

stage this will continue to advance regardless of weather, and in the end will destroy the plants, while the sclerotes falling to the ground will perpetuate the disease.

Affected leaves should be removed as soon as detected, and the stems of the plants dusted with air-slaked lime. The detached leaves should not be left on the ground; they may be composted with lime or buried very deeply in the soil. The disease, which is a very serious one, is far more prevalent than is supposed; it usually escapes notice until plants are killed. A good many plants are affected, including tomatoes and potatoes; but most frequently the first appearance is on lettuces and cabbages, because the way the bottom leaves rest on the soil creates conditions favourable to the disease.

Seeds to be sown at this period include peas, spinach, turnips, and turnip-rooted red beet, while broad beans may be sown if not already in. Celery for the main crop should be sown about the 15th September. Celiriac—known as turnip-rooted celery—is a valuable vegetable not so much grown as it should be; it is raised in the same way as celery. Tomatoes for late crops should be sown early in September. Plant potatoes, rhubarb, Jerusalem artichokes, cabbage, cauliflowers, lettuce, shallots, garlic, and various herbs—such as thyme, sage, mint, savoury, and marjoram—and sow or plant parsley.

Asparagus.

Asparagus-roots are active some time before the heads show through the ground, which in middle districts occurs early in September. The best time to plant is as soon as the roots are active, but if a head or two has broken it will do no harm. The activity of the roots prevents damaged roots dying back, and ensures a good start. If the plants have to be procured from a distance they must be packed in damp material. If raised on the place they should be placed between damp sacking and exposed as little as possible.

To plant, make a trench 6 in. deep with a shovel; then with a rake make a ridge in the centre of the trench by drawing up soil from each side of the floor of the trench. The plants should be placed on the top of the ridge with the roots spread on each slope, as on a saddle. The soil should then be returned, leaving the crowns from 2 in. to 3 in. below the surface. Modern practice is not to plant closely in beds, but at greater distances apart in lines on the flat. It would be better to plant one or two rows the whole length of a plot than a number of shorter rows side by side. In large plantations the rows should be from 30 in. to 36 in. apart, and the plants at least 15 in. apart, a greater distance being better. Two rows 18 in. apart, with the plants 18 in. asunder, is a good arrangement. This style of planting produces better heads than do crowded plants on the old-fashioned beds.

Established beds or plantations that have been previously covered with manure should now be put in order. In the case of beds, the soil previously taken off should now be returned to cover the manure. Where plants are in rows a light forking-over will be wanted. Where a good dressing of manure has been given, no fertilizer will be necessary except nitrate of soda, which should not be left out. Asparagus is benefited more by heavy manuring than is any other crop, except perhaps rhubarb. Nitrate of soda may be used with advantage in sufficient quantity to act as a weed-killer where necessary; it will also kill slugs. Amounts up to 6 oz. per square yard may be used.

SMALL-FRUITS.

Strawberries in most places are now coming into flower. If growth is not satisfactory a dressing of nitrate of soda should be given; 1 oz. per square yard, equal to 3 cwt. per acre, is sufficient. Nitrate of soda should not be applied till flowering begins, because if given earlier it is liable to cause luxuriant leaf-growth at the expense of the fruit. Weeds should be hoed out before the fertilizer is applied. Mulching-material should be prepared for application before the fruit-stalks extend too much. Materials suitable for the purpose include spent hops for small areas, or strawy stable manure, straw, rushes, pine-needles, and coarsely cut chaff. Where a good mulch can be afforded it serves to conserve moisture, as well as to keep the fruit clean.

Cape gooseberries may now be planted generally, and old plants cut down to the new shoots now appearing.

—W. H. Taylor, Horticulturist.