



WINDOW GARDENING.

By GORDON STABLES, M.D., R.N.

"Now the bright morning star—day's harbinger—
Comes tripping from the east, and leads with her
The flowery May, who from her green lap throws
The yellow cowslip and the pale primrose."

WINDOW gardening last month encroached upon our creepers' ground; but the game of "tit for tat" is a very ancient one, so creepers shall this month retaliate, in a friendly kind of way.

I did little more than merely mention the name of clematis—

"—that favoured flower

Which boasts the name of virgin bower"—

in my paper for March. This lovely climber deserves a little more extended notice. I cannot

boast of personal experience in its cultivation, my grounds are somewhat too much shaded for this sun-loving creeper; but I have well studied its tricks and manners in the gardens of my neighbours. At the corner of

my wigwam last year I placed two or three plants of the clematis called Gipsy Queen, the dark purple of whose flowers I thought might

mingle charmingly with the snowy blossoms of the wild convolvulus. They did well for a time and threw out a profusion of promising branchlets, with heart-shaped leaves of tenderest green. Suddenly, one by one, they faded and died, as if snipped at the root; and I'm not sure that my weasel had not something to do with it.

It is not too late now to plant the clematis, close by porches, unshaded by trees. You can buy them in the pots, so that there is no danger of their dying (unless you cultivate weasels). Let the ground be well dug up and very rich; remove the plant carefully, and when it is in the ground gently tack it against wall or wood-work with some bits of soft cloth, and as it grows train it; do not leave the branchlets to be swayed about by the wind. They will bloom this summer or autumn, and amply repay your care and attention. Protect tender plants at night from easterly winds and frost.

When it has been well done by, the clematis throws out quite an ocean of bloom, and the flowers are charming. There are, I should think, well on to a hundred different species of this creeper; and they are of very many colours, shades, and tints. There are, for example, the violets—purple, mauve-shaded, blue, puce, and crimson violet. Then there are mauves, and whites, and lavenders, and lilacs, and all kinds of minor colours, barred and striped.

You can buy them from a shilling to two shillings each plant. If you have some of the Jackmannii species—such as the Guiding Star or the Gipsy Queen, the Victoria or the Pride of Tunbridge—when done blooming it is best to cut them down to about one foot, and give a

supply of good rich leaf manure. Others such as the Fairy Queen, a gorgeous pink and purple bloomer, or the Gem, or the White St. Julia, need but little pruning; while the Princess Beatrice and some of the Florida species are hardy and do not require pruning at all.

Those who have sun-exposed porches, or windows, can with a little care cultivate the passion flower. I need not tell my readers anything about the charming shape and beauty of its flowers; once seen it cannot be forgotten. It wants a southern aspect, however; and the plant is difficult to preserve alive all winter. It blooms in July or August, according to the species; and there is one kind that, if grown indoors, blooms all the year round.

There are several varieties of the jasmine, with flowers yellow and white; but the most common are the scented jasmine and the yellow-blossomed *Jasminum nudiflorum*. This latter is no great favourite of mine, although I have heard it called the queen of creepers. It blooms by my dining-room window; I did not plant it, and will not take its life; but its dark green broom-looking stems are not pretty; only its bonnie wee orange flowerets adorn the walls in winter (December and January), when all other shrubs are fast asleep. It is almost scentless. The white jasmine is well worthy of cultivation, and being perennial it needs but little care, albeit it would do with a deal more than it gets. It trails round porches and arbours in the most willing way, and over walls or fences; and wherever it stations itself there it stays. Like the ivy too, it is green all the year round.

The perfume of its fairy-like flowers is most rich and delicious. Hear what the poet says—

"My mild and winsome jasmine tree,
That climbs along the dark gray wall,
Thy tiny flowerets seem in glee
Like silver spray drops down to fall.
I ask not, while I near thee dwell,
Arabia's spice or Syria's rose,
Thy light festoons more freshly smell,
Thy virgin white more freshly glows."

This is very pretty and very truthful; it is a pity, though, that the flowerets of the scented jasmine fall, like silver spray-drops, so quickly as they do. It is somewhat annoying, after you have innocently bedecked your hair with a blossom or two, on looking into the glass about an hour afterwards to find you have nothing left but a naughty morsel of green. But I am extremely fond of the flower, nevertheless; and the perfume it sheds round the porch after a summer shower is exquisitely sweet. Yes, it is a charming creeper; but what a pity the earwigs think so too.

The bignonias are very engaging, but want a deal of sun and shelter. They are rich in beautiful colours and profuse in bloom.

The hop is a pretty climber and very easily cultivated, and while it lasts makes a beautiful shade for an arbour; or it may be trained in arches along the garden walks.

Some of the barberry family make charming creepers for walls and well deserve cultivating.

There are a great many varieties of the common bramble which look exceedingly well trained over arches or rockwork, &c. Both leaves and flowers are pretty, and the fruit is, I need hardly say, much used for making preserves.

We have somewhere about twenty different species of virginia creepers cultivated in this country. Some of them, such as Hogg's virginia creeper, will adhere to the walls without any nailing up, and at least one species is an evergreen. The foliage of these creepers is very rich and light, but still massive-looking; and many of them change, in one short week in the autumn, to a bright crimson. They will grow anywhere if they have fair play and nearly as well on an eastern or northern wall as on one with a southern exposure. They are free growers and fast growers also; it is beautiful to see their crimson leaves in autumn, mingling with the dark green of the ivy around an old church tower that stands not many miles from the spot in which I write.

Sweet peas and French beans are not creepers strictly speaking, but, for all that, very pretty effects can be got from both of them, especially from the white or scarlet runner. These last are useful as well as ornamental; in my garden they are both, and while affording delight to the eye, they furnish many a dish of delicious vegetables for the table. They may be grown over arches or along fences, or even over porches. And that reminds me to say a word about gourds. These may be grown in old barrels—



well drained and filled with very rich soil; they will then grow luxuriantly and can be trained over arch or porch, where the splendid fruit they bear looks quite wonderful.

Scarlet runners may be planted to climb up even such a seemingly useless affair as an old withered Christmas tree. It gives one pleasure to see the dead shrub the children danced around in bleak December's festive week, arrayed in summer in white and green and crimson.

Honeysuckle is too well known to need description; but there are a great many different kinds of it, and sweetly fragrant and pretty they all are. Some bloom in January, others in April and May, and some later on still. They look beautiful spreading over trees, such as our dark, needled pines; but, indeed, it would be extremely difficult to say where they will not grow, and what they will not beautify.

Then there is the Japan honeysuckle, which makes a splendid archway over a gate. It is kind, and contented, and an evergreen, and makes a nice arbour. The wistaria is a gorgeous creeper. I believe the mauve or pale blue-flowered species is the most common in this country. My readers must know the plant, though it is more usually seen in the southern counties of England. Its flowers hang from the woody stems in immense drooping racemes, in shape and form like the laburnum. It looks most lovely as I have seen it in America, growing around and adorning tall pine trees in the forest.

The laburnum is not a creeper; but to a certain extent it can be trained. Now the wistaria and this flowering tree are both out in bloom at the same time. I mean to plant one of each at each side of a gateway, and bring them over to form an arch. Will not the combined blooms look very handsome in early spring?

But, indeed, there is no end to the charming effects that can be produced from tastefully-arranged and well-cultivated creepers.

About ivies I have only space to add that they are quick and willing growers, and will thrive anywhere and beautify anything; and they are always green. Their little bunches of yellow blossoms have little to recommend them, but the berries look pretty. They may be grown in boxes and trained over wooden or wire screens, which can be moved about at pleasure.

How they love the light, those creepers all. Their march is ever onwards; their gaze is ever upwards. May yours be the same, girls!

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I believe some of my readers have taken the advice I gave in my last, and have got ready boxes for growing outside window flowers in. Well, I shall now tell them what to put in these, so that they may make a nice show all the year round. By the way, though, if you have a brother, and he is a reader of the *Boy's Own Paper*, as all brothers ought to be, you might do worse than take a glance every month at the little article on window gardening appended to "Doings for the Month" in that periodical.

I told you that the mould ought to be rich—refer back, please; and it is as well to keep renewing it, now and then, with a few handfuls of good garden mould, or a mixture of that with leaf, peat, and a little fine sand. I find it a good plan with sickly plants or flowers to treat them sometimes to a spoonful or two of Condry's fluid, or, what is cheaper, a large bottle containing a dessert spoonful of the permanganate of potash, dissolved in water by simply filling the bottle up and shaking.

Bear in mind that you should never overcrowd your flower-box; bear in mind, too, that

when you are transplanting a flower of any kind out of a pot, it is best done in the afternoon, or early morning; but for the first day or two it should have plenty of water and shade from the direct rays of the sun; and it will be as well on very bright and hot days to extemporise some kind of shade over your flowers, else they may get killed.

This is now April, or rather will be when you are reading these lines. Early spring flowers are past and gone, tulips are now growing all to leaf, and crocuses and snowdrops are no more; you must prepare for summer, and exercise a little patience. But if you want a show of bloom all at once, and if you have a garden, you can remove a few of any that are in bloom, but do not fill up with these.

The question now comes to be: What is it best to put into our window-boxes to make a nice summer show? The difficulty I have in replying to this question depends on the fact that there is such a multitude of flowers to choose from. And not only on that alone, for I must not forget that my readers may not wish to spend too much money on the window-box.

For early summer show, then, you may with advantage get a few roots of the golden pyrethrum or golden feather, as it is usually called, the foliage of which is very pretty; also get about a dozen blue lobelias, and plant these in your front row alternately; they are both dwarfs. About the end of April or beginning of May will be time enough to plant calceolarias, and pelargoniums, zoned or ivy-leaved, mixing the former artistically according to foliage or flower. Well, with lobelias, a few yellow-pouched calceolarias, and these geraniums, which by the way ought to have different coloured flowers, and not be too tall or shrubby, you have quite a summer show. But quite a common one you may imagine. Nothing new about it. Well, I confess there is not, but these flowers look well and last a long time.

I am not finished yet, however. The ivy-leaved geraniums have a pretty wee flower; but this is not all, they trail over the box so nicely and hang down, and they need not interfere with the sweet, blue-blooming lobelias. Besides ivy geraniums to trail over the box, we have the tropæolums. Get the sorts that have a small flower of a bright crimson colour; they will form a perfect cascade of beauty. The scarlet and lucifer tropæolums are pretty, and I must not forget the lesser coccineum, quite a lovely dwarf.

In addition to these, when you go to a gardener's or seedsman's greenhouse to have a look around, do not forget to have a glance at the bignonias; you will be charmed with some of them.

The less bushy heliotropes are nice window plants; so are the balsams, some being very superb; so are many species of petunias; and last but not least come the fuchsias, and later on in the season asters bloom. So that really you can dispense entirely with geraniums if you think them common.

The two ends of your box must be reserved for your creepers. If you want a show quickly, get a few bits of wild convolvulus, and plant them under the window—not in the box, the roots spread so. In the box itself you may have the Scotch tropæolum—I believe it is called *Tropæolum speciosum*—or the canary creeper; or you may have creeping roses or maurandyas.

So much for summer blooms, but many of these will last far into autumn; and if you have room you may put a little mignonette or musk with them, or you may keep them for the smaller flower-box on the sill of your bedroom window.

For autumn we have a variety of asters, especially the dwarf kinds, primulas (Chinese),

the autumnal flowering stocks and the dwarf stocks, dahlias, the smaller kinds, and that charming flower the zinnia.

Towards winter we can have Christmas roses and chrysanthemums, and ferns of various kinds.

Now, in the beginning of winter, or, say, the latter end of October or November, is the time to get in your spring bulbs. Buy good ones, but do not overcrowd the boxes with them. Snowdrops come first up, then come crocuses, and by and by tulips, hyacinths, and daffodils, etc.

If you are careful to make a nice selection of these, your window-boxes in springtime will be one mass of gorgeous bloom; and this is the season of the year above all others when flowers are appreciated.

It must be confessed that hyacinths and tulips cost a little money to begin with, that is all; for remember that when they are done blooming you take them carefully up to make room for your summer flowers, and pot them, and then the bulbs go on increasing in number every year, so that you might have some to sell or give to your friends.

The crocus and snowdrop and wild hyacinth of the woods, that bonnie scented blue-bell, are certainly cheap enough. But if you wish to have a show of early spring flowers in your window-box, independent of bulbs, what can you have better than primroses, polyanthuses, forget-me-nots, crimson silene, and later on auriculas and phloxes (dwarf).

Violas and pansies look charming in window-boxes, so do marigolds and linums, and candytuft. But space warns me to stay my pen. Just one or two concluding words—in your hanging baskets put moss, then mould, and plant a fern or two, a trailing tropæolum, some trailing rose and blue lobelia, or the lovely hanging abromia.

Grow your own seeds in flower-pots, and put them in your window-box when ready to plant out. Your accessory flower-pots thus become your reserve forces, from which the regular army in the window-box is recruited.

CHATS ABOUT THE CALENDAR.

MAY is said by some authorities to have received the name in honour of Maia, the mother of Mercury; while others state that the name was assigned to it by Romulus, the founder of Rome, in honour of his nobles or senators, who were called Majores, or Maiors. The Anglo-Saxons gave the appellation Trimilchi to the month, with reference probably to the improved condition of cattle, from the benefit of the spring herbage as food. The first day of the month, May Day, is a very remarkable one in our calendar. May-day festivities are supposed to have originated with the Romans, who worshipped Flora, and celebrated her festival by rejoicings and offerings of spring flowers. In our own country, in former times, the lads and lasses left their houses at break of day, and joined in procession to some neighbouring wood or green, where stood the maypole, painted with various colours, dressed with garlands and streamers, and surmounted by a large crown. There was the village fiddler, seated upon a cart, vigorously scraping away for the dancers to trip joyously round the maypole. These good old times have long since passed away, and are merely honoured now in the remembrance. The last maypole in London was taken down in 1717, and conveyed to Wanstead, in Essex, where it was fixed in the park for the support of an immense telescope. Its original height was upwards of one hundred feet, and it stood