

HOME GARDEN NOTES

Work for October

"Whatever we have in any sort begun wisely, it is good to finish it thoroughly."—John Ruskin.

HAVING had a good start with the vegetable-growing season, every effort should be made to adhere to the planting scheme as originally decided upon before planting commenced. Alterations for the sake of expediency will invariably have unsatisfactory results.

Tomatoes

The increasing importance of tomatoes in the daily diet warrants this crop being given pride of place in the garden work for October. In most districts where tomatoes can be grown satisfactorily outside it is advisable to start hardening off the young plants from the beginning of October. If plants are to be purchased, this should be done as soon as convenient. These, too, should be properly taken care of until they are set out in their permanent place. Because of their removal when more fully grown, purchased plants should receive greater care in the hardening off period than those which have been home-grown. A sheltered part of the garden should be chosen for transplanting, and adequate protection provided against high winds. In bright, sunny weather light shade for two or three days immediately after transplanting would be an advantage.

As soon as the area in which the plants are to be grown to maturity is clear of the preceding crop soil preparation should begin. If, at the time of reading these notes, the land is growing a green crop, this should be dug in immediately. Heavy soil will require trenching, and provision should be made for adequate drainage.

It is an advantage to apply the fertiliser at least two weeks before planting time. In the home garden blood and bone manure is still the safest fertiliser to use for tomatoes. Four ounces should be distributed along each 9ft. of row, or 5oz. bone-dust. If this is done, the plant food content of the manure applied will be available for assimilation by the plant earlier than it would be if application is delayed until planting time.

When the plants are to be grown to one stem only, 12 to 14in. is convenient spacing, but 16 to 18in. will be necessary when two stems are trained from each plant. When setting the plants they should be placed in

the soil—not dumped down—so that the first true leaves are just above ground level. If more than one row of plants are set out, they should be separated by not less than 3ft. Throughout the tomato-growing areas of the Dominion Labour Day is recognised as a safe time for setting plants in the garden.

Pumpkins and Squash

As plants belonging to the pumpkin and squash family are all frost-tender, it is not advisable to have them growing outside earlier than late October. Plants for setting can, however, be obtained by adopting much the same procedure as that practised for growing tomatoes. A box not less than 6in. deep should be used and filled to the top with a mixture of soil and compost. Three seeds can be pressed into the soil 2in. apart to form a triangle, with 6in. at least between each lot of seeds. Plants grown in this way may be treated just like tomatoes, and hardened off in the same manner. The day before planting the box should be soaked in a tub or bath, so that the soil will be thoroughly wet when the plants are removed for setting. Considerable care is necessary when the plants are being taken out of the boxes. They should not be separated, but, if possible, maintained in the triangular form in which they were grown and these planted in one place. To grow this crop successfully in the home garden nothing better can be dug into the soil than well-rotted stable manure, supplemented by a couple of handfuls of superphosphate to each lot of plants. Six feet each way is the usual spacing between "hills" of plants. It is possible to grow them along the wires of a strong fence.

Rock Melons: All the above remarks apply to rock melons, but these are usually planted 8ft. apart.

Marrows: Marrow plants may be propagated as advised for pumpkins, but the special variety recommended for the home garden—Long White Bush—should be spaced 3ft. apart each way.

Beans

For early production of beans caution is necessary with regard to the weather conditions which may obtain in different districts. The

plants are frost-tender, and the slightest degree of frost will destroy all young growth. Cold, wet conditions are also undesirable for early sowing, and the plants will not flourish where cold conditions prevail either above or in the soil.

To secure an early crop seed of a dwarf variety should be sown. Black Valentine or Canadian Wonder Improved (Burnley Selection) are suitable varieties; the latter is reputed to be largely wilt resistant. Heavy manuring is not necessary for beans, and in ordinary good garden soil superphosphate 2oz. to the running yard of row will generally be sufficient fertiliser. Under moist conditions and in light soil the seed should be sown not deeper than 2in., while in heavy soil less depth is desirable. Before sowing, and with a goose-necked garden hoe, a shallow trench should be opened, at the bottom of which the seed may be sown. Subsequent cultivation will fill in this trench and give the fully-grown plants better rooting facilities.

Potatoes

Early potato crops will require attention, and where wet weather conditions have been experienced hoeing, particularly for weed destruction, is necessary. Good-sized early tubers cannot be secured under conditions where they have to compete with weeds for the plant food in the soil. Further, weed growth among the plants prevents proper air circulation,

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