



MR. W. J. UNWIN'S PEAS AS EXHIBITED AT R.H.S. SHOW, LONDON, 1909.

cient, and the broad acres of Althorne Lodge, Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex, were acquired. A large portion of the rural district of Essex is justly celebrated for seed-raising.

**SWEET PEA NAMES AND NAMING.**

The following paper was read by Mr W. J. Unwin, at the conference held by the National Sweet Pea Society on the 10th January:—

It has been announced that I would to-night read a paper on the "Names and Naming of Sweet Peas," but, interesting as this subject may be, I am fully convinced that it will be useless to discuss the naming of new varieties until some steps can be taken to safeguard these varieties after they are named.

I do not therefore propose to deal particularly with the naming of sweet peas, but rather to outline a scheme by which I believe growers may be more safeguarded in making their selections of distinct varieties. If I were to detail the various reasons why this or that firm should or should not give different names to what may be practically the same variety, it would be more or less a waste of time, as I am convinced every raiser would follow his or her own inclination in the matter. It is, so it seems to me, the duty of the National Sweet Pea Society to help the growers, so that they can make their selections with more confidence, but under the present conditions even experts are baffled. Our society is already doing good work, but more must be done if we are to know, with more certainty, which new varieties are worth growing.

The society cannot prevent unfixed stocks being sent out, but it could debar unfixed new varieties from being staged in competitive classes at its shows. As a remedy, I suggest that all new varieties in future shall be sent to the trials, and only those that proved to be fixed shall

**ECKFORD'S WEM.**

Not so very long ago if anyone had mentioned such a thing as a "Sweet Pea farm" he would have laid himself open to ridicule. Now one has only to look at the pages of the gardening press or the list of all our seedsmen to learn what a great industry sweet pea growing has become.

For those lovely exhibits that the firm put up at the principal shows in Britain. It is at Althorne, however, that the fields solely devoted to the growing of seed are to be found, and here no less than 40 acres are to be seen. In visiting these fields one is struck with the purity of the stock, and also the care that is taken to thoroughly rogue each variety, and can thus easily understand how the real seed of Eckford's on a packet of seed is a passport to its reliability.

Scotland may well be proud of the late Mr. Eckford, who was born at Stonehouse, in the parish of Liberton, near Edinburgh, on 12th May, 1823. He served his apprenticeship as a gardener in Beaufort Castle gardens, Inverness, and was afterwards employed as journeyman or foreman at some of the best gardens in Scotland. In the beginning of 1847 he went to England, and, after serving as foreman at several places, was appointed, in 1854, head gardener to the Earl of Radnor, at Colehill, Berkshire, where he remained nearly twenty years, during which time he raised many new dahlias, pelargoniums, and verbenas. We next find him in charge of Dr. Sankey's garden at Sandywell, Gloucester, and it was here he took up the work of improving the sweet pea, and in 1882 he exhibited Bronze Prince, for which, on the 8th of August, he received his first certificate. Other novelties appeared year after year, and the good work was continued at Boreatton, and afterwards at Wem.

The work done by Mr. Eckford shows how much can be accomplished with simple and often neglected things in our garden.

Some time before his death he received from the Royal Horticultural Society the Victoria Medal of Honour in Horticulture, and from his many friends and admirers all over the world an address and handsome testimonial.

The head of the firm is now Mr. John S. Eckford, who, during the latter years of his father's life, practically managed the business, and well maintains the honour of the old name, and can be depended on to leave no stone unturned to keep up the reputation the firm has gained the world over for all that is

best and most reliable in sweet peas.

For some years the grounds at Wem were capable of growing all the sweet pea and garden pea seed required by the firm, but as the fame of these sweet peas spread all over the civilised world, and were grown where the climate would permit, the demand for seeds exceeded the supply, and a wider field for the development of the business became necessary. At first arrangements were made for the cultivation of both types of peas in Essex, but this soon proved insuffi-



MR. JOHN S. ECKFORD.

A Vice President and a staunch supporter of the National Sweet Pea Society.

No one requires to be told to day that we owe all this to the work of the late Mr. Henry Eckford, V.H.M., of Wem. He it was who created the sweet pea enterprise. Twenty years ago the firm of Eckford's grew less than 2 acres of sweet peas, but the quantity has increased year by year until they have nearly 70 acres of them.

The headquarters of the firm are at Wem, in Shropshire, and it is there that the raising of new varieties is carried on, as well as the growing of the blooms



SPENCER SWEET PEA.—MARIE CORELLI.

An American novelty said to be a great advance on "Marjory Willis," being brighter in colour and more vigorous in growth. The flowers are a brilliant rose carmine of Spencer form.



SWEET PEAS AT ECKFORD'S SEED FARM IN ESSEX.