

In conclusion, it cannot be too strongly urged that any work of shifting bees should be done now, if possible. If left until the return of warm weather the risk of loss through the brood being overheated or the bees being suffocated is much greater.

## THE GARDEN.

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### VEGETABLE-CULTURE.

**RHUBARB** (the summer variety): New beds of this plant should be planted at once. Sets are usually old clumps chopped up, one or two good crowns being sufficient for each set. Plant about 2 ft. 6 in. apart in rows 3 ft. from centre to centre of the sets. The crowns should be barely covered with soil. No produce should be taken the first year, all growth being left to die down. This enables the plants to produce a good spring and early summer crop the following season. Commercial growers have made a number of changes in their practice, the latest being intended to eliminate the barren year. To understand this it is necessary to know that the commercial grower has to depend on the early crop to make his money, because that crop commands the best price. For this reason his methods are adapted to the strengthening of the early crop. The purpose of the leaves in the life of the plant is to make roots and crowns. A good crop of leaves, and consequently stalks, can be got only by allowing the previous crop to die down on the plants. For this reason only the early crops are taken; robbing the plants ceases after the early crops are taken; pulling ceases by the end of December, or a little later; and the most experienced cultivators pull nothing after December. It was formerly the custom to lift old clumps during winter, cut them up and replant in early spring, pull no stalks the first year, take the early crops during the next two years, and then lift again. The latest plan is to take the early crop, lift the clumps towards the end of November or early in December, cut up the clumps, and replant at once. The sets become re-established quickly, strengthen up during summer and autumn, and produce a crop the following spring—there being thus no barren year. Stable manure is considered indispensable in rhubarb-culture. The best time to apply it is in early summer, after pulling has ceased. Applied as a mulch it greatly influences growth, and builds up strong crowns. If stable manure is worked into the soil during winter or early spring it holds water like so many sponges, makes the soil cold, and delays growth. Therefore it is not good practice to so apply it, as the value of the crop greatly depends on getting it early. It is usual to apply a fertilizer in spring. Probably blood manure is more frequently used than any other, it being regarded as a complete fertilizer. It is as well to remember that about half the bulk of blood manures is sodium chloride (common salt), and that if used in excess, as I believe it sometimes is, it is likely to injure the roots badly, unless it is applied several weeks before the roots become active, so that rain may wash the salt down into the subsoil. Rhubarb can do with a lot of manure, but I believe in this case 4 oz. per square yard, equal to 1,200 lb. per acre, is the maximum that should be given.

The so-called winter rhubarb will be dealt with next month.

Asparagus beds should be put in order. In the case of old-fashioned beds the loose top soil should have been raked off some weeks ago, and a coat of manure placed on the beds; the soil should now be returned to its place. Where the planting has been done in lines on the flat—the best way—the soil should be loosened and weeds cleared off. In each case, and before either operation is performed, give such fertilizers as may be decided on. A suitable dressing would be 8 lb. of kainit and 6 lb. of superphosphate per square rod, to be followed a month later with 1 lb. of nitrate of soda per square rod. New beds may now be planted.

Sowing and planting of onions should be completed as soon as possible. Jerusalem artichokes should be planted during the month. Plant medium-sized sets 4 in. or 5 in. deep in rows about a yard apart, and 15 in. apart in the rows. Celery should be sown in boxes under glass for the early supply. The White Plume variety is good for this purpose. Where celery-rust has been troublesome the seeds should be washed in a solution of 2 oz. of bluestone in half a gallon of water. Dry the seeds before sowing.