

and a dressing of bonedust at 4oz. to the square yard worked in before planting. Good drainage is essential for the best results and, provided that this is available, the bulbs may be planted fairly deeply, especially if they are not to be lifted for several years. Small bulbs should always be planted closer to the surface than large ones and in lighter soils the planting depth will be correspondingly deeper. The minimum depth of planting for small bulbs such as freesias is 2in., which can be gradually increased to 5in. for hyacinths and similar large varieties.

A much better display usually results from spring flowering bulbs planted early in the season. They will not flower any earlier, but have more time to form a good root system, which improves the quality of the flowers and also enables the bulbs to increase more rapidly. For a long flowering season different varieties should be planted to take advantage of their slightly different flowering times. For early narcissi the paper whites and Soleil d'Or are two of the earliest to bloom. They are followed by lachenalias, jonquils, early daffodils, Dutch iris (Wedgwood), and freesias in that order.

Chrysanthemums

By now flower buds will have begun developing on chrysanthemums, whether they have been planted in beds or in pots. If exhibition blooms are wanted, hard disbudding will be necessary, leaving only the central or crown bud to flower.

Disbudding ensures that the maximum amount of food will reach the remaining buds, giving good-sized blooms suitable for showing. Another result of severe disbudding is, of course, that the flowering season is shortened, as the later flowers, which normally develop on laterals, are removed.

Unless exhibition blooms are wanted, little disbudding is needed for general garden display. Tying of chrysanthemums should be done as often as necessary for, if the plants are left, the weight of the flowers will often break the stems, especially in wind accompanied by rain. Liquid feeding should be continued until the buds are showing colour. Sprays for the control of rust should still be applied, using 3½ fl. oz. of lime sulphur to 4 gallons of spray plus colloidal sulphur at the rate recommended by the manufacturer.

Hedges

In southern districts the less hardy evergreen hedges should be given their final trimming during February. If trimming is left later than this, the resulting new shoots are likely to be killed by frost and there will be very little growth coming away in spring. If frost-tender hedges are trimmed



To get good chrysanthemum blooms like these disbudding must be carried out regularly.

early, the shoots will have time to harden off and the hedges will look more attractive during winter. Even if the tips are killed, the buds further back will break quite readily when the warmer weather begins.

Everlasting Flowers

Everlasting flowers are now coming back into popularity with the increasing interest that is being paid to arrangements of dry material for keeping over winter. Those most usually grown are statice, helichrysum, and honesty. The first two have scaly petals that keep their colour very well when dried, and honesty is used chiefly for the seed pods which turn silver when fully ripe. Everlastings should be cut when the flowers are half open, tied in bunches, and hung upside down where they will get no sunlight and as little dust as possible. They should be left like this until the stems are stiff and dry and then stored in cardboard boxes until wanted for use.

Bedding Plants

In districts where they will flower during winter and early spring there is still time to sow seed of cineraria, stock, antirrhinum, nemesia, schizanthus (butterfly flower), calendula, and winter flowering sweet peas. Provided that the plants are large enough before winter starts, they will supply plenty of colour, but later plantings will not flower until late spring.

Primula malacoides, violas, pansies, and iceland poppies should be planted out before the end of February; also anemones and ranunculus intended for winter flowering.

Trees and Shrubs

In a new garden or in one that is being replanted there are usually several varieties of trees and shrubs that are wanted for planting during winter. The order for these should be placed with the nurseryman well in advance of the planting season to avoid disappointment. It often hap-

pens, especially with popular varieties, that the stock is sold out early in winter or that the plants that are left are not very good specimens.

By ordering well in advance the gardener is sure of getting what he wants and probably the plants will be better than they would be when the ordering is left to the last minute. Most nurseries have several grades of plants with different prices, so the approximate size of the shrubs that are wanted should be given when the order is placed.

Cuttings

The cuttings of trees, shrubs, and perennials that were taken in January should be syringed with water every day to reduce wilting until they have formed roots. The callus that forms over the base of the cuttings is capable of taking up a certain amount of water from the soil and once this has formed the leaves become crisp. When the cuttings have formed roots new shoots start to grow and they can be transplanted either into a corner of the garden to grow on or into their permanent positions. It is better to delay the planting out until autumn, when the soil contains more moisture, as if they are transplanted during summer, watering will be necessary to keep the plants alive.

Cyclamen

Corms that have been dormant during the main part of summer and are wanted for flowering inside during winter can be repotted in February. The corms should be taken out of the pots, all the old soil removed, and a mixture of loam, compost, and sand used for repotting, with broken crocks or gravel in the bottom for drainage. When cyclamen are being watered it is best to avoid spraying water on to the corms, as if they remain wet over a long time, they will rot. The plants should be kept in a cool position, rooms being avoided that become hot and dry due to fires or heaters during winter.