

## WINDOW GARDENING.

Read by Annie Howard before the Northwest Fruit Grower's Convention.

The English rank first among the nations as skillful and tasteful gardeners and makers of attractive homes. No traveler passing through the rural districts of England is ever wanting in enthusiastic praise of their trim lawns, beautiful flower beds and artistic window gardening. Even in some of the windows of the most wretched tenements in the crowded streets of London may be seen pots of southernwood, lavender and other plants, which, perchance, in happier days and under more favorable conditions, may have been cultivated more abundantly in neat cottage gardens.

Yet for all this, there is not the pretty sentiment connected with the English window gardens as with those of the Japanese. A passionate love for flowers is manifest everywhere in the "land of the rising sun," and in some localities there prevails a custom as pretty and poetical as it is unique. Unlike some of our American architects, the Japanese builder endeavors to construct his house, not to be a habitation merely, but a home; and as plants and flowers are always recognized and counted as honored members of the family, the windows and verandahs are planned for the greatest comfort and pleasure of these dear children. If other members of this household are marriageable daughters, prominently placed in the front verandah is an empty vase of the most exquisite workmanship, daintily hung by three delicate chains. Then, at some time when no one is looking, and it is said that detection has never been known, the almond-eyed little Romeo slips slyly in and places a lovely flower in the vase, and in this pretty way makes formal proposal for the young lady's hand.

If on the morrow, in accidentally passing along the opposite side of the street, he should see the object of his fond devotion watering and otherwise tenderly caring for his little token, then he and all the neighbors may know that his suit is favorably received, and preparations for the wedding may go joyously on.

If on the other hand, the tender little plant is drooping under the fierce heat of the sun, or lies dying on the hard pavement below, alas for his window gardening—at least in that direction. And doubtless the art about that time seems to him a very difficult and disappointing one.

But for ordinary window gardening, though every attempt may not be rewarded by success, the results, as is most likely the case with the Japanese lover, are seldom so fatally disastrous as to be utterly discouraging, if one is careful in selecting soil, and in providing food for the plants, together with plenty of light

## THE RANCH.

and air, and not too much artificial heat. Under such conditions even

"A single violet transplanted,  
The strength, the color, and the size,—  
All which before was poor and scant  
Redoubles still and multiplies."

Most authorities with which I am familiar agree that a fibrous loam or rotted turf is the best soil for geraniums, fuchsias and such other plants as are ordinarily chosen for winter culture—and this paper refers to in-door gardening only—and I have found a mixture of ordinary Palouse loam sand and one-fourth compost very satisfactory, especially for bulbs.

In putting the soil into pots, care must be taken to put bits of potsherd—broken oyster shells are better, though cinders will do—and a few pieces of charcoal in the bottom of each pot, to insure good drainage, and especially is this commended to the novice whose only recourse, when plants become pale and sickly looking, is to water them, whereas this abnormal condition is much more frequently caused by the want of air and light rather than by any lack of moisture.

Methodical watering of plants is, however, of the greatest importance and can be best acquired by careful observation and exercise of good judgment. One safe rule may be suggested and that is, whenever watering is necessary, let it be done thoroughly and well, and not repeated until the surface of the soil shows signs of dryness. The size of the pot, the nature, age and roots of the plant will have much to do in regulating this matter, so that while some plants need a good drink only once in every two or three days, others may be so thirsty as to require water even twice a day.

Rain water is by far the best, since every gallon when fresh, contains  $\frac{1}{2}$  gram of ammonia salts, and Liebig, the great agricultural chemist, claims this quantity per gallon sufficient to nourish a forest of oaks. The soot from the roofs but enhances the value of the water, and a few drops of added ammonia, if the water is not fresh, gives vitality to the roots and glossiness to the leaves. Never allow water to stand in the saucer of the pot unless the plant is semi-aquatic.

In addition to watering, care must be taken to refresh the leaves with a thorough sponge bath at least once a week; tepid water is best for this and a weak soap suds is beneficial. This method of bathing should be restricted, however, to plants having firm, smooth leaves; for others, with soft hairy foliage a small syringe having a very small "nose" is suggested. Observation will soon show that not one drop of water is beneficial to the blossom; this, the culmination of character, as it were, in the plant, the result of its natural inheritance, developed or dwarfed as the case may be by its environments, is then beyond all extrinsic influences.

TO BE CONTINUED.

## SUNSHINE, PEACE, HAPPINESS.

By Adelaide C. Young.

Sunshine in every room of the quaint little house on the hill. What magic attraction has this home for all of the old and the young, for all of the town's people who live within several miles of its doors? Why does the scantily furnished living room appear so comfortable and homelike, and why does joy and peace come to each heart as it enters in! There by the window sits the dear old lady from whom the sunshine emanates. We see not the plain little figure in the dark gown—but the spirit of goodness living in this lowly temple.—Not lowly though, since the Master makes his abode there. Love radiating from this one sheds its glory on all who approach her, and upon each a ray descends and gives its owner a feeling of sweet peace. Do you now ask what magic draws us there?

Tired and perplexed, I walk slowly up the well trodden path to the "little house on the hill."

"Good morning, Mother Wells, I come to cast my burdens upon you, since you have encouraged in me that habit of late."

"You must be dreaming, Frank," cheerily responds the little woman, "for no burdens have I felt for many a day. What seems to you a burden is but a divine ministration. Cast it on another you can not. Sooner or later it will appear showing you a touch of the Divine hand."

No explanation of my burden could I give, since Mother Wells let drop the subject and avoiding it altogether took me into the garden to show me the first signs of the flower seeds she had planted ten days before—tiny leaves peeping out into the sunshine. Then into the house we go again, talk of the leading articles in the last Century and Review of Reviews, and before I am aware of it my burden has for a time slipped away, and as I try to grasp it again while walking back to the village, I see the divine touch upon it. Thanks, Mother Wells for your kindly thought which kept me from speaking of the burden which was for me alone.

There is an altar in the soul of man,  
No friend however dear may enter there,  
The dwelling place of the eternal good,  
Where man is sure of being understood.

It is folly to believe that one can faithfully love, who does not love faithfulness.  
—Sir Phillip Sidney.

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