

tion. It is usually better to water seedboxes by soaking in water than by sprinkling, which may create humid conditions conducive to trouble from the damping-off fungi.

As soon as seedlings have their first pair of true leaves they can be pricked out 2½ in. apart each way into a mixture with more body and more fertilisers.

Plants being hardened off in frames should have the lights lifted when possible. It has been found that polythene is a doubtful replacement for glass on frames, as it allows quick escape in the night of heat built up during the day. This deprives plants of the protection they still need.

Pansies and violas could be planted out now and make attractive borders round permanent beds of roses or fuchsias.

Bulbs Need Attention

Many spring bulbs are now past their best and the tops can be neatly tied in knots so that they continue to feed the bulb. DDT round the base of the plants will help prevent damage by narcissus bulb flies. New bulbs should be ordered while the varieties are still in flower. It is preferable to visit a good grower and see the varieties under field conditions rather than to order purely from the show bench. Tulips which have been attacked by virus should be dug up and burnt.

Summer and autumn flowering bulbs and roots such as cannas, agapanthus, galtonia, and acidanthera can now be planted. *Gladiolus nanus* (vars. "Colvili" and "The Bride") should be planted by now and a few of the large gladiolus can be planted successively to give a continuing display from Christmas on.

Plants in the Border

Division and replanting of herbaceous perennials should be attended to urgently, as they are now starting into growth. Catmint, useful as a border and along driveways, can now be cut back and divided up if the clumps are too large or if required for extension. Gerberas can be broken apart now and planted in warm, sunny locations. The crown of the plants should sit above the soil when planted.

Lily-of-the-valley and other plants nearing flowering will benefit from applications of weak liquid fertilisers. The whole flower border should now be given a dressing at 4 oz per square yard of balanced fertiliser made by mixing

- 3 parts of blood and bone
- 2 parts of superphosphate
- 1 part of sulphate of potash

Cuttings of agatheia, marguerite, hybrid wallflower, centaurea, and violet can be placed in sandy mixtures in a frame to root.

Chrysanthemums and Dahlias

If the planting positions of chrysanthemums and dahlias are alternated,

the build up of plant diseases which attack each crop is not so great. Both plants are gross feeders and repay all efforts to incorporate farmyard manure, compost, seaweed, and similar materials as well as regular balanced chemical feeding. Lime at 2 oz per square yard could also be given now.

Three-inch cuttings from the tips of chrysanthemum shoots should be neatly trimmed and placed in a box of a sandy mixture to root. In cooler districts they could be placed in a cold frame, but in the warmer areas they can be set outdoors. A sheet of paper should be placed over the box to stop the cuttings from flagging. Cuttings rooted in this manner will give shorter plants of bushier growth than those grown from rooted slips.

Cape Tulip

Cape tulip (*Homeria collina*), in flower this month, appears to be grown in many gardens in New Zealand. All parts of this bulbous plant are poisonous and it should be destroyed.

The flowers may be salmon with a lemon centre or pure lemon. They open consecutively up the 3 ft stem. The bulbs are up to 1½ in. wide and covered with a mesh of fibre. The plant typically has only one leaf per bulb. This leaf is straplike and may be up to 3 ft long.

The whole plant should be lifted and burnt. Well established plants are very difficult to remove completely, as the young bulbs are very small. The place where the plants were removed from should be left vacant for at least two years, as some of the bulbs may remain dormant for a season, and grow the next.

A spray of 2,4-D plus diesel fuel is recommended for heavy infestations where it is possible to use this without damaging other plants.

Dahlias can be encouraged, in frost-free positions, to send up new shoots. The tubers can later be divided or the shoots removed and set in a warm position to develop roots.

Eelworms

Eelworms cause sections of chrysanthemum leaves to turn dark brown and the leaves to shrivel and hang down. The damage usually starts at the base and extends upward until finally the whole stem is defoliated. Many spring flowering bulbs are also damaged, the attacks causing blister-like swelling of the foliage and distortion and yellowing of the flower stem and foliage. In New Zealand eelworms are also known to attack delphiniums and scabious. Eelworms

are very specific in their host range and some types of eelworm will attack only one type of plant.

For home gardeners the only possible method of control is the treatment of plants with hot water. This has to be done very carefully. Overseas work has shown that the growing roots of French and African marigolds give off a substance which will reduce the numbers of some types of eelworms. It may be worth while to plant this easily grown crop in infected soils.

Grassed Areas

Sowing of new lawns and topdressing of bare patches should be attended to as soon as possible. Grass grub has been so bad each year that the recommendation for their control is repeated this month, which is a suitable time to treat the ground before the grubs pupate. It is easiest to apply the DDT when mixed with the spring fertiliser application of

- 30 oz of sulphate of ammonia
- 10 oz of superphosphate
- 1 oz of 50 per cent DDT to 40 square yards of lawn

DDT should be applied to the flower and vegetable gardens as well, if grass grubs are a problem in the district.

One of the worst grass weeds which appears in garden areas is an annual, *Poa annua*. It flowers and seeds while the plant is very young and small and consequently the mower does not remove the seed heads. There may be several crops of this pale green grass each season, mostly during winter. It can cover gravel paths and bare lawns for several months during winter and spring, but dies out to leave bare patches on the lawns during summer.

The presence of this weed does not indicate that the soil is either too acid or too alkaline, as the grass will grow under either condition where the fertility of the soil is low. On lawns the fertility can be raised by the regular application of the fertilisers mentioned at least twice each year in spring and summer. It is preferable to apply them every three months.

On paths an application of dalapon at 1 oz to 120 square yards could be used to destroy *Poa annua*.

Hedge Plants

Several ornamental plants such as *escallonia* and *Chaenomeles japonica* (*japonica*) are now being used as hedge plants and should be clipped back after flowering. Privet, lonicera, macrocarpa, and euonymus should also be pruned at this time. Hedges of *Shawia paniculata* (golden akeake) are sometimes disfigured by the olearia gall midge, which causes stunting, rosetting, and malformation of the leaves. Plants are best trimmed back during winter and sprayed now