

THE FLOWER GARDEN IN MARCH . . .



Among the few bulbs with blue flowers, babianas are useful for cutting from October to December. Bulbs should be planted in the autumn.

the root system. It is these delicate, but essential, roots which are most damaged by lifting.

The shock of lifting can be lessened by cutting part way round each plant a few weeks before it is lifted, driving a spade vertically into the ground at a distance from the main stem equal to about a quarter of the plant's diameter. That severs a considerable proportion of the roots, but leaves some uninjured, including those which go vertically into the soil. The uninjured roots maintain the food and water supply of the plant, while the severed roots begin to form new rootlets. When the plant is lifted six weeks or so after wrenching, the roots originally cut should have developed or be about to develop enough fibrous roots to start taking in water as soon as the plant is set out in its new position, and so enable it to recover quickly from the check of being moved.

Reminders About Common Troubles

Thrips infest a wide range of ornamental and crop plants, and, though not native to New Zealand, are widespread in gardens in the Dominion. The insects are very small, active creatures, with cigar-shaped bodies, yellow when young and black when adult. The adults have curious narrow wings fringed with hairs and they fly freely. Thrips scrape the surface of

plants and feed on the sap, leaving a characteristic silver scurf on the foliage or flowers which they have attacked. This silver surface may later go brown.

Thrips can be controlled by spraying with nicotine solution (2oz. of soap powder dissolved in a little hot water and added, together with 1 fluid oz. of nicotine sulphate, to 4 gallons of water). The spray is more effective if 1 per cent. of summer oil emulsion is added. A second application should always be made about 14 days after the first to destroy young thrips which have hatched from eggs not killed by the first wash.

Tomato spotted wilt virus frequently attacks nasturtiums, the leaves of which show yellow mottles and spots which may almost cover the surface, while the plants become stunted. As nasturtiums frequently over-winter in mild districts, they serve (with other plants) to carry the spotted wilt disease from one year to the next. All nasturtiums which show mottling or distortion of the leaves should be pulled out and burned.

"Woolly bear" caterpillars are the black, hairy larvae often found feeding on cinerarias, eating holes in the leaves, which are left looking unsightly and ragged. The adult stage of this insect is the magpie moth, easily

recognised from its colouring of black with orange bands on its body and white spots on the wings. The caterpillars feed fully exposed on the leaves, so they can be controlled fairly easily by hand picking and killing them, though care should be taken, as the hairs are said to be dangerous if they get into the eyes. A derris dust can also be used to control these caterpillars.

"A Time and Place . . ."

WE had been wedged in a crowded service car for many hours of uneventful travel through desolate countryside, and most of the passengers looked bored and tired. We were half-way up a steep gradient when urgent shouts were heard from a stout, middle-aged, colourfully-dressed Maori woman, who lumbered down a nearby slope and who obviously wanted to catch the bus. With great difficulty our driver applied the brakes, bringing our giant vehicle to a halt. The door was opened and those standing moved back to make room for the would-be passenger. However, no one appeared! Then we heard rapid, excited ejaculations in Maori. Intrigued, the more curious of us turned round to discover the shrivelled, tattooed, be-shawled old woman in the corner was leaning out the window animatedly conversing with the now beaming person who had hailed us. The driver then extricated himself from the wheel, swung on the bus steps, and shouted in irate tones, "Come and get on. I can't wait all day!"



The Maori woman turned a happy, unconcerned face and casually replied, "You go on now—I wanted to talk—haven't seen her long time."

Amazement and anger chased themselves across the driver's face. In his bewilderment he was speechless. Then he shrugged his shoulders expressively and said, "Well, for crying out loud!"

How we all laughed, the more so as our smiling friend by the roadside farewelled us by waving gaily.—**"Bry," Eltham.**