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DOWN THE GARDEN PATH

By Dorothy Giles



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Down the Garden Path

PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS *for* FLOWER
and VEGETABLE GARDENING

is one of a series of service books issued by McCALL'S for its readers. The purpose of the booklets is to help the homemaker to arrange and simplify her daily life, enabling her to find time and strength for those interests which lie outside the narrow circle of household cares.

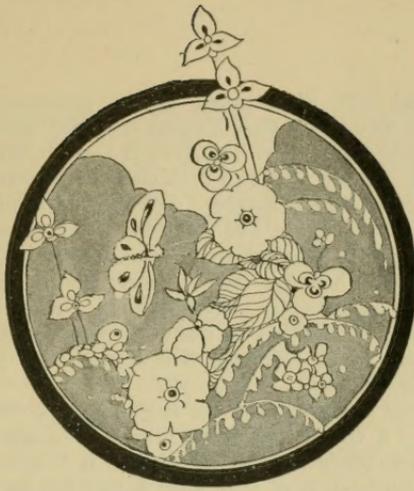
Gardening is one such interest, too often thrust aside for want of time. But when America shall have become a land of little gardens as well as of great ones, when the flower-garden on the farm, along the village street, in the suburbs, is the rule and not the exception we shall find a new spirit abroad and a loveliness which will do much to bring beauty to dwell with us.

Dorothy Liles

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The Making of a Garden

BY a garden," said Newman, "is meant mystically a place of spiritual repose, stillness, peace, refreshment, delight."

Size and type have nothing to do with it. It may be a narrow border at the back of a city lot, a careful grouping of beds and shrubbery in one of the gardened suburbs, a window box and a shelf of flower pots in the sky parlor of a towering apartment house, or a broad planting of gay posies to divide the dooryard from the farm. In any case, if it offers a door of escape from the commonplaceness of life, if it fills an urgent need of beauty, if it brings us face to face with the elemental facts of seed-time and harvest, it is worthy the name of garden, and deserves not only recognition, but thought and care in the planning.

How early in the year those garden plans can begin depends on the zeal of the gardener. We are a hopeful tribe, and most of us live entirely in the future. It is seldom this year's harvest that delights so fully as the prospect of next year's sowing, and I should say that the earlier in the year you make your plans the better, since this gives opportunity not only for more careful consideration, but a prolonged pleasure of expectation.

First comes the selection of the garden site. This should not be so far from the house that the busy housewife cannot snatch twenty minutes while the cake is in the oven to weed her marigolds. Few of us can set aside a whole day for uninterrupted work in our gardens, but there are hours and half-hours and ten-minute breathing-spaces which if the garden is intimately close at hand may be turned to good account.

Sun-exposure is of prime importance. Keep clear of dense, overhanging branches, particularly evergreens, of the close shadows of high walls, hedges, or tall shrubbery.

The ideal garden-site is well opened to the morning as well as the afternoon sun, receives partial shade from tall, open branched trees, and has some measure of protection against the north winds in winter.

If it slopes slightly, so much the better, since after sun, drainage is the next essential to success.

All this may sound very discouraging to the garden-amateur, but for her consolation let me add that where trees flourish she need have no fears of starting a garden, since their long roots pierce the sub-soil and provide natural drainage.

Having chosen your site the next step is to plan the garden on paper. Draw an outline of the beds you purpose making, their proportionate length and width, remembering that for flowers a bed five feet wide is more easily weeded than one six or eight feet across: that a better architectural effect is gained by planting in long borders than in spotty beds cut into the turf; that a vegetable-garden which allows for paths is more conveniently cultivated than a wide, uncharted patch, and above all that it is poor generalship to make a garden bigger than one can care for properly. A dozen Sweet Williams, well tended, will yield more and finer blooms than fifty neglected plants.

As soon as the ground has dried after the frost has come out you can begin your outdoor preparations. A simple test is to turn over a spadeful of earth; if it crumbles as it falls it is ready for the plough but if it shows a sticky tendency and forms a muddy lump, you must curb your impatience for a while longer.

The whole purpose of the spring cultivation is to render the top soil rich and friable. This involves the use of fertilizer and a thorough working. In large gardens ploughing and a subsequent harrowing of the soil will be necessary, but small beds are best forked to the depth of two feet and then raked smooth. If you are making your garden in virgin soil the sods that you turn over should be broken up and forked into the ground to rot. They are rich in humus and form one of the best fertilizers. Clay, sandy, or worn-out soils are especially benefitted by this. Acid soil, or ground that has grown sour by the use of too heavy manures, should have a dressing of lime, or of all the wood ashes that you can beg, borrow or steal. Indeed open fires are a boon to the gardener since the ashes gives the necessary potash, and the chimney-soot is a preventive against grubs and cut-worms.

To determine whether your soil has grown sour, mix a little in a cup with water, insert a strip of litmus paper, which if lime is needed, will turn pink. For each one hundred square feet of surface ten to twenty pounds of lime will be required.

The fertilizer, either well-rotted barnyard-manure or one of the commercial fertilizers which contain nitrogen, phosphoric acid and potash, should be spread generously over the ground after the ploughing or first spading, then turned under, and the surface raked smooth. A week later, provided there have been no heavy rains, you can begin your planting.

The Flower Garden

THUS far these directions are equally applicable to the vegetable-garden and to the flower-garden. In this chapter let us consider the flower-garden alone, and I have taken it first because this is essentially the woman's sphere. It is safe to suppose that men, left to themselves, would grow corn and potatoes, but how many roses and hollyhocks would blossom in the dooryards?

It is not a question of superiority of merit. We have need and room for both. When America shall become a land of little gardens as well as of great ones; when

the flower garden on the farm, in the village and in the suburbs is the rule rather than the exception, we shall find a new spirit abroad and a pervading loveliness which will do much to remove from us the stigma of materialism.

The flower-garden has to meet two requirements—it must provide blossoms for cutting, and it must be in itself a thing of beauty. Commercial florists find it profitable to grow flowers like carrots in mathematically precise rows, but there is little, in such a sight, to appeal to the beauty sense. Nor are beds shaped like stars or crescents other than grotesque.

The well-planned flower-garden bears a distinct relation to the house beside which it stands. The two should stand as a whole. For instance, a bungalow or Colonial cottage calls for a more informal type of garden than is appropriate to a brick or stucco house. Plaster urns and garden statuary that are both dignified and satisfying in gardens of the Italian type appear incongruous beside a shingled house, while by the same golden rule, a wide-porticoed mansion demands of its owner something more generous than a bed of sparse geraniums and cannas.

So plan your flower-garden to agree with your house, and to fit into the landscape as though it really belonged and had not been added as an afterthought. Draw a diagram, to scale, of the flower-beds, either a long border or four triangular corner beds enclosing a tiny grass lawn, or whatever form pleases you most, and then with this before you, go over the catalogues which begin to arrive soon after the New Year, and make out your seed lists.

If you are a new gardener you had better learn at once the three classes into which all flowering plants are divided: first, annuals, those which, sown in the spring, come to maturity and bloom that summer, and die in the autumn. Second, biennials, which are plants of two year's growth. Sown in the spring they do not come to maturity that season, but live through the winter, bloom the following summer, and then die. And third, perennials, requiring two or three years to mature, but which then go on living and blooming for many years. Peonies are perennials. I know a famous old garden in the Hudson valley where the peonies are more than one hundred years old; but where they still bloom each June with undiminished ardor. And while beds of annuals like petunias, asters, or nasturtiums are brilliant for a time, it is the long-lived flowers, the phlox, the poppies, and the larkspur, which are richest in garden associations and significance. It is well, therefore, in planning your garden to allow room for perennials and biennials as well as annuals, only, in using these, you must be prepared to wait a season for them to attain their glory.

If there is a gardeners' battle-cry, and if not there should be, it is "Continuous Bloom." That is the ideal we all strive for—flowers from April to frost—no bare spots, no barren weeks of waiting between the roses and the August blaze of annuals. And by this standard garden-success is gauged. Continuous bloom even within the range of a very small garden is a lively possibility and comes of careful planning. In the Flower-Chart, given at the end of this chapter, I have listed the most popular flowers in the three classes which may be grown with general success practically everywhere in this country. California and Florida gardeners can add many others of semi-tropical growth which are barred to those who live in colder climates, while in the northern states where spring comes late and winter early one cannot reasonably expect a flower-season of more than five months.

By the aid of the Flower-Chart and the seed-catalogues you will be able to make out your list so as to include early, mid-season, and late blooming plants; tall plants for the back of the beds, and low growing ones for a border; and all of colors that will harmonize.

Then when your list is complete, take up the diagram you have previously made and decide where you will plant each variety. Do you need more tall growing plants to form a background? Have you allowed enough hardy annuals for the last September and October garden days? Are you sure that you are not relying upon biennials like foxgloves and Canterbury bells for this season's bloom? Their places will have to be taken by annuals for the first year, but by starting them now you are keeping ahead of the calendar.

It is impossible to lay down absolute rules about the amount you will need of each, save the general one that of perennials, biennials, and those annuals which grow as individual plants, like petunias or asters, one packet will yield enough for a garden of moderate size. Of annuals like alyssum and mignonette which are sown in the open ground in a mass, one packet will plant a drill six feet long. If you want special color combinations, of asters let us say, you will need a packet of white, one of pink, and one of lilac, using only a part of each. Experience teaches that it pays to be generous in ordering seeds, since one must allow for losses, accidents, and alas! for mistakes, while close planting does much to eliminate weeds.

When the seeds come from the nurseryman decide which of those you have ordered need to be started under glass in order to have plants big enough to bloom that season. Since you must needs wait a whole year for the perennials and biennials, at all events a few weeks' delay now will make little difference and all these may be started in the open ground after the first spring-rush is over. So too with all the annuals except those marked with an asterisk in the Flower-Chart. Those so marked are of slower growth and need, for the best success, to be started about March first in the hot-bed or in flats in the house.

A hot-bed is a pit about four feet deep filled to within six inches of the surface with rotted leaves and manure, and covered with fine, rich soil in which seeds will sprout rapidly. Over this rests a glass sash on a wooden or cement frame. A cold frame differs from a hot-bed in that it has no pit beneath, the frame resting on the ground and banked about with manure. Since it lacks the heat from below it cannot be used until later in the season, when the frost is coming out of the ground.

A small hot-bed is not difficult to make and ought to be an accessory to every garden, but if needs must, you can supplement this by starting your seeds in flats in a sunny window. The soil for filling the flats should be: one part sand, one part leaf-mold or humus, and one part garden-earth, rubbed through a sieve to free it of all lumps or stones.

When the flats are filled mark off shallow drills with the point of a lead-pencil, and scatter the seeds from the tip of a spoon as thinly as possible, since the process of germination requires room for the seed to move, and to have the seedlings come up uncrowded ensures stronger plants.

After sowing, the flats should be watered and put in a warm place, on the top of a radiator or near a stove. Light is not essential. Watch them carefully never permitting the soil to dry out, and as soon as the seedlings break ground remove

to a sunny window and cover for a few days with a pane of glass which will tend to keep in the moisture.

When the seedlings have developed their second set of leaves they should be transplanted into other flats filled with slightly richer soil. In transplanting care must be taken to preserve the tender roots and the plants should be set deeper than before, and about two inches apart. Water thoroughly and shade with a newspaper from the bright sunlight for a day or two until they recommence growing.

By April fifteenth the flats can be moved to a cold frame in the garden, and the sash opened for a few hours during the warm part of the day. Later it should be removed altogether to harden the plants before setting them out in the garden which, in the latitude of New York ought to be about the tenth of May.

Meanwhile the hardier seeds have been sown in a seed-bed out-of-doors about the time that the maple-buds break into leaf. Indeed it is better to build one's garden-calendar around nature's signs like this than to rely on dates which cannot be significant to all parts of the country.

The seeds sown out-of-doors should be treated exactly like those in the flats, that is, sown in drills, transplanted when they attain their second set of leaves, then transplanted again to the places where they are to bloom. The double transplanting tends to produce stocky, well-rooted plants which will withstand drought, the great enemy to gardening in America, better than the spindly seedlings which have made their growth in only one soil. All flowers are benefitted by transplanting except mignonette and Shirley poppies which *must* be sown where they are to bloom.

When the time comes for setting out your plants consult the diagram of which we have spoken so often—tall plants at the back of the beds, bushy plants for the center, and along the front edge a low border of alyssum or dianthus or mignonette. In planting remember that a group of three or five or even more plants of one kind produce a better effect than isolated specimens or long, straight lines; also that each bed should receive sufficient varieties to ensure bloom there all through the season. The perennials and biennials are best left in the seed-bed until September when they will be big enough to move to their permanent places in the garden. It is well, too, to leave some plants in the seed-bed as a reserve stock to fill in the gaps later on; for example forget-me-nots die down after blooming and leave an ugly bare space into which, if you are wise, you will set a few marigolds or calendulas which can be moved without ill effect at any time.

FLOWER CHART

(P.—Perennial, B.—Biennial, A.—Annual)

NAME	TYPE	COLOR	HEIGHT	SEASON OF BLOOM
Achillea	P.	White	2 feet	July-Aug.
Alyssum	A.	White	6 inches	June-Oct.
Anchusa	P.	Blue	4-5 feet	June
Anemone	P.	White, pink	2-3 feet	Sept.
*Aster	A.	White, pink, lilac purple	2-3 feet	Aug.-Sept.
*Balsam	A.	Pink, white	18 inches	Aug.-Sept.
*Calendula	A.	Yellow, orange	12 inches	July-Oct.
*Calliopsis	A.	Yellow, orange	12 inches	July-Oct.
Candytuft	A.	White, pink	12 inches	June
Candytuft	P.	White	9 inches	May
Campanula medium..	B.	White, blue, pink	3 feet	June

FLOWER CHART

(P.—Perennial, B.—Biennial, A.—Annual)

NAME	TYPE	COLOR	HEIGHT	SEASON OF BLOOM
Campanula Persicifolia	P.	White, blue	2 feet	June
Centaurea	A.	Blue	2 feet	May-June
Columbine	P.	All colors	2-3 feet	May-June
Coreopsis	P.	Yellow	2-3 feet	June-Oct.
Cosmos	A.	White, pink	6 feet	Sept.-Oct.
Chrysanthemum	P.	All colors	3 feet	Oct.
*Dahlia	P.	All colors	6 feet	Aug.-Oct.
Daisy, English	B.	White, pink	6 inches	May
Delphinium	P.	Blue	3-6 feet	June
Delphinium	A.	Blue, pink, lilac	18 inches	July
Dianthus	P.	White, pink	12 inches	June
Eschscholtzia	A.	Yellow	12 inches	July-Oct.
Feverfew	P.	White	2 feet	June-Sept.
*Forget-me-not	B.	Blue	8 inches	May-June
Foxglove	B.	White, pink	5 feet	June
Gaillardia	P.	Yellow, red	2 feet	July-Oct.
*Gaillardia	A.	Yellow, red	18 inches	July-Oct.
Globe Amaranth	A.	Pink, red	15 inches	July-Oct.
Gypsophila	P.	White	2 feet	July
Helenium	P.	Yellow, red	6 feet	Aug.
Hemerocalis	P.	Yellow	3 feet	June
Hollyhock	P.	All colors	6 feet	July
*Heliotrope	A.	Blue	12 inches	July-Oct.
Iris	P.	All colors	2 feet	May-July
Lupin	P.	Blue, white, pink	3-5 feet	May-June
Monkshood	P.	Blue	3 feet	Aug.
*Marigold, African	A.	Yellow	4 feet	Aug.-Oct.
*Marigold, French	A.	Yellow, red	2 feet	Aug.-Oct.
Mignonette	A.	Green	12 inches	June-Oct.
Nasturtium	A.	Yellow, orange, pink	12 inches	June-Oct.
Nicotiana	A.	White	3 feet	July-Oct.
*Pansy	A. or B.	Blue, yellow, purple	6 inches	April-Oct.
*Petunia	A.	All colors	12 inches	July-Oct.
Peony	P.	All colors	3-4 feet	June
Phlox	P.	Pink, white	2-3 feet	July-Aug.
*Phlox	A.	All colors	12 inches	July
Poppy, Oriental	P.	Red, pink	3 feet	May-June
Poppy, Shirley	A.	All colors	2 feet	June
Portulaca	A.	All colors	6 inches	July-Oct.
Platycodon	P.	Blue, white	3 feet	July
Rocket	P.	White	3 feet	June
*Salvia	A.	Red, blue	3 feet	Aug.-Oct.
Shasta Daisy	P.	White	2 feet	July
Sweet William	B. or P.	All colors	12 inches	June-July
*Snapdragon	A.	All colors	2 feet	June-Oct.
Valerian	P.	White	4 feet	June
Viola	P.	Blue, purple, yellow	8 inches	May-Oct.
*Verbena	A.	All colors	8 inches	June-Oct.
*Zinnia	A.	All colors	2-4 feet	July-Oct.

* Plants of slow growth. For best success, start about March first in hot beds or in flats in the house.

The Vegetable Garden

ALL vegetables, with the exception of asparagus, artichokes and rhubarb, are annuals, and therefore must be forced by rich soil, moisture and frequent cultivation if they are to produce abundantly in the short season allotted to them.

I have already spoken in Chapter Two of the method of starting seeds in a hot-bed or cold-frame or in flats in the house, and the same rules hold true in regard to vegetables. The following vegetables should be so started: early cabbage, early lettuce, celery, cauliflower, eggplant, peppers and tomatoes.

All others are sown in drills or hills in the open ground, the peas first, since they are extremely hardy and should be planted as soon as the ground is ready. By the time the first planting of peas breaks ground the carrots, beets, radishes, spinach, onions, leeks, parsnips, potatoes and turnips may be planted, to be followed when all danger of frost is past by the corn, cucumbers, beans both the lima and string varieties, melons and squash.

The vegetable-garden is more successful if a definite planting-plan is followed. Mark off on paper the number and length of planting-rows your garden has room for, then decide how much space you will allot to each vegetable. Most catalogues quote the amount of seed needed to plant a one-hundred-foot row, and if you can make your rows of this length or a fraction of it, it will be fairly easy to estimate how much seed of each sort to order.

Another object gained by following a plan is that you have a record from one year to the next of the location of your crops. A vegetable seldom does well if grown two years in succession in the same spot, so where you have peas this year is the place for the tomatoes next season, and so forth. Also it is easier to plan an intensive gardening-scheme on paper than in the garden itself.

Many vegetables have a short season and their places may be filled by a crop of late vegetables for winter storage, thus reaping two harvests from your land. About July fifteenth when the peas, early beans, beets, spinach, radishes and lettuce are over, fork the ground, add fresh fertilizer and plant a late crop of the same vegetables, only not in the identical places each occupied before. Root-vegetables have a tendency to grow coarse and fibrous when they are old, and are best for table use when immature. Those planted in July are therefore more delicate than if they had grown all through the summer months.

The tender vegetables which have been started in the hot-bed or in flats are ready to be planted out in the garden about the middle of May when all danger of frost is over. They should be set in regular rows, about 18 inches apart.

Application may be made to the Division of Publications, United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C. for a list of Farmers' Bulletins. Of these I especially recommend Bulletins 460 (on Cold Frames); 1044 (City Vegetable Garden); and 1171 (On Growing Annuals). They are free.

Many of the State Universities and Agricultural schools publish free literature which may be had on application. It is a wise plan to be in direct correspondence with your State College of Agriculture, not only to obtain the free bulletins, but also to refer to them your particular problems. The specialists there, having made a special study of gardening under the conditions of climate and soil in your state, can help you far better than any general pamphlet or bulletin can.

LIST OF AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES

(Address your letter, in each case, to the Director of Extension)

Alabama.....	Polytechnic Institute, Auburn, Alabama
Arizona.....	College of Agriculture, Tucson, Arizona
California.....	College of Agriculture, Berkley, California
Colorado.....	State Agricultural College, Fort Collins, Colorado
Connecticut.....	State Agricultural College, Storrs, Connecticut
Delaware.....	Delaware College, Newark, Delaware
Florida.....	College of Agriculture, Gainesville, Florida
Georgia.....	State College of Agriculture, Athens, Georgia
Idaho.....	State College of Agriculture, Moscow, Idaho
Illinois.....	State College of Agriculture, Urbana, Illinois
Indiana.....	Purdue University, School of Agriculture, La Fayette, Indiana
Iowa.....	State College of Agriculture, Ames, Iowa
Kansas.....	State College of Agriculture, Manhattan, Kansas
Kentucky.....	State College of Agriculture, Lexington, Kentucky
Louisiana.....	State University and Agricultural, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Maine.....	State College of Agriculture, Orono, Maine
Maryland.....	Maryland State College, College Park, Maryland
Massachusetts.....	Massachusetts Agricultural College, Amherst, Massachusetts
Michigan.....	Michigan Agricultural College, East Lansing, Michigan
Minnesota.....	University of Minnesota, Department of Agriculture, St. Paul, Minn.
Mississippi.....	Mississippi Agricultural College, Agricultural College, Mississippi
Missouri.....	State College of Agriculture, Columbia, Missouri
Montana.....	State College of Agriculture, Bozeman, Montana
Nebraska.....	College of Agriculture, Lincoln, Nebraska
Nevada.....	College of Agriculture, Reno, Nevada
New Hampshire.....	College of Agriculture, Durham, New Hampshire
New Jersey.....	State College of Agriculture, New Brunswick, New Jersey
New Mexico.....	State College of Agriculture, State College, New Mexico
New York.....	State College of Agriculture, Ithaca, New York
North Carolina.....	State College of Agriculture, West Raleigh, North Carolina
North Dakota.....	State College of Agriculture, Agricultural College, North Dakota
Ohio.....	State College of Agriculture, Columbus, Ohio
Oklahoma.....	State College of Agriculture, Stillwater, Oklahoma
Oregon.....	State College of Agriculture, Corvallis, Oregon
Pennsylvania.....	School of Agriculture, State College, Pennsylvania
Rhode Island.....	State College of Agriculture, Kingston, Rhode Island
South Carolina.....	Clemson Agricultural College, Clemson College, South Carolina
South Dakota.....	State College of Agriculture, Brookings, South Dakota
Tennessee.....	College of Agriculture, Knoxville, Tennessee
Texas.....	Agricultural College of Texas, College Station, Texas
Utah.....	State College of Agriculture, Logan, Utah
Vermont.....	State College of Agriculture, Burlington, Vermont
Virginia.....	Virginia Agricultural College, Blacksburg, Virginia
Washington.....	State College of Agriculture, Pullman, Washington
West Virginia.....	State College of Agriculture, Morgantown, West Virginia
Wisconsin.....	State College of Agriculture, Madison, Wisconsin
Wyoming.....	State College of Agriculture, Laramie, Wyoming

Summer Work in the Garden

"Oh, Adam was a gardener, and God who made him sees
That half a proper gardener's work is done upon his knees."

FROM the day that your plants are set out or your vegetables come up in their neat rows, one obligation is laid upon the gardener—CULTIVATE! All of us who have bent to the hoe or knelt reverently for the slow process of hand-weeding can appreciate the stern significance of the Biblical command to till the earth and know that "Singing, 'Oh, How Beautiful!' and sitting in the shade," grows neither vegetables nor flowers but only weeds.

Proper cultivation consists in working the surface soil so as to keep it clear of weed-growth and free of the crust which even one day of brilliant sunshine after a heavy rain will produce. If the top-soil is kept loose and friable to the extent of forming a "dust-mulch" the underground-moisture will be retained much longer, and the dews will have a chance to benefit the soil, a thing greatly to be desired during the dry days of July and August.

Indeed, a well-cultivated garden resists drought far better than a frequently watered one. If you find it necessary to water, do so either in the early morning before the sun is hot, or after sundown. Much harm is done by the action of brilliant sun on the wet foliage especially if the water you are using is cold. Watering from a watering pot filled with water that has been tempered by exposure to the sun is always better than hosing, though more arduous.

July may bring other enemies beside drought in the shape of pests and plant diseases. To forestall the ravages of blight, mildew and rust among perennial plants, experienced gardeners spray with Bordeaux mixture the last week in April and twice after that at intervals of two weeks.

For pests like the green or black aphid which often attack nasturtiums a solution containing nicotine is advised. A ten-cent package of coarse tobacco left to soak over night in two gallons of water will make a simple, effective spray for all forms of plant-lice. The black beetles which attack the asters come out of the ground and may be checked by working chimney-soot into the soil about the plants. The cut-worms which girdle the young cabbage and pepper plants in May are driven off by the same method. Indeed, in setting out the plants it is well to sprinkle a trowelful of soot about each one.

Certain vegetables, like cauliflower and egg plant, need continual feeding if they are to produce large fruits. Wood ashes will do wonders for them, or a few crystals of nitrate of soda worked into the ground about the roots. Only a few, remember, perhaps a teaspoonful to each, since its action is very powerful.

There is no space here to take up the culture of roses, or of small fruits which every garden should have, or the bulbs which, if planted in October, will give you your early spring blooms. This little book can present only a short brief for gardening with the hope that more women will be encouraged to turn their thoughts gardenwards, and claim kinship with "green things growing."





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