



# FRAN

BY JOHN BRECKENRIDGE ELLIS

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## BACK YARD FARMER

Interesting Pointers on Gardening for the City Man or Suburbanite.

### WHAT TO PLANT AND WHEN

Advice by an Expert on Agricultural Matters—Care of the Garden—Raising Sweet Peas—Hot Weather Pointers.

**By PROF. JOHN WILLARD BOLTE.**  
Every man with available land should make some kind of a garden on it. About one man in three who could have a nice little garden plot in the city has one. Almost everybody in the suburbs has both lawn, flowers and a vegetable garden.

The fascination of this delightful pastime is amply demonstrated by the fact that so many people make gardens every year and yet the majority of these gardens are failures to a greater or less degree. They start out beautifully, with the warm, fresh mellow earth turned over from its winter's rest, and the little delicate seedlings following the warm rains.

The first crops, small things like radishes and lettuce, develop fairly well and the gardener puts in his late crops with great expectations. When the hot, dry weather of late June and early July arrives the plants begin to shrink and shrivel. They turn brown and enter into a kind of dormant state, neither advancing nor retreating, worthless as food providers and certainly unhandsome to view.

This unthrifty summer condition knocks out the most satisfactory crops, corn, beans, tomatoes, cucumbers, etc. The worst of it is that the same thing happens to the same gardens, year after year, and the best of it is that it need not happen at all if the gardener will use his head as much as his back, and use both of them a good deal.

The two great causes of garden failures are lack of proper cultivation and lack of available plant food. In a humid climate it should never be necessary to water the garden if the soil is in proper condition to hold the natural rainfall. It needs to be plowed deeply, cultivated finely, firmed down well to make capillary connection between the soil water below and the plant roots above, and then the surface must be hoed, and hoed often.

Never let up on the hoeing. A single weed will evaporate many times its own weight in valuable soil water every day. If you permit the top soil to bake or a crust to form, direct means is established for the soil water to evaporate and it will leave the soil as rapidly as it would an open dish and possibly more rapidly. Do your best to keep your garden covered with an inch of fine, dry dust all the summer through. The roots will go deep and the plants will get all the water there is.

Next, fertility: A garden must contain plant food and the best plant food is rotten vegetable matter. Make a compost heap in some out-of-the-way corner or in a large box. Here throw your stable manure, grass clippings, leaves, waste vegetables, hen manure, in fact, anything that will rot. Keep it moist and keep flies away from it. Grass sod is an excellent foundation for a compost heap and it is extensively used by florists. Use plenty of the compost on your garden, plowing it under, and be careful not to put in too much straw, as that will dry out the soil. The compost will increase the water-holding capacity of the soil, it will permit of better ventilation, it furnishes plant food of all kinds, it lightens a heavy soil and stiffens a sandy one.

If you wish to brace up weak plants and force them this summer, fill a barrel full of manure and cover with water. The liquid resulting is the finest kind of quick acting fertilizer. Pour it about the plants to be forced, and the effect will be immediately perceptible.

**Sweet Peas.**  
No flower is more generally beloved than the old-fashioned Sweet Pea. It was dear to the hearts of our great grandmothers and their great-grandmothers as well, and for no telling how many generations back of that. It belongs to a large family whose scientific name is taken from the peculiar butterfly-like form of the blossoms. The garden varieties of green peas, string, wax, navy, pole and lima beans and the ornamental beans, are its first cousins. Some of our most valuable field crops, notably alfalfa, red, crimson, alsike and white clover, are first cousins once removed, and every wild flower that has the butterfly blossom is more or less distantly related.

Really, we have immense cause to be thankful for many members of the leguminous plants. As field crops they form the finest kind of hay and pasturage, and they are the only cultivated plants that possess the power of transferring nitrogen from the air to the soil. Without them it would be practically impossible to keep our soil productive.

In the floral field, this family is not so numerous as prominent as some other groups, but the Sweet Pea makes up for its rareness in numbers by its rare merit.

No flower will grow better under so many varying conditions as this one. Light soil or heavy, fertilizer or no fertilizer, deep trench or shallow, much care or little, it will do its very best to bloom early and often, and it will succeed most remarkably well.

Did you ever know any persons who did not like the perfume of the Sweet Pea? We do not, and we are sorry for them if there be any such.

In variety of tints the most fastidious can be suited, as there are 40 or 50 different shades and mixtures to choose from. They range from a deep pansy purple through all shades and mixtures of blue and red, to the purest vivid white. The colors are not merely surface colors. They are deep colors that actually live.

The next best thing to belief in God is to sympathize with people.

The proper way to grow sweet peas to their greatest perfection is to dig a trench a foot wide and a foot deep, as early as possible in the spring. Fill in six inches with rich, loose loam and plant the seed three inches apart and one-half inch deep after soaking them in water. As soon as the seedlings are six inches high fill in with earth around them until only two inches of the plant shows. This treatment will insure a more extensive root development and more resistance to drought. Fill in from time to time until the bottom of the trench is level with the land. Furnish a support for the vines, either woven wire, branches, or a fence, and they will run up several feet.

Be sure that you pick all of the blossoms as soon as they are perfect and the plants will bloom from early summer until frost. If allowed to go to seed the plants will promptly cease blooming.

The Sweet Pea might well be our national flower. May it bloom forever.

### Garden in Hot Weather.

When hot weather visits us the fact of most gardens hangs in the balance. At this time, the garden needs our care more than at any other and we feel less like giving it the necessary care. The weather is hot and the air is still, and a hammock in a shady nook looks better to fatter than any "Man With the Hoe" tableau, especially after a hard day's work. Remember that the kind of weather that gives you a very tired feeling, makes the weeds grow rank and bold and dries the garden soil until it is almost water-proof.

Probably you feel that you don't need the exercise nearly as much as you did in the spring, and probably you are right; at the same time it will do you good if you take it properly, and you cannot afford to have the garden go to pieces just when a little work will pull it through in grand shape.

Get up half an hour earlier than usual and do your garden work then, instead of waiting until the tired evening or trying to lump it all into a week's end job. A little daily work in the cool of the early morning will send you to your regular broad-and-butter job feeling many times better than that little extra sleep would.

Gone is that brown task—the one that deadens the feeling that the long stifling summer night brings.

Nature is at her loveliest while the dew is on and half the fun of gardening is getting close to nature. Do your gardening before you are tired out and enjoy it to the utmost.

We have previously told you what to do for the weeds, which, like the poor, are always with us. Unlike the poor, however, they need no assistance, but the strongest possible resistance, because they are altogether too well able to fend for themselves. Cut off their heads, cut off their feet, burn their middles, and do it before they have any offspring. Then start in and do it all over again, because they resurrect mighty fast if given the slightest opportunity.

Keep the soil surface in a dry, pulverized, weedless condition, and never let it harden. Pull the weeds out of the rows, where the hoe cannot reach them, because they do more harm here than between the rows.

If the garden shows lack of moisture, it must be furnished, and the best way to do this is to irrigate at night. This is better than sprinkling, because the water soaks in deeper and evaporation is much less at night than in the daytime. A thorough soaking once a week is plenty and the soil should be cultivated the next morning to hold the water.

Story Jones Tells.

Last year a distinguished Japanese official was in the hands of an entertainment committee and was seeing the greatness of New York. The next thing to be seen was the subway, and the rush hour of the morning was selected so that this observing Japanese could see New York in its most democratic scramble. The party was jammed aboard a local at Times Square, intending to take an express at Grand Central. They were unable to get out and proceeded to Fourteenth street. After passing Twenty-third street they got seats and were comfortable. At Fourteenth street, which is an express station, the guide of the party rushed them across the platform to an express, where they were again crushed together most uncomfortably. The Japanese official noticed that the local train went on its way with plenty of seats unoccupied. He said nothing, but when they alighted at Brooklyn bridge he saw locals pulling in across the platform and asked the guide to explain why they changed in such a rush at Fourteenth street. "Why," said the New Yorker, "we saved two minutes."

"Oh!" said the Japanese, "and pray tell me what we shall now do with the two minutes?"

Foods for Brood Sows.

Brood sows should have bulky and succulent foods. Grain feeds do not furnish these elements. Roots, vegetables and forage should be given in abundance.

Value of Salt.

Salt not only promotes digestion and assimilation, thus keeping the dairy herd in good health, but it is a big factor in causing the butter to come at churning time.

Big Price for Hen.

The prize Missouri hen which laid 281 eggs in the contest last year recently sold for \$800.

Meaning of Ventilation.

Ventilation means fresh air—not a draft.

Tonic for Hogs.

Common coal is an excellent tonic for hogs.

Make More Profit.

More alfalfa and less high priced feed will make more profit.

**SYNOPSIS.**  
Fran arrives at Hamilton Gregory's home in Littleburg, but finds him absent conducting the choir at a camp meeting. She repeats thither in search of him, laughs during the service and is asked to leave. About Ashton, superintendent of schools, secures Fran from the tent. He tells her Gregory is a wealthy man, deeply interested in charity work, and a pillar of the church. Ashton becomes greatly interested in Fran and while taking leave of her, holds her hand and is seen by Sapphira Clinton, sister of Robert Clinton, chairman of the school board.

### CHAPTER IV.—Continued.

He was sorry for her; at the same time he was subject to the reaction of his exhausting labors as song-leader. "Then," he said, with tired resignation, "if you'll follow me, I'll take you where you can spend the night, and tomorrow, I'll try to find you work."

"Work!" She laughed. "Oh, thank you!" Her recent was that of reputation. Work, indeed!

He drew back in surprise and displeasure. "You didn't understand me," she resumed. "What I want is a home. I don't want to follow you anywhere. This is where I want to stay."

"You cannot stay here," he answered with a slight smile at the presumptuous request, "but I'm willing to pay for a room at the hotel—"

At this moment the door was opened by the young woman who, some hours earlier, had responded to Fran's knocking. Footsteps upon the porch had told of Gregory's return.

The lady who was not Mrs. Gregory was so pleased to see the gentleman who was Mr. Gregory, that he did not meet since the evening meal—that, at first, she was unaware of the black shadow; and Mr. Gregory, in spite of his perplexity, forgot the shadow also, so cheered was he by the glimpse of his secretary as she stood in the brightly lighted hall. Such moments of delighted recognition are infinitesimal when a third person, however shadowy, is present; yet had the world been there, this exchange of glances must have taken place.

Fran did not understand her very wisdom blinded her as with too great light. She had seen so much of the world that, on seeing a tree bearing apples, she at once classified it as an apple tree. To Gregory, Grace Noir was but a charming and conscientious sympathizer in his life-work, the atmosphere in which he breathed freest. He had not breathed freely for half a dozen hours—no wonder he was glad to see her. To Grace Noir, Hamilton Gregory was but a benefactor to mankind, a man of lofty ideals whom it was a privilege to aid, and since she knew that her very eyes gave him strength, no wonder she was glad to see him.

Could Fran have read their thoughts, she would not have found the slightest consciousness of any shade of evil in their sympathetic comradeship. As she could read only their faces, she disliked more than ever the tall, young, and splendidly formed secretary.

"Oh," said Grace with restraint, discovering Fran.

"Yes," Fran said with her eldish smile, "back again."

Just without the portal Hamilton Gregory paused irresolutely. He did not know what course to pursue, so he repeated vacantly, "I am willing to pay—"

Fran interrupted flippantly: "I have all the money I want." Then she passed swiftly into the hall, rudely brushing past the secretary.

Gregory could only follow. He spoke to Grace in a low voice, telling all he knew of the night wanderer. Her attitude called for explanations, but he would have given them anyway, in that low, confidential murmur. He did not know why it was—or seek to know—but whenever he spoke to Grace, it was natural to use a low tone, as if modulating his touch to sensitive strings—as if the harmony resulting from the interplay of their souls called for the soft pedal.

"What is to be done?" Grace inquired. Her attitude of reserve toward Gregory which Fran's presence had inspired, melted to potential helpfulness; at the same time her dislike for the girl solidified.

"What do you advise?" Gregory asked his secretary gently.

Grace cast a disdainful look at Fran. Then she turned to her employer and her deliciously curved face changed most charmingly. "I think," she responded with a faint shake of rebuke for his leniency, "that you should not need my advice in this matter." Why should he stand apparently helpless before this small bundle of arrogant impudence?

Gregory turned upon Fran with affected harshness. "You must go." He was annoyed that Grace should imagine him weak.

Fran's face hardened. It became an ax of stone, sharpened at each end, with eyes, nose and mouth in a narrow line of cold defiance. To Grace the acute wedge of white forehead, gleaming its way to the roots of the black hair, and the sharp chin cutting its way down from the tightly drawn mouth, spoke only of cunning. She regarded Fran as a fox, brought to bay.

Fran spoke with calm deliberation: "I am not going away."

"I would advise you," said Grace, looking down at her from under drooping lids, "to go at once, for a storm is rising. Do you want to be caught in the rain?"

Fran looked up at Grace, undaunted. "I want to speak to Mr. Gregory. If you are the manager of this house, he and I can go outdoors. I don't mind getting wet. I've been in all kinds of weather."

Grace looked at Gregory. Her stances were effective weapons.

"I have no secrets from this lady," he said, looking into Grace's eyes, answering her silence. "What do you want to say to me, child?"

Fran shrugged her shoulders, always looking at Grace, while neither of the others looked at her. "Very well, then, of course it doesn't matter to me, but I thought it might to Mr. Gregory. Since he hasn't any secrets from you, of course he has told you that one of nearly twenty years ago—"

It was not the rumble of distant thunder, but a strange exclamation from the man that interrupted her; it was some such cry as human creatures may have uttered before the crystallizing of recurring experiences into the terms of speech.

Fran gave quick, relentless blows: "Of course he has told you all about his Springfield life—"

"Silence!" shouted Gregory, quivering from head to foot. The word was like an imprecation, and for a time it kept hissing between his locked teeth.

"And of course," Fran continued, tilting up her chin as if to drive in the words, "since you know all of his secrets—all of them—you have naturally been told the most important one. And so you know that when he was boarding with his cousin in Springfield and attending the college there, something like twenty years ago—"

"Leave us!" Gregory cried, waving a violent arm at his secretary, as if to sweep her beyond the possibility of overhearing another word.

"Leave us—with her?" Grace stammered, too amazed by his attitude to feel offended.

"Yes, yes, yes! Go at once!" He seemed the victim of some mysterious terror.

Grace compressed her full lips till they were thinned to a white line "Do you mean forever?"

"Oh, Grace—I beg your pardon—Miss Grace—I don't mean that, of course. What could I do without you? Nothing, nothing, Grace—you are the soul of my work. Don't look at me so cruelly."

"Then you just mean," Grace said steadily, "for me to go away for a little while?"

"Only half an hour; that's all. Only half an hour, and then come back to me, and I will explain."

"You needn't go at all, on my account," observed Fran, with a twist of her mouth. "It's nothing to me whether you go or stay."

"She has learned a secret," Gregory stammered, "that vitally affects— affects some people—some friends of mine. I must talk to her about— about that secret, just for a little while. Half an hour, Miss Grace, that is all. That is really all—then come back to me. You understand that I ask on account of the secret that I know of your work. You understand that I would never send you away from me if I had my way, don't you, Grace?"

"I understand that you want me to go now," Grace Noir replied unresponsive. She ascended the stairway, at each step seeming to mount that much the higher into an atmosphere of righteous remoteness.

No one who separated Gregory from his secretary could enjoy his toleration, but Fran had struck far below the surface of likings and dislikings. She had turned back the covering of conventionalities to lay bare the quivering heartstrings of life itself. There was no time to hesitate. The stone ax which on other occasions might be a laughing, elfish face was now held ready for battle.

"Oh," cried Fran, catching a tempestuous breath, uneven, violent, "you know what I mean—that!"

The dew glistened on his brow, but he doggedly stood on the defensive. "You are indefinite," he muttered, trying to appear bold.

She knew he did not understand because he would not, and now she realized that he would, if possible, deny. Pretense and sham always hardened her. "Then," she said slowly, "I will be definite. I will tell you the things it would have been better for you to tell me. Your early home was in New York, but you had a cousin living in Springfield, where there was a very good college, where your parents were anxious to get you away from the temptations of a big city until you were of age. So you were sent to live with your cousin and attend college. You were with him three or four years, and at last the time came for graduation. Shall I go on?"

He thought desperately for self-preservation. "What is there in all this?"

"You had married, in the meantime," Fran said coldly; "married secretly. That was about nineteen years ago. She was only eighteen. After graduation you were to go to New York, break the news to your father, come back to Springfield for your wife, and acknowledge her. You graduated; you went to your father. Did you come back?"

"My God!" groaned the man. So she knew everything; must he admit it? "What is all this to you?"

He burst forth. "Who and what are you, anyway—and why do you come here with your story? If it were true—"

"True?" said Fran bitterly. "If you've forgotten, why not go to Springfield and ask the first old citizen you meet? Or you might write to some one you used to know, and inquire. If you prefer, I'll send for one of your old professors, and pay his expenses. They took a good deal of interest in the young college student who married and neglected Josephine Derry. They haven't forgotten it, if you have."

"You don't know," he gasped, "that there's a penalty for coming to supposed facts in their lives. You don't know that the jails are ready to punish blackmailing, for you are only a little girl and don't understand such things. I give you warning. Although you are in short dresses—"

"Yes," remarked Fran dryly, "I thought that would be an advantage to you. It ought to make things easier."

"How an advantage to me? Easier? What have I to do with you?"

"I thought," Fran said coldly, "that it would be easier for you to take me into the house as a little girl than as a grown woman. You'll remember I told you I've come here to stay."

"To stay!" he echoed, shrinking back. "You?"

"Yes," she said, all the cooler for his attitude of repulsion. "I want a home. Yes, I'm going to stay. I want to belong to somebody."

He cried out desperately, "But what am I to do? This will ruin me—oh, it's true, all you've said—I don't deny it. But I tell you, girl, you will ruin me. Is all the work of my life to be overturned? I shall go mad."

"No, you won't," Fran calmly assured him. "You'll do what every one has to do, sooner or later—face the situation. You're a little late getting to it, but it was coming all the time. You can let me live here as an adopted orphan, or in any way you please, married, married—"

"I know all about it," he said, "but I don't want to make it hard for you, truly I don't." "Don't you?" He spoke not loudly, but with tremendous pressure of desire. "Then, for God's sake, go back! Go back to—wherever you came from. I'll pay all expenses. You shall have all you want—"

"All I want," Fran responded, "is a home, and that's something people can't buy. Get used to the thought of my staying here; that will make it easy."

"Easy!" he ejaculated. "Then it's your purpose to compel me to give you shelter because of this secret—you mean to ruin me. I'll not be able to account for you, and they will question—my wife will want to know, and—others as well."

"Now, now," said Fran, with sudden gentleness, "don't be so excited, don't take it so hard. Let them question. I'll know how to keep from exposing you. But I do want to belong to somebody, and after I've been here a while, and you begin to like me, I'll tell you everything. I knew the Josephine Derry that you deserted—she raised me, and I know she loved you to the end. Didn't you ever care for her, not even at the first, when you got her to keep your marriage secret until you could speak to your father face to face? You must have loved her then. And she's the best friend I ever had. Since she died I've wandered—and—and I want a home."

The long loneliness of years found expression in her eager voice and pleading eyes, but he was too engrossed with his own misfortunes to heed her emotion. "Didn't I go back to Springfield?" he cried out. "Of course I did. I made inquiries for her; that's why I went back—to find out what had become of her. I'd been gone only three years, yes, only three years, but, good heavens, how I had suffered! I was so changed that nobody knew me." He paused, appalled at the recollection. "I have always had a terrible capacity for suffering. I tell you, it was my duty to go back to find her, and I went back. I would have acknowledged her as my wife. I would have lived with her. I'd have done right by her, though it had killed me. Can I say more than that?"

"I am glad you went back," said Fran softly. "She never knew it. I am so glad that you did—even that."

"Yes, I did go back," he said, more firmly. "But she was gone. I tell you all this because you say she was your best friend."

"A while ago you asked me who I am—and what?"

"It doesn't matter," he interjected. "You were her friend; that is all I care to know. I went back to Springfield, after three years—but she was gone. I was told that her uncle had cast her off, and she had disappeared. It seems that she'd made friends with a class of people who were not—who were not—respectable."

Fran's eyes shone brightly. "Oh, they were not at all what you would call respectable. They were not religious."

"So I was told," he resumed, a little uncertainly. "There was no way for me to find her."

"Her?" cried Fran; "you keep on saying 'her.' Do you mean—?"

He hesitated. "She had chosen her part—to live with those people—I left

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