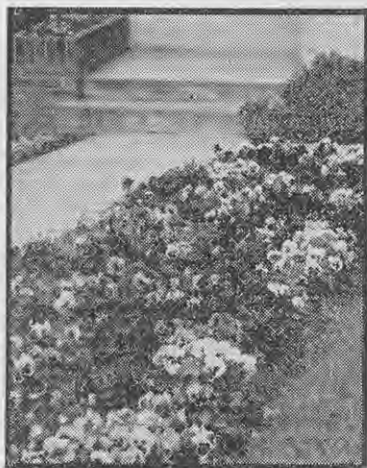


SPRING-FLOWERING PLANTS . . .



In favourable circumstances and given the right treatment, most of what are known as winter-flowering pansies and violas will flower throughout the winter, and all of them will flower profusely during spring.

few inches from the base of the plant a clean, sharp spade is driven into the ground with the blade at an angle of about 45 degrees. The operation is usually, and more effectively, carried out by two persons working in unison, one on either side of the row. The blades of the spades should meet between 6 and 8 in. below the surface, thus completely severing the outward- and deep-growing roots. To complete the job, a downward cut is made with the spade between each plant and its neighbour.

Wrenching not only induces the plants to develop a more fibrous root system, thus enabling them to be lifted later with a ball of earth attached, but also checks the growth, causing it to become more firm and compact.

Wrenching usually is carried out after a good rain when the soil is moist, and in such circumstances the plants will recover quickly, but should conditions be less favourable, a dull day should be chosen for the operation, the soil heeled after the cuts have been made, and the plants given a good watering. Wrenching causes the plants to wilt, especially under the influence of bright sunlight, but usually they recover within a few days.

The wallflower belongs to the same natural order as the cabbage family (*Cruciferae*) and, like the cabbage, it is subject to club root disease. To prevent the soil becoming infested with this fatal disease it should be treated with a dressing of lime before sowing and before planting.

Pansies and Violas

Many seedsmen now catalogue what are known as winter-flowering pansies and violas. In favourable circumstances and if given the right treatment, most of them will flower throughout the winter, but all of them will flower profusely during spring. The seed of these kinds should be

sown in boxes or trays as described for wallflower seed. When the seedlings are large enough to be handled they should be pricked out into boxes containing a richer compost and grown on without a check until April, when they will be ready for transplanting to the beds or borders where they are to flower.

Both pansies and violas prefer cool conditions, and during summer they should be grown in a position where they are partially shaded from sunshine. On the other hand, to induce them to flower during winter they should be transferred to a warm sunny position.

Daisies

The common lawn daisy—the “wee, modest, crimson-tippéd flower” immortalised by the poet Burns and the “cursed weed” of the groundsman—like many another lowly plant has received the attention of plant breeders. By selection and breeding they have evolved a type much in advance of its progenitor. The double or *monstrous* varieties of *Bellis perennis* are procurable in white, red, pink, and salmon.

For edgings, for small beds, and for grouping in front of flower borders they are most useful and are among the hardest of spring-flowering plants. They should be given the same cultural treatment as that recommended for pansies.

They have one disadvantage, however: If planted alongside a lawn, seed from them invariably grows among the grass, where in the struggle for existence they quickly revert to type and become the “cursed weed” once more.

Forget-me-nots

Seed of forget-me-nots, or myosotis, should also be sown toward the end of December. The seed is sown in boxes, and when the seedlings are large enough to be handled comfortably they are pricked out or transplanted into other boxes or “flats.” The plants make rapid growth and, if left in the boxes, would soon crowd each other. To overcome this difficulty the young plants are put out 6 in. apart

in rows 12 in. apart in open ground. About the end of April they will be ready for transplanting to their flowering quarters. Unlike the wallflower, the myosotis does not require wrenching.

A well-grown bed of tulips is a lovely sight, but tulips rising above a groundwork of blue myosotis are even lovelier.

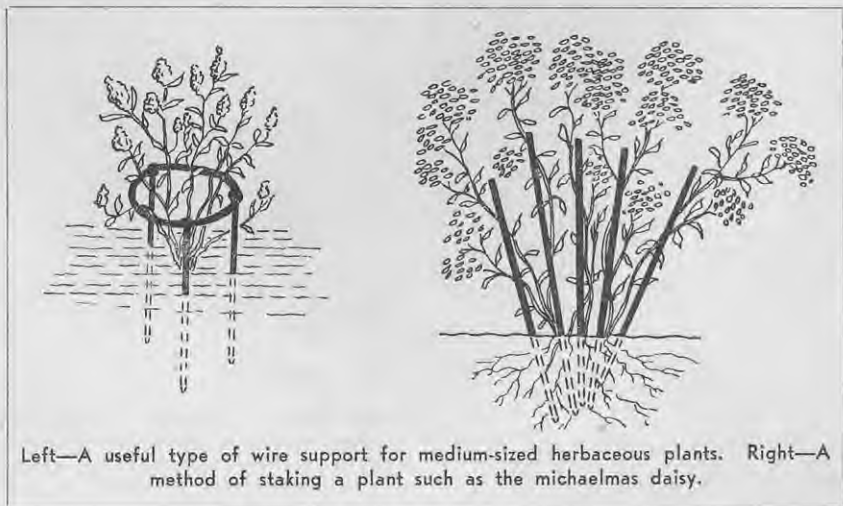
Foxgloves and Canterbury Bells

The foxglove (*Digitalis*) is a noxious weed in the fields, but when given the right situation in a flower garden it is a stately flower. In a large hall a bowl of the flowers is most effective. Such varieties as the Shirley hybrids, Giant Primrose, Apricot, and Giant Spotted certainly are worth growing and appear to advantage when planted in groups at the back of a spacious flower border, in open spaces among the taller shrubs in a shrubbery, or in the wild garden—if the gardener is fortunate enough to possess such a place.

Canterbury bells (*Campanula medium*) are old favourites and may be obtained in single, cup-and-saucer, and double varieties, and in white, mauve, blue, and pink shades. Foxgloves flower during December and Canterbury bells toward the end of the month—when they are most useful for Christmas decorations. The seed of both should be sown during December and grown on in boxes in readiness for planting in autumn in the positions in which they will flower. Both foxgloves and Canterbury bells are true biennials, and to make sure that they will produce good blooms the plants should be well grown and transplanted to their flowering quarters during April so that they will have every chance to recover and establish themselves before the cold of winter sets in.

Stocks

Seed of early-flowering stocks such as the Beauty of Nice varieties should be sown now. Results will be better if the seed is sown where the plants are to flower, but a vacant piece of ground in the flower garden is not always available at this time of the year, in which case the seed may be sown in boxes and the plants put out where required later in the season, when some of the summer-flowering



Left—A useful type of wire support for medium-sized herbaceous plants. Right—A method of staking a plant such as the michaelmas daisy.