

PLANTING THE MIXED FLOWER BORDER

the stems later. If the old stems are dragged at instead of being cut cleanly, the crowns will be injured and future growth retarded. The tops of all herbaceous plants should be allowed to ripen off, particularly bulbous and tuberous kinds.

Healthy prunings from herbaceous plants provide useful material for building up the compost heap, but if they are badly diseased they are better burned.

Most herbaceous plants should be lifted every two or three years and those which have become too large should be divided. If this periodic lifting is neglected, clumps get too large and produce only stunted shoots and smaller flowers. Lifting is done in autumn and young, vigorous growths from the outside of clumps should be chosen for replanting.

Perennials too large and compact to pull apart by hand can be divided with the aid of two large garden forks with prongs placed back to back, the handles being levered inward to tear the roots apart. In some cases a knife cut is needed to divide the clumps, but care should be taken to avoid unnecessary damage to roots.

Vacant areas can be dug over and replenished with material and manures required by the type of soil, and if weather and soil conditions are suitable, the newly-selected plants can be replanted immediately.

In seasons between periodic thorough overhaul of the border a light dressing of farmyard manure or decayed vegetable matter from the compost heap forked around the plants and shrubs during autumn or early spring is beneficial.

Some subjects, such as paeonies, tritoma, gypsophila, geums, heuchera, lupins, anchusa, and oriental poppies, resent disturbance, and if the clumps show no sign of deterioration, it is not necessary to take them up as regularly as others.

During early spring it is advisable to remove or thin some of the growth of



[Douglas Elliott photo.]

Varieties of lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*) may be had in various colours with single and double flowers. The shrubs flower prolifically in spring and are attractive specimens for the border.



[Douglas Elliott photo.]

The brilliant colours of some of the hybrid flowering brooms (*Cytisus*) make them excellent background subjects for the border. They are very hardy.

the more vigorous varieties such as delphiniums, michaelmas daisies, perennial phlox, rudbeckias, and heleniums; if excess growth is allowed, smaller flowers will result.

If plants which cease flowering early, such as lupins, pyrethrum, trolius, doricums, and delphiniums, are cut back immediately the flowers are over, they may be induced to make second growth, which often produces a second flowering in the autumn. This second flowering is considered to be less exhausting to the plant than the development and ripening of seed heads, which should not be allowed to form.

Hoeing should be commenced as soon as the soil is dry enough in spring and continued until autumn to maintain a free, open soil and to control weeds.

Pruning

It is necessary for the average home gardener whose space is restricted to have some knowledge of how and when to prune shrubs, as most of them require some pruning, not only to maintain their appearance, but to encourage growth for future blossoming, which is even more important.

From evergreen shrubs it is often necessary to remove only dead, diseased, or misplaced branches between late summer and mid-winter. The season of flowering governs the pruning of flowering kinds, which may be divided into two main groups:—

1. Those that flower on the wood of the previous season's growth:—

Shoots of early-spring-flowering varieties of this group, for example forsythia, *Ribes*, and *Cytisus*, are cut back to 2 or 3 buds immediately after flowering.

Varieties in this group which flower in early summer, such as philadelphus, deutzia, diervilla, *Hydrangea hortensis*, and *Kerria japonica*, are pruned after some growth has been made.

Old flowering shoots and weak wood of all varieties in this group are thinned out after flowering, but young growths are allowed to ripen without being cut.

2. Those that flower on the wood of the current season:—

Examples of this group are *Buddleia variabilis*, *Hydrangea paniculata*, *Tamarix gallica*, and spiraeas, the flowering shoots of which should be pruned back to 2 buds in autumn or winter.

Pruning of rhododendrons and azaleas consists only of removing the old flower heads before the seed develops.

It is desirable to have a clean stem at the base of deciduous trees and it is usual to remove a third of the lower branches as the trees grow.