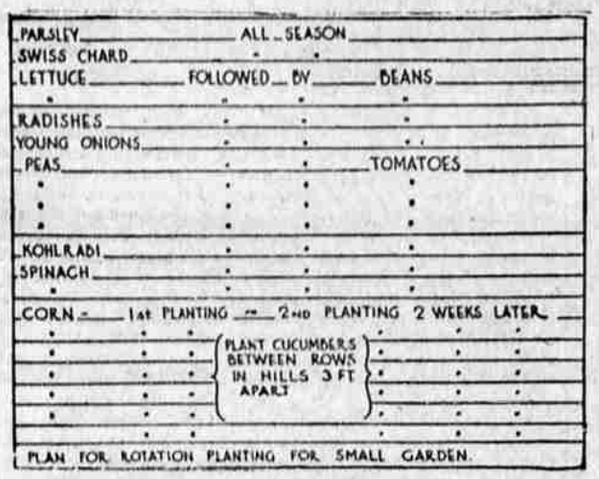
Hints for the Home Gardener



PLAN FOR ROTATION PLANTING FOR SMALL GARDEN.

Rotating the Crops

Rotation planting is an important factor to consider in a garden and one of the main points to consider a garden plan. In fact, it is almost a necessity to have garden plans on file to keep track of the rotation of crops. The same crops should not be planted in the same place in succeeding years.

Each kind of plant has its particular form of food it takes from the soil, and the soil becomes exhausted for that one plant if it is grown continually in the same place. Only one vegetable seems to be indifferent to being grown in the same spot year in and year out, and that is the onion.

There are several botanical orders that include a large portion of the vegetables, the cress or mustard family, legumes, the umbel bearers, and the nightshades. To the first belong radishes, turnips, cabbages, cauliflower, kohl rabis and kale. To the second belongs all the peas and beans. To the third belong parsnips, celery, parsley and carrots. The fourth includes tomatoes, potatoes, egg plants and peppers.

It is a good plan to group these plants according to family relation and see that a legume does not follow a legume in successive seasons, or a member of the mustard family a mustard—that is to say, cabbages follow turnips. The same rule applies to all these groups.

Not only is this true for annual succession, as the groups should be moved to different sections of the garden each year, but in following planting the same season, beans should not follow peas nor peas beans. Late cabbage should not follow early cabbage or turnips cabbages.

Plant a member of a different family as a follow crop, as peas to follow radishes or cabbages potatoes. Beans may follow radishes. Turnips may follow peas. Tomatoes may follow young onions or spinach. A little study as to these groups will greatly add to the success of the garden and the main idea in following planting and rotation is to make the soil yield the highest rental in vegetables to its owner.

Renovating the Lawn

Everybody has a lawn, but very few people have good ones. Now is a good time to start a real one.

The first requisite is good seed, seed from a reliable seed house that will contain good perennial grasses free from weed seeds, which will take hold and make a velvet surface to increase in beauty with each year. Much of the difficulty with lawns may be traced to poor, cheap seed which contains a large proportion of annual grasses which will make a fine show the first year and then will leave a thin and bedraggled stand of perennial grasses which will need to grow for some time to cover the bare spots where the annual grasses have died out.

Lawn seed is now prepared and mixed to suit various soils and situations and a description of the character of your yard will bring you the proper mixture for best results. Many seed houses will mix you a grass prescription if you ask them.

There are grass-seed mixtures for shady lawns, for sunny lawns, for light soil, for heavy soil, for sweet soil, for sour soil, seed that will give sod to stand hard usage, and for every purpose and situation likely to arise. It is a matter of consulting a catalogue or a dealer of recognized standing to get the right sort of seed.

A lawn is a garden for grass. The soil needs fertilizing just as much if not more than the garden proper, for it must support a heavier and denser plant life. Fertilize the lawn. Use pulverized sheep manure, shredded cow manure, nitrate of soda or the balanced commercial lawn fertilizers.

There will be bare spots this spring owing to the coating of ice which covered a large part of the country. Be ready to seed those spots as soon as the ice has melted.

Roll the lawn as soon as frost is well out of the ground.

THE MAN WITH THE HOE

Start snapdragon seed in a cold frame or in a cool room. They want a cool start and they'll make up for lost time when they get into the ground.

The new English lupines, which have made a sensation abroad, are now being offered by American seedsmen. They are worth adding to the perennial collection. Don't give them rich soil.

The English experts are also sending up a new hollyhock, the Exquisite, white edged with different colored centers.

Try a few dahlias from seed this year and see the surprises you will have next August and September. Start them in March in the house or in a hotbed.

It has been estimated that more than 150,000,000 talking machines records are made in the United States annually.

Garden Destroyers

Potato bugs, cabbage worms and plant lice in assorted variety are garden pests that appear as surely as the season rolls around, and every gardener must be ready to meet and repel the invading hordes of insect destroyers. In addition the cutworm works insidiously and destroys some vegetables, although commiting nothing like the depredations of enemies of the garden that work out in the open. There are also molds, blights and mildews to add to the toll.

The forehanded gardener has his poison plant loaded and ready to swat the invaders on sight.

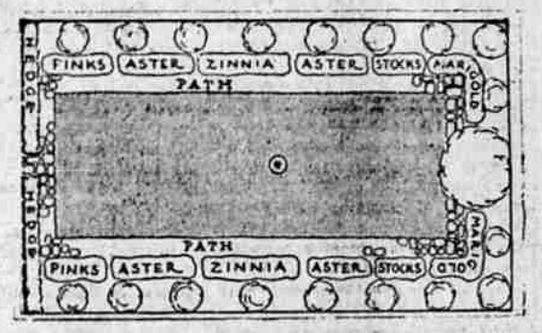
In his list are arsenical poisons, arsenate of lead, paris green, either alone or in combination; nicotine solution or tobacco powder for the lice, and bordeaux mixture for the various fungous pests. Also he has sprayers to distribute them. Aside from these poisons there are insecticides and slug shots which are nonpoisonous and effective.

Later in the season there are various bugs and beetles that flock to the cucumber, squash and melon vines in droves.

An insecticide combining all three qualities is an ideal one, and there are several proprietary poisons on the market which now standard and kill the bugs present and thwart those approaching.

The insect pests are two in variety, those that eat the foliage and stems and blossoms and those that suck the juices of the plant. The former include the potato bug and cabbage worm. The latter are confined largely to plant lice. For the eaters, arsenical poisons are the proper treatment. They will also minimize grasshoppers when they get troublesome in midsummer.

Plant lice, which now appear in all shades from pale green to black, with the exception of blue ones—and they may appear—yield to a spray of nicotine or tobacco. The poison should be applied so that the entire surface of the plant is wet. The plant louse must be hit by the spray to be killed. The leaf eaters need only to have the poison on the leaves where they can eat it.



Vegetables for Shade

A shady garden places a vegetable grower under a considerable handicap. If the shade is furnished by deciduous trees, he may grow the early spring vegetables, such as lettuce, radishes, young onions and spinach, with a fair degree of success, because they will have attained much of their growth before the trees have leaved out sufficiently to shut out the sun. Lettuce will be grateful for protection from the hot days which occasionally come in late spring.

But for midsummer vegetables the shady garden is limited as to varieties. String beans will give good enough crops to make them worth planting, although not as good as in the open sun. Parsnips and carrots often do fairly well. Leaf crops, in general, are more successful than root or fruit crops, and one that is sure fire is the Swiss chard for greens. It will give a good crop in a shady garden, although it will not luxuriate in the plenty of lime for plants such as peas and beans. Soil which has been treated for some time with nitrate or commercial fertilizers is likely to turn acid and these fertilizers should be alternated with a lime manner it does in the sun. The Swiss chard is a beet that does not make a thickened root. The beets themselves give a good leaf growth for greens in a shady situation, but will not develop as good roots as in the sun.

Early peas are a good prospect for a shady garden if planted early enough to get the spring sun before the trees shut out the sun. They will give a crop in late May or early June from earliest plantings and are worth while.

It is useless to expect sweet corn, tomatoes, the main crop of string beans, cabbages, cauliflower, turnips and other usual garden crops to flourish in shady gardens. If, however, the garden is shaded only half the day and gets afternoon or morning sun, a gardener need not hesitate to plant the usual crop with good assurances of worthwhile crops.

It will be remembered that during the war-garden days beans were grown in enormous quantities in many shady lots and good crops were harvested where it was thought previously that nothing would grow.

Make Study of the Soil

As we progress in scientific knowledge, we are learning a great deal about the soil. A gardener nowadays makes it his business to study his soil and find out its nature and what it needs before he begins making garden. He tests it to see whether it is acid or neutral. This is easily done by getting a few pieces of blue litmus paper from the drug store, mixing a sample of the soil in rain water or distilled water and dipping the litmus paper in it. If the soil is acid the paper turns red.

While acid soil may not be "sour" soil in the usual meaning of the word, and may be well supplied with nourishment for certain forms of plants, it is best to give it dressing in the fall to neutralize the acidity.

If the soil is loam, a mixture of clay and sand, it is likely to need the addition of humus in the form of manure or decaying leaves and grass clippings to add to its texture. If it is inclined to clay, sand or finely pulverized limestone plowed in will help to lighten it as well as heavy dressings of manure or vegetable matter to furnish the humus necessary.

Very sandy soil needs manure or leaves and lawn clippings and similar vegetable matter to decay in it because it cannot retain moisture without the addition of this vegetable sponge, one of the most valuable attributes of humus being its ability to retain moisture in suspension like a sponge.

The presence of certain weeds, such as sour dock or yellow sorrel, indicate an acid condition. The formation of moss on the surface may also indicate this condition, although it is not as certain a symptom as the sorrel. Lime has the valuable property, in addition to neutralizing, of liberating plant food for the use of the eager roots in the soil.

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