has received after it is placed in the silo. In seasons of plenty it is a common practice to simply fill the silo and take chances on what would spoil. This is a very wasteful practice. It is possible to bring this waste down to a minimum by a little attention after the silo has been filled and thoroughly tramped.

"Last year, owing to the scarcity of corn, we made an extra effort to preserve all that we had. As a result of these efforts the silos scarcely two inches of spoiled silage. After the silo was filled and thoroughly tramped we put a two inch layer of clover chaff on it. We then dampened this chaff with a barrel of water in which had been dissolved a ten quart pall of salt. This brine proved to be the most effective preserver we had ever tried. On the surface, when we came to feed the silage, the two inch layer on top peeled off slick and clean and left good silage immediately underneath. Try this scheme on your silo this fall, and you will save much food that would otherwise be spoiled. It is much better than chaff and growing grain such as is commonly used."

### Garden Mints.

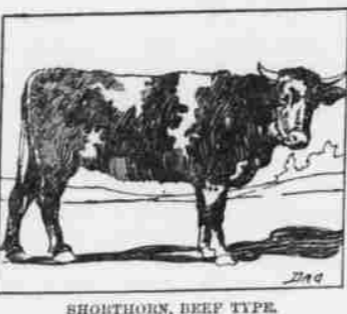
Squashes and pumpkins should be stored in a cool, dry place before being touched by frost and be handled very carefully to avoid bruising them. Salify (or vegetable oyster) and parsnips are left in the ground over winter in the autumn. But both are good in damp sand for use in winter when the ground is frozen. Parsnips are not injured by the first frosts until there is danger of the ground freezing. Cabbages are not injured by frost and may be left out until quite cold weather is imminent. Carrots and beets may be left in the ground till freezing weather.

### Keep It in the Bottle.

Bottled milk, being sealed with a cap, cannot absorb odors and should be left in the bottle until used, not emptied into an open dish.

## BEEF CATTLE ON THE FARM.

There are hundreds of farmers who for various reasons are not making a business of dairying, but are keeping only two or three family cows, and yet these same farmers are perhaps raising hogs or growing grain as a specialty and therefore have considerable rough-feeding. Corn fodder, old straw and clover hay are usually abundant on every farm of much size and unless fed



SHORTHORN, BEEF TYPE.

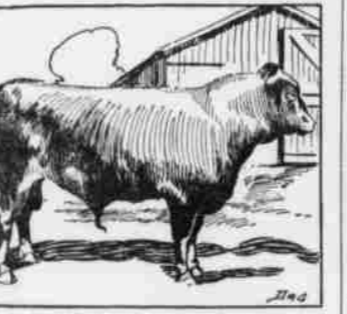
to cattle or sheep must be otherwise disposed of and perhaps at a loss financially, and of course the soil suffers when such products are sent off the farm.

Selecting the cattle is half the battle, writes an Ohio breeder in Rural New Yorker. It is useless to raise dairy steers and expect top prices for them at selling time. The straight backs, full joints and blocky quarters of the best breeders or beef grades are what you want in the feeders you select. Usually a farmer has two or three calves of his own raising, and if he can use more he may buy some calves from his neighbors at weaning time and thus have his bunch of cattle even in age and size. Where one needs a carload or more one can get range calves, or a stock buyer can get a bunch of native stock together in a short time, or one may go to some large stockyard and pick the calves or older stock personally.

My own practice is to buy some calves at weaning time three to six months old and keep them till they will do to export. I frequently keep them till they are four years old, though the best ones are ready at three years for the market. To bring good prices cattle must be well finished, and we cannot get the necessary finish while the cattle are growing without heavy feeding. There are a number of problems about cattle feeding that each farmer must work out according to his own conditions, and one of these is whether he shall buy the best feeders and finish for the best prices or buy common stuff and sell for whatever is offered. In my own practice I get as good calves as I possibly can and finish them for the higher prices, and I usually get the highest prices paid for grass cattle, the prices varying from \$4.50 to \$5.75 per hundred pounds during the past four years, the cattle ranging in weight from 1,200 to 1,500 pounds as three and four year olds.

Those who buy two-year-old cattle for a short feed have the advantage of getting quicker returns from their investment, but the cash invested is greater, and such cattle are sometimes so stunted that they never do as well as they should.

When feeding the cattle, the small feeder must depend on the local shipper to buy his cattle, and right here I



A PRIZE WINNING ANGUS.

will say that a little business sense comes in good play. The local shipper, if he has to, will pay within 75 cents per hundred of the market price of your grade of cattle, but will pay less if you let him. The larger feeder with a carload or more should have no trouble to sell his cattle, and he may deal direct with the live stock commission houses to advantage. I am not an expert feeder of cattle, but from experience I know that a farmer with some good cattle ready for market need not hunt a buyer.

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