DEPARTMENT OF ORNAMENTAL HORTICULTURE.

W. C. STEELE,
SWITZERLAND, FLORIDA.

Cissus Discolor etc.

Editor Floral Department:

I noticed, not long ago, an inquiry about growing Cissus discolor, sometimes called climbing Begonia, it has nothing to do with Begonia but that is a small matter.

The Cissus should be planted in good rich soil, I planted mine in well rotted compost out of the cow-pen. Keep it in the shade, as the sun will burn the leaves. It makes an especially good veranda plant and if given a trellis will soon cover it. In what state it passes the winter in its native home, Java, I do not know, but I expect it is evergreen. But here, in Florida, it seems to be deciduous and often dies back to the harder wood, and becomes quite dormant till warmer weather sets in. At least this was the case last winter, though there was no frost. So I judge it is very impatient of cold.

The leaves certainly do rival those of a Rex Begonia in color, but are not so large; the largest being 6 1-4 by 3 1-2 inches. It grows very fast and seems to have no insect enemies, so that once started it is very little trouble to grow.

Crinus Virginicum is one of the finest for massing, as it is not at all particular where it grows, and will flourish in full sun or almost complete shade. It is not as large as Augustus, but is most useful for filling in corners. For the best effect mass in front of and between shrubbery, so as to get a high back ground. The leaves are about 2 feet long and 2 inches wide. The flower scape is sometimes 4 feet high and the flowers of white tinged with pink, 6 inches across. The time to see this Crinum at its best is just before dark, as the flowers open as the sun goes down, it is as beautiful a sight then as one could wish to see, the dark green leaves forming a bed, and out of it springs dozens of spikes of large white lily-like flowers most fragrant, and contrasting perfectly against the tall green back ground of various shrubs. As the sun raises the flowers fade, but more come out the next evening so an umbell will last for several days. This Crinum flowers most in July and August and is very tender to cold.

The only enemies to Crinums are the large yellow grasshoppers called "lubbers" which can eat up a small plant at a meal. Pick them off and stamp on them as nothing will eat them not even turkeys of fish. There has been a pest of these grasshoppers the last few years and the pine woods have been full of them, where a few years ago there were hardly any, but this year I notice there are not nearly as many as last year, so I trust we are over the worst.

Louis Bosanquet.

(There is something strange about those large grasshoppers, they seem to possess some quality which is repulsive to all living creatures. It was given them as a protection, other grasshoppers are quick and hard to catch, can easily escape enemies, while these even when small are slow and clumsy. We have tried chickens with them when small, catch one or two and throw to a lot of hungry chickens, they would snatch up the insect but drop it at once as if it was hot. We have also tried a shrike or butcher bird that was tame enough to come for a whistle, and pick up insects thrown towards him. Throw one of thes grasshoppers to it and it would not touch it.—Ed.).

At Home Everywhere.

The state flower (of Carifornia) has, among its many admirable traits, that of being at home everywhere, and lifting its smiling face just as joyously in a strange land as on its native dunes, Eschscholtzia.

I have grown the Eschscholtzia in the clay soil of Vermont, which it does not like over well; in the rich soil of the middle west, where it throws up an immense amount of feathery foliage, but the ideal place for the golden poppy is a sandy soil, and lots of sun.

I can readily see why Mrs. Georgiana Townsend consideres it a "shiny" flower.

I have seen great banks of the solid orange bloom, along the coast line between Los Angeles and Frisco, and it certainly gives one the impression of burnished gold. I think Mrs. Townsends' only experience with the Buttercup was one lone root that we succeeded, after years of failure, in growing in our flower bed, in the west. One needs to "go strawberrying" in the meadows, gold with Buttercups to really get a correct idea of their bloom. So far as I have noticed I have never seen any other flower with the burnished shine of the Buttercup.

Maude Meridith,

Brooklyn.

Sinningia Regina.

An English magazine, the Gardner's Chronicle, prints an item of news about this plant which will interest flower lovers. Probably few of you will have any idea what a Sinningia is like. You know what a Glinia is and probably admire it very much. It was found, after the Gloxinia had become well known and widely cultivated under that name, that it had been discovered and named Sinningia many years before so that according to the rule of priority the plant is really Sinningia, but it has become so well and widely known as Gloxinia that it will go by that name to the end of time. The item which we quote, records the introduction of a new species:

This species was exhibited last year at the Ghent quinquennial show as Gesneria regina, by M. De Smet-Duvivier, from whim a plant was purchased for Kew, where it flowered in April and May, 1904. From the most cursory glance it was obvious that the plant was not a gesneria, and on examination if proved to be a sinningia (gloxinia of gardens), allied to S. discolor and S. Menziesiana. S. regina is reported to have been introduced with a cattleya from Brazil, but until this is confirmed by properly authenticated wild specimens, the possibility of a hybrid origin cannot altogether be excluded. Sinningia regina is a strikingly handsome plant, about nine inches high, with dark green, velvety leaves, purple on their under surface. The flowers are pale violet and drooping, and are borne on long flower-stalks, four to six together in the axil of each leaf; as two successive pairs of leaves are usually close together on the stem, the effect is that of two many-flowered whorls, and is very fine. The duration of the flowering period is about six weeks, so that this plant is likely to become a favorite.

Aloysia Citriodora.

This plant is commonly known in this country as Lemon Verbena. It was an old time favorite in northern gardens, but we have never known of its being successfully grown in Florida. If any of our readers have had any success with it here, we shall be very glad to know it.

The following description is from the Gardener's Magazine:

This charming old plant, generally known as the scented verbena, makes a grand subject for cultivating in tubs for decorating the ground in summer, providing room can be found to keep it safe from frost during winter. The finest plants I have ever seen are at Lockinge, and they are perfect pyramids, from fourteen to fifteen feet high, growing in tubs two feet six inches square. These must have been a grand sight during the past summer, as nearly every point flowered. The specimens are thirteen years old. I also noticed several fine standards with five-foot stems. Mr. Fyfe grows a large number of plants in tubs for standing about the grounds in summer, the charming position of Lockinge leanding itself admirably to this kind of gardening.

Roses old and New.

The fact that a Rose or other flower is new is not always a certain indication of its value. Sometimes new varieties are puffed beyond their real merits. This is brought out strongly in an article from the Gardener's Magazine. You will also be interested in seeing how our English cousins view some of the old favorites among roses.

Yes, we have advanced in rose culture, gained magnificent new varieties but it is a matter for rejoicing also, I think, that these are quite powerless to oust all the old ones. While some, nay, many, of the ancient roses are now unknown, it is a truth, too, that many of the modern introductions will be lost, just as deservedly, a few years hence. Surely the great lesson to be learned and practiced, is the buying of the best roses, new or old; choosing them for their merits, uninfluenced by the crazes of a season, weighing the advantages of each flower in the balance of justice, and discarding any variety that proves less good than was promised.

Public taste is not an infallible guide. A novel color will often sell a loosely petaled, ill-shaped, quickly fading rose; size is sometimes admired to the too-ready-forgiveness of bad color; delicacy of tint and shape are often combined with weak, drooping habit of growth, and flabby stems.

Of course, perfection is not to be found, so we must make all reasonable concessions to any new rose; only let us avoid neglecting older varieties placed in carriages in which there is