

## GARDENING NOTES

(By Mr. J. Joyce, Landscape Gardener, Christchurch.)

### Laying Out a Garden.

The intention of this paper is to give a little instruction to the person who has very little knowledge of gardening. I do not presume in the least to teach the expert or professional horticulturist, and I shall therefore commence by supposing a man has possession of a small allotment, has built a house on it, and is now going to make his garden and needs information on the manner of procedure.

The first item on the programme is a walk from the front gate to the front entrance and back, right through to the end of the garden. He must commence by wheeling away all the good soil to the low parts of the garden, or perhaps it may be wanted to fill up hollows around the house. He must peg out the width of his walk, nicking it out with a spade, first laying a line along to guide him. The soil being taken out, the next work is to fill up with some rough material, such as coal ashes, cinders, broken bricks or any rough stuff available. Rough gravel will do if nothing else is to be procured, as this will form a good foundation for the walk. It must then be well rolled, and a coating of fine gravel or grit laid on and well rolled, and the walk is finished. If possible it should have a fall to the road to drain the surface water away.

Now the next thing to be done is to trench the ground. Trenching means digging the ground two spits deep, bringing the second spit to the top. It is always well to break up the clay, if there is a clay bottom. To give satisfaction every garden should be trenched, as deep digging pays well for the labor spent.

The way to commence is to get a line and mark out two feet from the edge of the path or boundary, as the case may be. Then get a barrow and wheel away the first trench of soil to the end of the plot where it is intended to finish. That soil will fill up the last trench. When the soil is cleared away mark out two more feet, laying the line along for a guide, and fill up the vacant trench with the soil, and so on to the finish. If required, manure can be put at the bottom of the trench, and the next time it is dug it will turn up and mix with the soil.

The garden now being trenched, the next thing is to lay out the front garden. Begin by getting some pegs and pegging out the design, usually a border about six feet all round for planting shrubs and flowers. The design being marked out, rake the ground where the lawn is intended to be. When nicely levelled give it a thorough good rolling, and tread with the feet all over very closely, laying all the weight on the heels.

Rake it again nice and even so as to give it a nice level bed for the seed. Now sow the seed pretty thick. Six bushels to the acre will not be too much. Rake in the seed nice and evenly, taking care not to draw the soil with the rake, or the seed may come up patchy. Then roll again lightly to press in the seed, afterwards raking very lightly to take away signs of the roller, so that the ground may not cake hard if rain should come. In about three weeks the lawn will be green, and nothing more is needed now until it will want mowing. Roll well a day or two before mowing, and during the growing season mow at least once a week, and roll as often as possible, especially after rain. Constant rolling and mowing is the secret of a good lawn, as the old English gardener said to the American when the latter asked how he came to have such a beautiful lawn. 'We be mowing it for three hundred years and we be rolling it for two hundred.' And that was the secret.

### Planting.

Now that the garden is laid out the next thing is to see to the planting. Choose a nice lot of the best flowering shrubs, plant about six feet apart or more, according to the nature of the variety. Plant the taller kinds at the back, and dwarfs at the front. If a hedge

is needed, I would recommend holly, laurel, or privet. If nicely clipped once or twice a year they will always look nice and prim. The secret of a good hedge is to cut in the sides pretty hard each time it is clipped. Some are in the habit of leaving two or three inches of the season's growth when clipped, the consequence being that in a few years the hedge gets so wide that it will occupy half the border space.

Now that the front garden is finished, we will turn our attention to the back garden. Choosing a good selection of fruit trees, about a dozen apples may be sufficient—two early, two medium, and two late, for cooking purposes, the same for dessert or eating, and the same might be followed with pears. One or two cherries may be added, and three or four plums, a couple of peach trees and a pair of apricots—planted in a sheltered position away from the east winds. Add about six each of gooseberries and currants, and a couple of dozen raspberries, and the garden is well stocked. These trees will not prevent vegetables being grown among them for a good many years, especially if the trees are properly looked after and never allowed to grow too big by careful pruning each year.

Now the garden being finished, constant cultivation is the secret of success. Keep the Dutch or push hoe constantly going during summer and the spade during the winter.

### Manuring.

After a year or so, the garden will want some manure. If you want to grow flowers and vegetables successfully, you must manure after taking a crop out of the ground. Take a lesson from Nature. Nature supplies food to her plants each season by the annual shedding of leaves of trees and plants, which, when decayed, provide food for the tree or plants for another season. When the tree sheds its leaves every autumn it is not because they are dead and of no further use to the tree, but because they are required to return to the soil the constituents which have been abstracted during the season of growth, thus enabling the soil to maintain a healthy vegetation for another season. Every particle of a leaf when decayed is capable of being absorbed into a tree or plant, enabling it to produce leaves, flowers and fruit for another season.

It follows that when man removes the natural food from the soil by the crops produced, it must lose a good part of its fertility. Such being the case, he must return an equal amount of matter in the form of manure, to make good the loss sustained in producing such crops. If properly manured with a judicious rotation of crops, the garden will always be a success. Manure is the food of the soil, and without manure it will soon get hungry.

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