

## GARDENING NOTES

(By MR. J. JOYCE, Landscape Gardener, Christchurch.)

### HYBRIDISING AND CROSS-BREEDING.

To the lover of flowers and plants this is a very interesting field to labor in. To be successful he must be possessed of great patience and perseverance, for it will take some time before he sees the result of his work. In the first place he selects the plants which he intends to operate on. If he wants a cross-breed he will select two varieties of the same species, but if he desires a hybrid he will choose two different species. Having decided on the plants, he must pot them, and place them in a greenhouse or some safe place, where bees or insects cannot have access to them. Both plants should be treated alike, and when in flower must be carefully watched for the time when the hybridising should be performed. When this arrives the pollen of the male plant will appear like fine powder or dust, and the female flower will show a mucus-like fluid on the stigma, now is the time to operate, fine bright sunny weather being the best. With a pair of very fine tweezers nip off the stamens bearing the ripe pollen, and gently deposit it on the stigma of the female flower, and the operation is completed. No other flower but that fertilised should be left on the plant, so as to prevent self-fertilising, for if any pollen should happen to be present there is every possibility that the operation would be a failure. On that account no flower of the same species should be allowed in close proximity. It would be wise to place a gauze frame to protect the flowers from the intrusion of bees or insects after the work is performed, and then there should be careful treatment as to air and water when necessary. I omitted to state that the female flowers should be divested of all their anthers before their pollen would be in a fit state for fertilising, and also the petals of the flower would be better cut away, so that there would be no attraction for bees or other insects to bring the pollen of another plant. It must be borne in mind that most flowers are male and female combined, that is, they bear anthers which produce pollen, and are therefore capable of being fertilised by their own agency. That is why the anthers of the female flower must be removed at an early stage, so that no other pollen, but that to be operated on will be present. Varieties are always capable of uniting readily and producing seed freely, but it is very difficult to get species to do so. When they do, the outcome is a hybrid, and hybrids are usually non-productive of seed. Hybrids are generally termed mules. Nature has decreed that each species should be carefully guarded against the intrusion of foreign agents, or else there would be nothing but chaos. We would be crossing the gooseberry and the currant, and the result would be a hybrid; then the apple and the pear, the plum and the cherry, and so on, with the result that there would be an endless

number of hybrids. If nature intended that plants should be multiplied in such a manner, there is no doubt that in time the originals would be completely lost. But nature has, however, decreed that each species is to propagate its own kind, but this does not prevent man from multiplying and improving varieties of each species of plant or animal for his benefit. And man has taken advantage of the opportunity to improve those classes of plants and animals to such an extent that the number of both throughout the world to-day is enormous. But with the breeding of species it is different. The law is laid down, and so far and no farther, can man go, either in the animal or vegetable kingdom.

Learned experts and botanists have experimented with a great many species of plants, in their endeavors to raise new hybrids, but all to no purpose, as only a very few species would amalgamate with others. The apple and pear are very similar in appearance, and yet they will not amalgamate, neither will the cherry and plum, nor the gooseberry and currant. Experiments were tried with those many years ago, and they resulted in failure. It is really marvellous how perfect are the laws of nature. Look at the numerous varieties of wild plants throughout the world, and yet each tree in the dense forest propagates its own species, never interfering with its neighbor, and all nature in that respect is in harmony and peace. This is also the case with the innumerable plants and flowers throughout the universe: they conform to the laws which nature has laid down.

### A DREAD DISEASE AND ITS REMEDY.

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