

THE HOME GARDEN IN AUGUST . . .

When sowing make a shallow trench and press the seed into the bottom of it; in the heavier soils the seed should be put about 1in. deep and in light soils up to 2in. deep. Seed can be sown in zig-zag fashion 2 to 3in. apart in rows 20 to 36in. apart. One pound of seed is sufficient to sow up to 100ft. of row. A dressing of superphosphate at the rate of 1 to 2oz. a square yard applied before sowing will be found to give satisfactory results.

Potatoes

It is advisable in most districts to refrain from planting any considerable area of potatoes until September and in many districts it is better to wait until October. In the meantime potatoes can be sorted over and set in boxes in a light, airy, frost-free shed or outhouse to green and sprout. The potato requires a well-drained soil containing plenty of humus; in soils deficient in humus scab is liable to be troublesome. Sets (either cut or whole) should be planted 3 to 4in. deep and 14 to 16in. apart in rows 24 to 27in. apart. To plant 100ft. of row 16 to 20lb. of potatoes are required.

Probably the most favoured early variety is Epicure, but Doon Early is gaining considerable popularity. In the South Island Arran Banner, which is actually a second early, is often planted as a first early because of a popular belief that it recovers well if it is frosted.

Rhubarb

If the work of planting new rhubarb beds or renovating old ones has not yet been commenced, it should be proceeded with at once. Each succeeding year after the third or fourth the growth of crowns that have not been disturbed becomes weaker. Too many buds develop and from each many weak stalks arise. Old crowns should be lifted and reduced in size by chopping with a sharp spade or similar implement as soon as the buds are clearly discernible.

When healthy, vigorous crowns commence to grow the buds show up as they emerge from their protective covering as blunt protrusions with a fleshy-pink colouring. Replant crowns with only one or two buds in ground that has been deeply dug and heavily manured with humus-forming material such as farmyard or stable manure or old stack bottom. A handful of blood and bone should be mixed with the soil about each crown if other organic manure is lacking.

The site of new beds should be deeply dug or trenched and enriched with organic manure. Perennial weeds such as couch grass or convolvulus should be removed, and if necessary the area should be drained by field

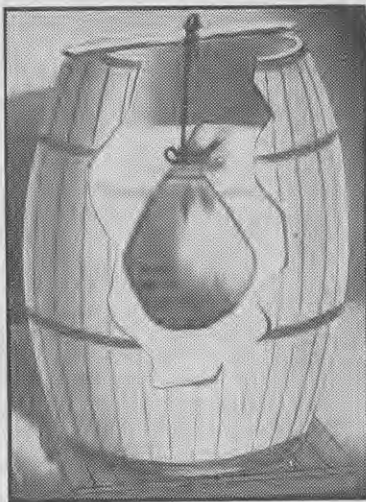
pipes or by the deep burial of open, stony material to form a moraine drain. No stalks should be pulled from newly-planted crowns the first year, and only light pullings should be made the second season. Thereafter if the plants are well manured each year, the pulling of main crop rhubarb should last for about two months each spring. Perpetual or ever-bearing rhubarb is usually pulled in the autumn or winter, and if space permits, it is as well to have a few crowns in the garden to extend the period rhubarb is available. The pulling of stalks is exhausting to the crowns and they must have an adequate period of rest each year.

Retarding Second Growth

Toward the end of August, or even earlier in the warmer localities, root crops such as carrots and parsnips begin to make second growth. Usually this is only top growth, and as it is the first stage of seed production, it is produced at the expense of the tap root. Lift the roots as soon as growth commences, and store them in a cool cellar or outhouse. They should be used without undue delay, as they deteriorate rapidly unless kept at nearly-freezing temperatures.

Salad Vegetables

Salad vegetables such as lettuce, radish, and spring onions can be sown now if ground conditions are favourable. Small successional sowings are in order, as these vegetables remain in best condition for only a limited time and should be used when young and fresh. They are a useful source of vitamins and are worthy of more general use in New Zealand.



[Sparrow Industrial Pictures Ltd. photo.]

Fig. 6—Method of making liquid manure in a large container.

Shallots

August is the best month for setting out shallots. The bulbs should be graded, and those of moderate size set out 8in. apart in rows 12in. apart. Press them firmly in the soil just deep enough to give them stability to enable roots to develop. Cultural requirements are similar to those for the onion.

Spinach and Silver Beet

Spinach and silver beet are relatively quick-maturing vegetables and are among the first of the new season's crops to mature. They do well in the cool soils of early spring as long as there is sufficient lime present. If lime is lacking, it should be dug in at the rate of 2 to 3oz. a square yard. A fertiliser made up by weight of 3 parts of superphosphate and 1 part of sulphate of ammonia, and applied at the rate of 2 to 3oz. a square yard will provide the stimulus so necessary for the production of the crisp, succulent growth desirable in these vegetables. Liquid manure may be given later. If organic material for making it is lacking, 1oz. of sulphate of ammonia to 4 gallons of water may be used. Silver beet transplants well at this time of year and is usually spaced in rows 18in. apart. Thin or plant out to about 8in. apart in the rows. Seed of both spinach and silver beet should be sown $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1in. deep. Spinach should be sown in rows at least 12in. apart and thinned to 3 to 6in.

Liquid Manure

A good-sized container such as a 40-gallon drum or large open cask filled with liquid manure is an advantage in the home garden (Fig. 6). Liquid manure is one of the most valuable of plant foods and is quite easily made. A small sack or sugar bag should be filled with fresh manure (preferably pig, cow, sheep, or poultry manure) and submerged for a week in a large container of water. The solution should be used at the rate of 1 part to 3 parts of water. If the container is then refilled with fresh water, the solution may be used at the end of a week, diluted with equal parts of water. Thereafter each refilling should be allowed to stand for about a week, and the liquid used neat. This manure should be applied weekly at the rate of 4 gallons to about 18ft. of row. It is safe to use and is a complete plant food. Gardens where organic manure is in short supply will especially benefit from its use and such crops as cabbage, cauliflower, lettuce, silver beet, and spinach show a gratifying response to its application. Dry soil should be watered before liquid manure is applied. The sugar bag containing the manure should be pressed from time to time to ensure more complete dilution of organic material in the water.