

Protecting Flowers from Frost

WHEN Jack Frost has visited the garden and checked or blighted the vegetation, the flower lover will consider what shall be done for the various plants and shrubs. Jack Frost usually makes himself decidedly evident about the first of November. Different plants demand different treatment. Such flowers as peonies and hollyhocks will come up again the following year if they are properly protected during the winter, while others like cannas and dahlias, which are more accustomed to warmer climes, must have their roots or bulbs dug up and stored in a cellar. At this season many inquiries come to the United States Department of Agriculture regarding the treatment needed by different plants, and the Department's specialists have given the following suggestions regarding some of them:

Hardy Perennials.

Hardy perennials that are expected to live through the winter, should be covered with a good coating of manure or other litter to a depth of three or four inches. This in more southern localities will hold the frost in the ground during the winter and keep the plant from alternately freezing and thawing; in more northern regions the manure will keep the plant from freezing to so great a depth that its water supply would be cut off and the plant would perish. This treatment is good for peonies, larkspur, hollyhocks, columbines, iris, palycondones, and perennial poppies.

Cannas, Dahlias, Etc.

As soon as the tops of cannas, dahlias, gladiolas, caladiums, similar plants are killed by the frost, the roots or bulbs should be dug and stored in a cellar, where the temperature will remain about 55 degrees and should never go below 50 or above 60 degrees. No more earth should be shaken from the clumps of cannas and dahlias than is necessary to remove them from the ground. The plants may be placed on racks or in slat boxes so the air may circulate freely through them. No frost must reach the roots, nor must they become too warm or dry.

With bulbous plants, such as caladiums, gladiolas, tuberose, it is desirable to remove all the soil and dry them in the open air a day or two before storing.

The killed tops of all vegetation may well be removed from one's flower beds after Jack Frost has visited them. This is merely for the sake of appearance, as it has nothing to do with making the garden more successful the coming season.

Pansies.

If pansies are expected to do well in the South they must be set out in the fall, and need the protection of manure as do the perennials. In the South, pansies make the best showing in the early spring, and later in the summer are burnt up by the hot sun. North of the region from New York City to Springfield, Illinois, pansies do better if set out in the spring than if planted in the fall, for in these regions the flowers will not be affected by the strong sunlight and they should blossom all summer.

Geraniums.

The ordinary method of carrying geraniums over the winter as used by florists is as follows:

A few vigorous young plants are taken into a conservatory or greenhouse and cuttings are taken from these during the winter from which a new supply of plants is grown for spring use. The cuttings for the spring supply should not be made later than January, if good stock plants are desired for the next summer's use.

The ordinary house holder who desires to keep his or her plants through the winter is not usually the possessor of a conservatory where he can follow the method outlined above. The following suggestions may help him to keep a part of his geraniums, at least, throughout the winter season. Be-

fore the frost has killed the plants, dig up the geraniums and place them in a cool, damp cellar. This cellar should be cooler than that in which bulbs are kept, ranging in temperature from 40 to 50 degrees; in other words, such a cellar as is suitable for storing potatoes.

The plants may be placed in deep boxes, standing up and packed close together with a little dry soil about the roots. Geraniums are also sometimes hung up by the roots on the wall or from the posts. In spring, the tops of these plants should be cut off within two or three inches of the ground and the roots again planted. A loss of half the plants is to be anticipated in following this procedure.

Garden Notes

THE blooming season of almost all annuals may be greatly prolonged, not only by picking off the seed heads, but by cutting back severely, the entire plant, which will, except in a season of severe drought, make a fine, new growth and blossom profusely. This is especially true of the cornflowers or bachelor buttons, marigolds, larkspurs, and candytuft, and also of those general favorites, the nasturtiums, or tropaeolums, not, however, taking off the central stalks of these, but picking closely every day to prevent the formation of seed.

Professor Hunter of the department of entomology of the University of Kansas has found, as a result of experiments which he has conducted in the university orchard, that apples nipped by frost before picking in the fall may be saved by spraying with cold water to draw out the frost. If the water is applied before the apples begin to thaw the bloom of the apple is restored, and it is left in nearly perfect condition.

Asters unquestionably take rank as the finest of midsummer annuals, and their development and training will amply repay any extra care that may be bestowed. They do not thrive in stiff clay soils, and before sowing the seed or transferring from the hotbed the border designed for them should have a specially prepared soil of loam, rich compost and sand.

Do not plant flower-plants too close together. Verbenas should be at least 18 inches apart; petunias the same; phlox a foot; balsams a foot; pansies 10 inches; sinias 18 inches; maribold two feet; poppies 10 inches. If flowers are too close in the bed they will not make as thrifty a growth nor will the flowers be as large and plentiful.

Keep flower beds out of the center of the lawn. They show with better effect if used as borders for walks and around the sides of the lawn.

Soapwort, bouncing bet, hedge pink, bruisewort, old maid's pink or Fuller's herb, as Saponaria officinalis is commonly called, makes a good plant for the garden. The flowers are fragrant, of a delicate shade of pink, growing on stems one or two feet high. It is found growing along the roadsides and in waste places. The flowering season is from June until September. The leaves when bruised and stirred about in water make a cleansing lather.

Another good wild flower for the garden is the butterfly weed, pleurisy root, orange root or orange milkweed. The botanical name is Asclepias tuberosa. The flowers are of a very unusual hue of reddish orange. The stem grows one to two feet high. They are found in dry or sandy fields and along the roadsides. Plant in masses and also mass the flowers in large vases when they are picked. They last for days in water and on the plant or in bouquets when treated in this manner make a splendid show.

PRIZE CONTEST

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This contest closes Nov. 30th, 1914. You must send in your list in weekly installments. Send all you have on Nov. 14th, any you wish to add Nov. 21st and any additional names Nov. 28th. Prizes will be awarded as soon as the counting is completed.

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