



The Home Department

Conducted by
Helen Watts McVey

Don't Quit

Fight, and the crowd stays with you;
Quit, and you're out of the race;
For he who quits goes down and out,
And who fights slips into his place.
Dig, and you reach rock-bottom;
Quit, and you'll find but sand;
For the treasure is for the digger—
For the quitter, the rifled land.

Plow, and you turn smooth furrows;
Quit, and your tools gather rust;
Root, and you soon learn to burrow;
Keep striving, and pay you it must.
The world lays its coin on the winner;
For the shirk, it has no use at all;
So, up with you: Wrestle, you sinner!
Or don't howl if you go to the wall.
—Martin Brewster, in Farm Journal.

Work for the Springtime

If you have not already ordered your catalogues from the florist and nurserymen, do not delay, for springtime is seed-time, and when the March winds begin to blow, it is full time to begin to stir the soil. One mistake too many of us make is never to look far enough ahead. Every season, we should do everything in our power to add to the permanent beauty of our garden, or its usefulness. A safe way to do this is to give due attention to the blooming season of our flowering plants, or shrubs, and the possibilities in the way of foliage or flower of everything we plant. Read carefully the descriptions of the plants catalogued, note their blooming period, and choose for a succession, and by this means there will always be flowers of some kind ready at hand. Many summer bulbs or plants will bloom well on into the winter months if carefully potted at the approach of cool nights and accustomed to house conditions. Many things intended for the window garden must be planted in springtime and cared for during the summer and fall. Begin now to plan for the autumn and winter months.

Try to have a succession of vegetables in the garden by a selection of early and late maturing varieties, and also by having seeds for successive plantings, so that as one sowing of seeds mature, or is exhausted, another sowing shall have filled the vacant places. The garden spot should be very rich—the best of the manures and fertilizers should be plentifully used and seeds and plants should be ordered of reliable nurserymen.

Work for a succession of fruits by planting varieties that succeed each other. Plan for the hot, dry months, as well as the early, well watered ones. Don't let the garden go to weeds through neglect to have the right kind of fruits and vegetables started and well cultivated to withstand the drouth.

When Spring Winds Blow

I do not think there ever was a woman who did not love flowers, but not all women are willing, or have the time to devote to a large garden or border devoted exclusively to such things, unless the majority of the plants are perennials, herbaceous or shrubby. But any woman can have a little greenery and bloom, if she has a pot of earth or a plat of ground as big as a pocket-handkerchief. In the cities, beautiful things are grown in window boxes, and if the plants used are suited to the sun or shade of the window outside of which the boxes are hung, the effect

may be all that can be desired. These plants are easily watered and cared for, and there are many hanging plants that serve as a fringe down the sides, while plants of upright growth, beautiful for either bloom or foliage, or both, are to be had of the florist, or grown from seeds. Care must be taken to have plants suited to the location, whether shade or sun-loving. If in doubt as to what kinds to get, tell your florist what they will get of shade or shine, and he will advise you. A flourishing window box is just beautiful.

Many plants for porch or living room should be ordered now, and kept growing through the spring and summer. Palms may be grown from seeds, as the seeds germinate readily, and the plants grow rapidly. But it is better to send to the nurseryman for a plant already started, if time is any object, as most of palms do not develop the character leaf the first year.

Tuberous should be started in pots early; gladiolas, and other summer blooming bulbs may be treated the same, and when well started, the bulb with its ball of earth can be turned out into the border at the proper season. Gladiolas should be planted in groups, a dozen or more close together. Get the mixed colors of good size; or beds one color may be chosen. Do not forget to order flowering vines for the porches and trellises. The varieties of large-flowering clematis are beautiful and satisfactory.

Seeds or Plants?

While it is advisable to plant seeds for many things, there are many perennials, shrubs and vines that must be ordered of the nurseryman, as the seeds germinate slowly, and the young plants are difficult to raise unless one is experienced. Then, too, there are many things that are wanted singly, a large number of them not being desirable. Others do not "come true" to name, and if one wants a special kind or color, it is best to order the plants from the nurseryman. For these, the order may be sent in at any time, and the florist will send the plants at the proper season. It is better to order early, as the orders are handled in the same order in which they come in, and the first-comers usually get the best packages, while the last orders have to be filled from the picked-over stock, and in many cases, substitution must be resorted to, or the order not filled because of the stock having been exhausted. Get your orders in early.

For the Fruit Garden

Do not neglect the family fruit garden. If one has but a small back yard, there is always room for a good gooseberry bush, or a root of rhubarb, or a grape vine. Any of these, once established, will pay rent, right along. If there is a large yard, a sweet cherry, dwarf peach, pear or apricot, or a choice plum tree may be used. These can be ordered in mailing size, and with any ordinary care will live and grow rapidly, coming into bearing in a short while, some varieties sooner than others. Many nut trees can be supplied by the nurserymen, and according to latitude, will add much to the comforts of the home table. While we all want raspberries and blackberries, we should have them away from the house, and the blackberry just

revels in rich ground, moisture and shade. A "home patch" of these will well repay care. The plants can be ordered from the nurserymen, or, if plants are already established, roots and tips may be made to fill vacancies. But be sure to have good stock.

Possibilities of Mixed Seed Packets

Among the perennials one may have through the sowing of one or more packets of mixed perennial seeds are columbines, larkspurs, chrysanthemums, irises, rose mallows, phloxes, oriental poppies, fox gloves, lobelias, valerians, sweet williams, holly-hocks, dianthus in variety, golden glow, and dozens of others. All seedsmen put up these mixtures, and sell them for ten cents each, and no two firms put up the same assortment. So, it might be well to club together with your neighbors and get a packet from different seedsmen, and divide the plants when they are large enough for transplanting. Many shrubs and vines can be grown from seeds, and many of the plants will bloom the first season, while others will put in for growth alone the first year.

Dahlias, cannas, and many other tuberous-rooted plants will grow readily from seeds, costing but a few cents for the seeds, but producing dollars worth of plants. These seeds should be planted early in window boxes in the house, if there is no hot bed; but any woman can learn to make and run a hot bed successfully. Little paper boxes of earth containing the seeds can be slipped into the hot bed that is starting the vegetable plants. If you've never tried raising such things, give them a trial this year.

Caring for the Seedlings

After you have got your seeds into the soil, remember that further care is needed. You must not neglect the seeds, for your supply of thrifty plants is to come from them, and neglect of seeds mean poor germination and frail plants. A baby plant is just like other babies—it needs a great deal of care, and the right kind of care, and if it does not get it, it will die. Some plants grow in spite of neglect; that is, they live; but they are just like little invalid children. Too much water will rot the seeds, while too little will dry out the tiny rootlets; some plants must have the sunshine, while others need the shade. Some can stand the noon glare, while others will stand only the softness of the morning. No one but a person who likes to "putter" should sow the tiny seeds, but the coarser kinds will stand much carelessness. Seedlings must have fresh air, even on warm days, when they can be shifted about; but great care must be taken to give the airing and proper watering, thinning and loosening of the soil. It is better to file a notch in the hard-shelled seeds, like the canna, and then pour boiling water over them, letting stand until the water is cool; take out those which have the shells burst, and repeat the process until all are opened.

The preparation of the soil has much to do with the germination of the seeds. It should be well worked, pulverized, and if fertilizers are used, they should be carefully mixed with the soil. It is impossible to give satisfactory rules about depths, as much depends on the size of the

seeds, and the strength the plants will have to push their way through the soil. Some very fine seeds require no covering, but should be mixed with three or four times their bulk of very fine soil then sprinkled over the prepared surface, and well pressed into the earth by laying a board on the soil and pressing. All seed beds should be well firmed after planting, as the soil does not dry out so quickly as if left loose.

Salad Plants

In planning the garden, do not forget the salad plants. Study the catalogues closely, and learn all you can about their uses from the cook books, but be sure to send in your order for seeds and plants. The lettuce is the chief salad plant, but there are many others that can be grown with success, and will give variety to the meal. Endives, fennel, chickory, chives, nasturtiums, garden cress, watercress, spinach, dandelion, parsley, mint, followed by cucumbers, cabbage, radishes, celery, beets, asparagus, onions, leeks—the list seems endless. Many salad plants should have been started last fall, some of them are perennial, while others must be planted only in the spring time. If you want a really satisfactory garden, even though it is a small one, study the catalogues and then send in your orders for seeds, plants, or cuttings. It is well to subscribe for a good farm paper, or gardening monthly, and learn how to have these things, for, in the long run, you will save more than the cost of the literature, and have vegetables such as no money can buy.

Mailing Plants

This is the season to order mailing-size plants for next winter's decoration; small plants are offered at small cost, and if they are ordered from a reliable firm, and given good care, whether for flowers, vines, shrubbery, fruits, or herbaceous perennials, they will make good growth by next fall, and become fully established, growing better and better, for many years. The plants intended for the house would cost a great deal, if purchased in the fall, in the sizes you will have from the ordered plants, and the change from the green house or forcing methods would make their thriftiness in your hands extremely problematic. The trouble for caring for them through the summer will be but little, and you will have learned their habits, and be better prepared to carry them through the winter.

Planting Time

Probably more seeds and plants are bought in March and April than any other time. In the far south, gardening is well on the way by this time, while in the middle country, we are just beginning to plan; in the far north, it is yet only the time for sending in orders for catalogues and seeds. By all means send for the catalogues, for there is always something to be learned from every one of them. Just say you "saw it in The Commoner" when you send in your name.

For the Early Garden

Among the vegetables, radishes, turnips, cabbage, lettuce, and plants of their class, appear in from three to six days after planting, while celery, parsnips, carrots, pepper, etc., require never less than ten days, and often twenty. Nearly all vegetables require from eight to fourteen days at the earliest.

The early potatoes should be in the ground as soon as it can be worked, and many things can be started as soon as the frost has quit heaving the soil. Clumps and roots can be separated, and divisions made at once.

When cutting potatoes for plant-