

damp situations place the hives sufficiently high from the ground to avoid the dampness. Old bricks or concrete blocks make good supports for the bottom-boards. Make sure that the hives have sufficient cant towards the front before the winter rains set in. The presence of much moisture on the bottom-boards is the means of loss to the beekeeper, and, in addition, causes the hives to become sour and foul-smelling.

—*E. A. Earp, Senior Apiary Instructor, Wellington.*

HORTICULTURE.

The Planting Season.

THE months of May to September inclusive are known as "the planting season"—the period during which hard-wooded plants may be set out to best advantage: hedge-plants, shelter-belts, fruit-trees, bushes, and ornamental shrubs. Where the requirements have been carefully studied and planned and the land thoroughly prepared, the work is best done without delay when the ground is free from frost and not too wet. Considerable root-growth is made during the winter, which greatly facilitates establishment. Only in cold exposed conditions is there any advantage in delaying the planting of less hardy plants until the end of the planting-season.

It is best to take delivery of plants of this class so soon as they are ready, and heel them in in a piece of friable ground. They will then be quite secure for the whole of the planting season, if necessary, and may be planted out as weather conditions and other circumstances permit.

Advice on planting is often somewhat laboured, but if the plants are suited to the conditions of soil and climate and the ground has been prepared as advised it is only necessary to observe a few precautions. Straggling and damaged roots should be pruned back, and the plant set in a hole sufficiently big to accommodate the roots without crowding and of a depth which will allow the plant to be set at the same level as in the nursery. In filling, the soil should be broken fine and distributed evenly, and when the roots are covered it should be trodden thoroughly firm, and the filling then completed. Loose planting is the commonest and most serious fault. Plants with a long stem, such as standard roses, &c., require staking. For these a hardwood stake of suitable length should be driven when the hole is opened; the plant is then firmly planted beside it and made secure by tying it to the stake with strong tarred string. A piece of canvas or other material round the stem of the tree under the tie will prevent it from injuring the bark.

Plants which have had their roots considerably shortened when lifting in the nursery will require to be pruned. This operation will require careful consideration—more than it usually receives. Those which make young growth subject to damage by frost, such as roses, are pruned only lightly when planting, the pruning being completed just before, or shortly after, growth commences in the spring—at the later period in the colder districts. Shrubs having more than one stem, or which branch low down, should have the branches thinned to three or four well-distributed growths so that crowding will not take place as they get older. They should be removed completely, close up to the point of origin, cutting them off flush. The remaining growths should then be shortened, cutting just beyond a good bud pointing in an outward direction. The plant will then make well-spaced bushy growth. Plants which it is desired to grow on a main central stem, pyramid fashion, should have any vigorous growth likely to compete with the central leader removed completely. Many specimens that are otherwise admirable have this double leader, which is not only disfiguring by spoiling the balance of the tree but frequently causes serious injury. The remaining branches may then be thinned out where there is any sign of crowding, and