

done at any time after the old leaves are off. If there is a good plantation, forcing may continue in batches till natural growth commences. The system of forcing described in English books will be rather mystifying to many colonial gardeners, but it need not be considered, as few people in this country could command the means there imperative, nor would it be necessary for us to take so much trouble, our milder climate rendering outdoor forcing more easily accomplished. It would be more correct, perhaps, to say that colonial requirements can be catered for by the rough-and-ready means referred to, and that large supplies are more economically provided by the better means afforded by heated houses. Forcing is accomplished by the aid of fermenting stable manure. This should be fresh and contain a good quantity of straw. The straw is necessary for a two-fold reason. Droppings without straw become saturated by heavy rain, and do not retain heat, and a better covering can be made by strawy manure. It is best to give the manure a shake over a few days before using: it heats the better for it. Manure from corn-fed horses is requisite, for the layer will be but a thin one, and that from grass-fed animals does not retain heat. In England there are earthen seakale-pots. These are made bell-shaped. The broad, open end rests on the ground, surrounding a clump of crowns, and at the top is a movable lid, with a knob to lift it with. These pots are the only perfect covers. Here we make such shift as we can with boxes. Kerosene-cases answer very well. Some people even use kerosene-tins, but the clumps must be very small for the tins to cover them. A layer of fermenting manure is packed around and over the boxes. Several clumps must be forced at once, or the manure would not be in sufficient bulk to retain heat. It would not do to put a large quantity round one box, or the heat would be too strong, resulting in the crowns being scalded by the hot vapour which would find its way through the loose top of the box. Sufficient heat is generated by a ridge of manure, which covers the box about 12 in., and projects a like distance on each side. If there is a desire to have seakale ready for a special day, allow fourteen days for forcing. If the heat is good, that will be ample. When a crown is cut take it with a piece of the old neck, so that the rosette of stalks remains intact.

*Rhubarb.*—The advent of evergreen varieties of rhubarb has made forcing unnecessary, at least over the greater part of the Dominion. I am not aware how it behaves in those parts subject to severe frost and snow. In all other parts it would be more than ridiculous to force rhubarb. We are pulling an ample supply from a bed of Topp's Winter, the stalks being of fair substance, up to 30 in. long, and many of beautiful red colour, though they vary much in this respect. They are certainly of far better average quality than forced rhubarb. There may be some parts where forcing is desirable. The *modus operandi* is