



## Growing Plants in Pots and Boxes

**N**OTHING adds greater interest to the home and garden than to have well-grown pot plants in the house and to raise at home the plants needed for bedding out in the garden. To do this successfully is not difficult, provided attention is paid to certain details. In this article, which will be concluded in the August issue of the "Journal," J. P. Hudson, Horticulturist, Wellington, describes the necessary steps to be taken in growing pot plants.

**P**LANTS in pots and boxes are growing under very artificial conditions compared with those growing out in the garden, and as these conditions are entirely controlled by the gardener, he has to pay attention to the details of cultivation to get the best results.

If this attention is given, however, there is no reason why any gardener, even without a glasshouse, should not raise his own plants for bedding out and have in his house an all-year-round succession of well-grown, decorative pot plants which will be a credit to his cultural skill and an ornament to his home.

The five fundamentals which should be mastered and which will be dealt with in detail are:—

1. Provision of a suitable soil medium.
2. Knowledge of the correct method of sowing seeds, pricking off, and potting.
3. When and how to water plants.
4. Correct conditions of light and temperature.
5. Control of pests and diseases if any appear.

### Choice of Compost

The first and most important point is the careful choice, preparation, and mixing of the ingredients of the compost\* to be used for seed sowing and potting.

The gardener may consider that, as seeds and plants grow well in his garden, he can use the soil from the flower border or vegetable garden just as it is for filling boxes and pots. However, conditions in the garden are quite different from those in a box or a pot, where a relatively-small volume of soil is isolated.

There are several reasons why the small volume of soil will give different results from the soil in the garden, but the most important is that the small volume dries out quite quickly and has to be watered fairly often to keep it moist.

**It is common for pot plants to be watered at the equivalent rate of more than 100in. of rain in a year, and this abnormal "rainfall," coupled with fairly warm conditions and extremely good aeration, would soon reduce ordinary garden soil to a very unsatisfactory condition if it were used by itself for potting plants.**

Loamy soil is still the main staple of a compost, but other items have to be added in correct proportion to make it suitable for box or pot work.

\*The word "compost" is a confusing one, as it is used in two quite separate senses by gardeners. A mixture of soils, fertilisers, and other ingredients prepared for filling seed boxes, pots, and other containers is called a seed-sowing or potting compost, and it is in this sense that the word is used in this article.

Garden refuse, green manures, and other materials put together and left to rot in a compost heap turn eventually into a form of organic manure referred to as compost. This usage of the word is quite distinct from that used here.