

Many of the wild plants that accompany the advent of spring can be used advantageously in the household. Before modern methods of marketing, storing and preserving made it possible to have vegetables throughout the year, these plants were eagerly sought for by housekeepers to furnish relief from the monotonous winter fare. Even now they will form a welcome change, and, above all, they will be had for the trouble of picking, as substitutes for purchased greens.

Foremost among these plants is the dandelion. Its use as a vegetable is so common that it is sold in many city markets. Occasionally it is cultivated by market gardeners, but much more frequently the plants sold are wild and ought to cost less than cultivated greens. When some one in the family can dig them near home, there can be no doubt as to the economy of using them. If they are taken from the lawn there is the further advantage of removing a troublesome weed—providing always that the digging is carefully done. Only the dandelion should be pulled, not the grass around it, and the root should be removed, not broken off at the top, else several crowns of leaves may grow in the place of one. As in most stems and leaf vegetables the texture and flavor are both best when the plants are young.

Growing as they do close to the surface of the ground, dandelion greens are likely to be full of earth and grit and must be carefully washed and rinsed in several waters. The water in which they have just been rinsed should never be poured out of the pan over the greens, but the greens should be lifted out of the water so that the dirt which has settled to the bottom may not get back on the leaves, and for the same reason the cooked "greens" should be lifted out of the water in which they are boiled.

The most common way of using dandelions is as a pot herb, or greens. As with most green vegetables it is a mistake to cook them more than is needed to make them tender. If they are boiled with one-eighth teaspoonful (level) of cooking soda to each quart of greens used they will keep their

color better. Young dandelions may also be used uncooked as a salad, a custom common in this country than in Europe where the tender plants are sometimes blanched like asparagus. If more dandelions are available than can be used while they are fresh they may be preserved for future use. They may be canned by the method used by the cunning clubs for spinach or they may be "put down" in salt according to a household method. In many homes it is a common practice to preserve dandelion greens with salt in stone crocks, putting in first a layer of greens, then a layer of salt, then more greens, and so on until the crock is filled. The dandelions are then covered with a close fitting plate or board, on which a weight (a clean piece of marble or a stone) is placed to keep the greens packed solid.

Other wild plants used as pot herbs are curly dock, pigweed or lambs quarters, chickweed, mustard shoots, purple milkweed shoots, young horse-radish leaves, marsh marigold (sometimes called American cowslip), poke sprouts, pepper cress, purslane or "muesley" and in the Southwestern States some sorts of cactus leaves and stalks. If the bitter acid flavor is too strong, as is frequently the case with horse-radish leaves or poke sprouts, for example, it may be lessened by changing the water once or twice during cooking. Rightly cooked all of the plants mentioned are harmless, but the marsh marigold is sometimes said to be harmful, but this is not the case with the cooked greens.

A little later in the season a few other pot herbs appear which, though cultivated rather than wild, are so seldom utilized that to use them means a much saving as if no care had been spent to raise them. Among these are the tops of turnips, radishes, beets and onions. All of which may be cooked like spinach or dandelion. The onion tops should be cut up into inch lengths before cooking. They are excellent served on toast. Cabbage sprouts are also a favorite when they are obtainable.

There are also a few salad plants to be had for the picking. Like all food materials eaten without cooking, they

must be very carefully washed before using. Watercress is perhaps the one most generally known. It is also cultivated. It should never be eaten if it has been grown where there is any chance of contamination from typhoid fever or other disease. This is true of any vegetable that is uncooked, but must be remembered especially in connection with plants growing near water, since the latter may have carried the disease germs a long way from the place where the illness was. Pepper grass or pepper cress is another wild plant useful for flavoring other salads, if too sharp to use alone. Sorrel may also be used to give a pleasant acid taste to lettuce or other mild flavored salads, though the ordinary wild kind is too sour to use in quantity as a potherb like the varieties cultivated for that purpose.

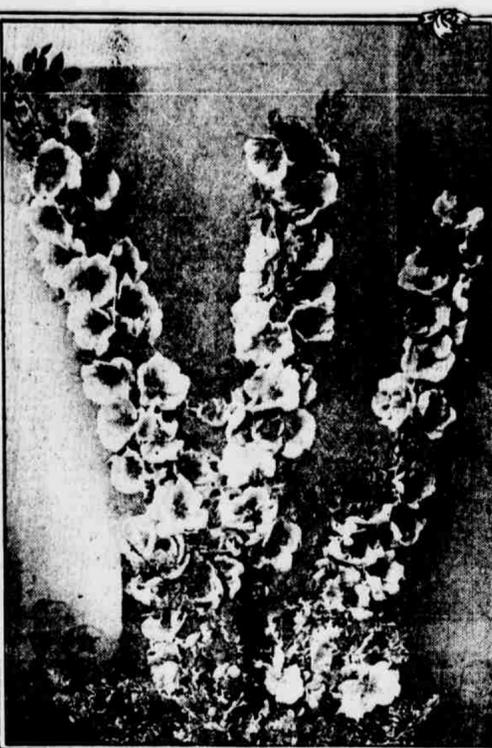
Of plants cultivated in the flower garden the leaves and variegated seeds of nasturtiums may be mentioned as a seasoning for salads.

**BIRDS SAVE CROPS.**

The protection of birds and the problem of food production bear a close relationship, according to E. H. Forbush, an ornithologist of Massachusetts, in a talk recently given at the State College of Agriculture at Cornell.

So valuable are the birds in protecting crops from insect pests, that without them, the grass crop, which is the biggest of all crops the world over, would hardly be possible. The birds feed on the pests which kill the grass, especially those which eat the roots. Dr. Forbush gives the birds a practically complete ally as enemies of the farmer. He backs his statements by so many specific instances in which birds have saved crops that those who heed his words will protect their feathered friends. Protection of the birds is not merely a matter of sentiment, but has a fundamental economic basis.

Parent birds work incessantly to keep their young sufficiently fed. A young bird is about the biggest eater in the world. Audubon, the great naturalist declared a woodcock would



New rose Hugonis.

eat its weight in worms in a night, do better than this; and it will eat it has since been shown that it will twice its weight in twenty-four hours.

In proportion to his size, if a man needed as much food as a young robin it would mean he would have to eat a Bologna sausage 47 feet long and 9 inches in circumference each day.

A farmer who thought the robins were pulling up his young cabbages learned from a student of bird life that the birds were pulling up only those plants which were dead; and this was not to get at the wire worms at the roots, which had caused the plants to die, and which would destroy other cabbages if left alone. In another case a group of farmers thought the meadow larks were destroying their crops. An ornithologist persuaded one farmer to spare the larks on his place. The other farmers shot these birds, the result was that the man who spared the larks was the only one for miles around who had an oat crop. The birds killed the insects which destroyed the other crops.

A Massachusetts cranberry grower suffered heavy losses from a worm which ate the berries. He encouraged the birds to build in his bog and in a few seasons he found he was bothered not at all by the worms.

Birds may be encouraged to build in orchards by having suitable nesting boxes provided and by being protected from their enemies. Their presence will favorably affect fruit production. They also help save the trees, because there are various birds which protect different parts of the tree; some feed on the insects which work at the roots; some on those which bore into the bark, and still others on those which eat the leaves.

**NEW ROSE HUGONIS.**

The new rose Hugonis was recently imported from China. The plants are perfectly hardy and the introducer says will stand the winters anywhere in the United States.

The illustration shows the exceptionally floriferous character of the plant, the stems being completely covered with flowers. It is the first rose to bloom in the spring, from ten days to two weeks ahead of Harry's Yellow. Last year the plants in Washington, D. C., were in bloom during the last snowstorm of the season. The flowers are of intense canary yellow, very bright and attractive, and the foliage is bright and dainty. When in bloom the entire plant is covered with the bright yellow blossoms, making a splendid early spring show. Later, rich scarlet berries are formed, which contrast beautifully with the delicate light foliage. The young shoots are of a rich crimson color. This rose is sure to be in great demand.

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The organisms which cause the diseases are harbored on the seed during the winter and are introduced into the ground at the time of planting. By soaking the tubers in a solution of corrosive sublimate or of formaldehyde before the seed is planted, the diseases may be greatly checked or wholly prevented.

**Potato Diseases.**

The four potato diseases likely to be found in New York are partly or wholly controllable by corrosive sublimate. These diseases are:

Scab, which is responsible for most of the rough and generally unmarketable potatoes.

The rhizoctonia stem rot, which is also known as the little potato disease, causes missing hills, an uneven stand and hills with nothing but small worthless potatoes. It appears on the seed tubers as small black particles like muck, sticking fast to the surface.

Blackleg, which causes a black stem rot and the early death of the plant, is carried both on and within the seed tubers.

Powdery scab, a disease recently introduced from Europe, is caused by an organism that is carried on affected potatoes and on other tubers which come in contact with them.

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The barrels are filled with uncut potatoes, which are covered with the solution and soaked for one and a half hours. At the end of this time the solution is drawn off, the tubers are removed, and the process repeated with the next lot of untreated potatoes, adding some fresh solution to replace what was taken up by the treated seed. The solution loses strength with each successive treatment; even with the addition of the fresh solution it should be drawn off after the fourth using.

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Reports from various parts of the country show that many hardy plants and trees have been greatly damaged by the unusually cold weather of the past winter. Peaches, pears, plums are badly damaged and hybrid perpetual roses frozen down to the ground in some parts of western New York. The frost penetrated the ground to a depth of eight feet and evergreen trees came through the winter badly. Tree peonies were entirely killed. The hardy perennials were well covered with snow and were not injured.

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The muskrat is found throughout a

wide area in North America, the habitat extending from the northern limit of trees to near the Mexican border.

The practicability of muskrat farming already has been demonstrated. The animals are easily kept, become very tame and breed well in narrow quarters. Under present economic conditions, however, keeping muskrats in preserves is more practicable than keeping them in restricted quarters. The former plan is in remunerative operation in the Chesapeake Bay region. In Dorchester county, Maryland, marshland formerly considered almost useless and now used as muskrat preserves is worth more, measured by actual income, than cultivated lands in the same vicinity. The owner of one 1,800 acre tract of marsh took in two seasons—1905 and 1910—more than 12,000 pelts, which sold for more than \$9,000.

**The Industry Adapted to Farmers.**

The maintaining of muskrat preserves should be an attractive business where conditions are favorable. The animals require no feeding, since the plant life of ponds and marshes furnishes abundance of food. It is possible to "plant" the industry in sections from which muskrats are now absent. As trapping is done in winter the business of muskrat farming is especially adapted to farmers and farmers' boys.

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**ARCHITECT**

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**Buy Wholesale and Build**

**NEW BULLETIN ON BEEKEEPING**

The small farmer or village dweller who wants to cut down the high cost of living and at the same time be patriotic and conserve the sugar supply should keep a few hives of bees, says George A. Coleman, instructor in entomology in the University of California and curator of the Agricultural Museum. Mr. Coleman is the author of Circular No. 185 on "Beekeeping for the Fruit Grower and Small Rancher, or Amateur," just issued. The pamphlet is obtainable free by writing to the College of Agriculture at Berkeley. Mr. Coleman says at least one colony of bees should be kept for every five acres of fruits or for a smaller acreage of berries and vegetables. The bees will not only supply honey, but will increase the crop from 10 to 100 per cent., and will improve the quality, and therefore the salability, of the fruit. The bulletin tells the kind of bees to keep, gives a list of equipment necessary, and detailed directions for handling the bees. The ten frame Langstroth hive is recommended. This hive is not patented and may be had from dealers.

Some interesting scientific observations on eating economy have been made this last year abroad, notably in England and in Germany. Medical evidence has proved that slower eating is economic eating. Half-chewed food yields only half its nourishment. Eating slowly and chewing thoroughly results in lessening the amount of food required and at the same time increases the bodily stamina and gives better health. Some 1000 school children in England have been taught to eat in the slower way, with the result that one-quarter of the normal bread consumption has been saved, while they have shown the results of increased nutrition and benefited health.

**HOMESICK FOR THE COUNTRY.**

I'd kind of like to have a cot,  
Fixed on some sunny slope, a spot  
Five acres more or less,  
With maple, cherry, cherry trees  
And poplars whitening in the breeze.

"I would not my taste, I guess,  
To have the porch with vines curling,  
With bells of woodbine pendant swing  
And for each bell a bee,  
And round my lattice a shadow spread  
Clumps of peonies, white and red.

I kind of like I should desire  
To hear around the lawn a choir  
Of wood birds singing sweet,  
And in a dell I'd have a brook,  
Where I might sit and read my book.

Such should be my retreat,  
Far from the city's crowd and noise;  
Here I would rear the girls and boys  
(I have some two or three),  
And if I had Heaven should bless my store  
With five or six or seven more  
How happy I would be.

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**A Complete \$1 Flower Garden**  
Delivered Free in U. S.

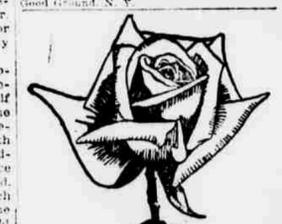
27 Packets, all different, of our choicest Annual Flower Seeds. Will produce a wonderful garden of flowers in the garden and furnish a ample supply of flowers to cut during the summer.

**A Complete \$1 Vegetable Garden**  
Delivered free east of the Mississippi

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These roots are the best of the season, also large, bushy roots for this year's crop. All kinds of roots for sale. How to grow them. Write for our free literature. HARRY A. SQUIRE, Good Ground, N. Y.



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Other Fargo \$1 Specials.  
15 Jersey Gladioli, \$1.15 the dozen, 12.50 a gross. 100, \$11.00. 1000, \$100.00. 10000, \$1000.00. 100000, \$10000.00.