

# Work for January in the Home Garden

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*"It is better to suffer wrong than to do it, and happier to be sometimes cheated than not to trust."*

—Samuel Johnson.

**T**HIS epigrammatical utterance may well be applied to gardeners, who are usually very tolerant and in most instances are prepared to accept full responsibility for crop failures. True, verbal explosions are sometimes heard about seeds or plants which have been bought from a seedsman or nurseryman. For his misfortunes, however, the average gardener is more inclined to blame himself than anyone else. What would appear obvious is the necessity for more investigation into cause and effect.

**L**OW viability of seed, disease which may be internally or externally seed borne, disease-infested soil, unsuitable soil composition, moisture content of soil, depth of soil coverage on seed, and care of the seed-bed after sowing are only a few of the many causes of germination results which may be disappointing, if not disastrous.

As far as seed-borne diseases are concerned, success or failure for every vegetable grower rests mainly in the hands of those who produce the seed. Production of high-quality seed is an undertaking of the highest value to the community, and its economic importance is fully realised by those engaged in the industry. Good seed is of the utmost importance, and seed should be obtained only from reputable seedsmen.

Disinfection by steam will do much to ensure successful propagation of seedlings, and the illustration on page 531 shows how a small quantity of soil may be efficiently and economically treated. When soil has been disinfected by steaming it is not advisable to use it for at least a week after treatment.

## Vegetables for Late Autumn and Winter

In the November issue of the "Journal" the provision of vegetable supplies for late autumn and winter was briefly referred to. It is important that all plants considered necessary should be set out without further loss of time in the place where they are to grow until harvested. Seedlings already transplanted should be protected against attacks by aphides and caterpillars, which are very destructive pests during late summer and early autumn, particularly among green vegetables.

Paranaph is a highly efficient aphicide; the formula for making it has been published on several occasions in the "Journal." Nicotine sulphate may be used as a spray for both aphides and caterpillars. Where only caterpillars are present, arsenate of

lead can be used alone at the rate of 1½ to 1½oz. to 4 gallons of water.

Paranaph may be applied during any part of the day, but nicotine sulphate will give best results if applied in warm, bright sunshine. Derris dust is also effective against aphids and caterpillars.

## Shallots

As well-grown shallots should be harvested during late January or February, it is not advisable to continue watering the bed after December. High moisture content of the soil will not permit the bulbs to ripen properly, and continuation of growth after maturity is detrimental to the keeping quality of the bulbs.

## Endive

In districts where lettuce are difficult to grow endive will prove a valuable substitute for use in salads. Seeds may be sown now and grown in much the same way as lettuce. Twelve inches between rows and the

plants thinned out to a similar distance will give plenty of space for development.

Unlike lettuce, endive does not develop a solid heart. To blanch the centre of the plant, which is the part mostly used, the outside leaves should be tied together near the top.

## Potatoes

The tops of main-crop potatoes should be examined regularly for late blight infection. Keeping the rows well moulded up protects developing tubers from the potato tuber moth, admits maximum sunshine between the rows, and provides better air movement among the plants, which materially assists in preventing the development of blight. However, spraying with freshly-made Bordeaux mixture is the best known means of protecting the crop against this disease, which takes a heavy toll of potatoes every year from the home gardener as well as the commercial grower.

## Tomatoes

Fruit on tomato plants which were set out early should now be showing up well, particularly on the bottom truss.

**In an endeavour to hasten ripening, leaves hanging over the fruit are sometimes removed; this is a mistaken idea and a practice which cannot be recommended.**

When growth has developed until the foliage of plants set in the same row is meeting it may be advisable to remove leaves under the bottom truss of fruit. If that is done, air circulation round the base of the plants



[Sparrow Industrial Pictures Ltd.]  
Keeping rows of potatoes well moulded up protects developing tubers from the tuber moth.