

Annuals of the hardier types can be sown in open beds in September if the soil is not still too wet. The top few inches of soil should be cultivated, all lumps broken down, the soil trodden fairly firm, and the surface raked until it is uniform. Seed is far better sown too thinly than too thickly. An $\frac{1}{2}$ in. sieve can be used to spread a light covering of soil over the seeds; not more than 4 times as thick as the diameter of the seeds. For satisfactory results the seed-bed must be firm. Among the many annuals that can be treated thus are alyssum, marigolds, candytuft, cornflowers, clarkias, godetias, cosmos, larkspur, and night-scented stocks.

Bedding plants raised from earlier sowings of seed can be planted out in September in most districts, though where late frosts are likely such tender types as salvias and zinnias should not be planted out until the following month. Bushy plants with plenty of strong, green foliage are the best for bedding, and any flowers or buds present should be cut off to encourage branching and better flowering. Plants that have been in their boxes too long tend to become long and spindly and have yellowed foliage as a result of partial starvation. Such plants are never satisfactory.

Bulbs which have flowered early in the season may still carry a mass of foliage which is perhaps a little untidy, but the gardener should not yield to the temptation to cut it off. To do so is to deprive the bulbs of food which is necessary to complete development and can result only in smaller bulbs and poorer flowering next season. In herbaceous borders the masses of bulb foliage can be made tidy by tying the leaves into neat bunches.

Chrysanthemums can now be lifted and divided and root pieces replanted. Cuttings may be taken and set in sand in a cold frame to root. A cutting should be about 3 in. to 4 in. long, have the lower leaves removed to reduce transpiration, and be cut cleanly at the base immediately below a node or point of origin of a leaf. Cuttings

should be kept moist at all times and be shaded from bright sunlight. After about 3 weeks the buds at the tips begin to produce new green leaves, and this can be taken as an indication that root formation is well advanced. When this stage is reached the shading should be removed and the lid of the frame opened up or taken off. Shortly after that the plants may be potted up or planted straight out into the borders.

Dahlias which were boxed for starting in August should be producing shoots around the necks of the tubers the following month. When these shoots are growing well the plants may be increased in either of two ways: The clumps of tubers can be divided carefully by pulling them apart, care being taken to ensure that there is a healthy shoot attached to each piece of tuber, or plants can be propagated readily from cuttings. A shoot for a cutting should be cut off immediately below a pair of leaves about 3 in. from the tip, the lower leaves removed, and the cuttings inserted 1 in. deep in finely sieved river sand in boxes and as close together as they will go without being crushed. The boxes should be placed in a greenhouse or cold frame for the cuttings to root. In most districts the cuttings can safely be planted directly



A recently pruned hydrangea, showing how the old flowering stems from last season have been removed, and how all new shoots are untouched.

into the borders as soon as they have rooted well.

Herbaceous perennials often throw up a great number of shoots at this time of year, and if all these are allowed to grow, only a mediocre show of flowers can be expected. The shoots should be thinned out severely until only a few remain. All planting of new perennials should be completed in September.

Hydrangeas should be pruned now in cold districts or where the work was not done during autumn. All last season's flowering stems should be cut out and all new shoots left uncut, as the new flower buds are borne at the tips of these. Two handfuls of blood and bone scattered about the roots of each of the bushes in September should prove beneficial. It should be forked in very lightly with a hand fork.

Lawns should be given their spring dressing of fertiliser during September. The best dressing is a mixture consisting of 3 parts by weight of sulphate of ammonia, 1 part of superphosphate, and 1 part of sulphate of iron applied at the rate of 1 oz. per square yard.

Pot plants indoors or in a greenhouse should receive attention now. A plant in need of new soil can be removed from the pot, the crocking material being taken away from the base, and as much soil as possible being scraped away without damaging the roots too greatly. The plant can be repotted into a pot of the same size or only very slightly larger. Where the need for repotting is not so great the top inch or two of soil can be scratched away and emptied out and fresh potting soil substituted.

Rose pruning will now have been completed in all districts, and the beds should be given a topdressing of well-rotted manure, compost, or leaf mould to help retain moisture during summer.



Chrysanthemums may now be lifted and divided into pieces as shown. Cuttings may now be taken in the manner described in the text.