

SELECT GARDEN BEETS.

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FOR some years past we have paid a very considerable amount of attention to garden beets, and have grown side by side in our experimental grounds all the varieties, reputed or otherwise, that could be obtained. By this means we have succeeded in reducing the list of varieties very considerably; for some sorts were of an inferior character, whilst others were simply synonymes of the best types in general cultivation. Even now there are more varieties than are required for any one garden; but, as tastes differ with regard to colour and flavour, it is necessary to retain a considerable number of really distinct varieties. With regard to the cultivation of garden beet, a very few words will suffice to convey all that the amateur will require to know upon the subject. The soil must be in a nicely pulverized state when the seed is sown, and be also moderately rich; but it is not desirable that it should be recently manured, as the presence of fresh manure has a tendency to develop coarseness in the roots. Soils liberally manured and lightly cropped the previous season are perhaps the best for this crop; and next to this, preference may be given to soils manured last autumn. In either case, the best results may be expected from soil that was thrown up in ridges last autumn, and which has thus been fully exposed to the action of the weather during the winter. In sowing the seed, no better plan for private gardens can be devised than that of laying the ground out in beds four feet in width, and sowing three rows on each—one down the centre, and the others eighteen inches right and left of the middle row. Sow in April, and when the plants are well up, commence thinning out, so as to guard against the possibility of any injury resulting from overcrowding. The plants at the final thinning should be about nine or twelve inches apart, according as the variety may be of small or large growth; but it is not prudent to thin them to the full distance at first, for there is a possibility of some of the plants being injured when in a young state; but, by thinning according to the progress made by the crop, the danger of having blanks in the rows will be reduced to the lowest possible minimum.

The varieties which can be the most highly recommended for their general excellence are as under; and the amateur must select from the list according as he may require a large or small root, or a purple or crimson-fleshed variety.

Covent Garden Dancer's Selection (Lobjoit), purple flesh; recommended.

Cattell's Dwarf Purple Top, purple flesh; a good useful variety for those who prefer largish roots.

Dewar's Improved Short Top, crimson flesh; handsome short-necked roots.

April.

Barr's Selected Compact-topped Pine Apple, crimson flesh; beautifully-shaped roots, of uniform colour, boils tender and fine flavoured. This is a pure stock of the true Pine Apple Beet; this variety is the very best for early sowings.

Dell's Crimson-leaved Beet (syn. *Dwarf Waterloo*, *Belvoir Castle*, and *Perfection Salad Beet*), purple flesh, the leaves of a rich dark crimson; compact and upright, slightly arched, and of a uniform medium height, more effective in the flower garden than *Perilla*; also an excellent variety for the table.

Dwarf Victoria, purple flesh, leaves rich metallic crimson, gracefully arched, uniform in height, and, judging from the sample test of 1871 in our experimental grounds, it is likely to supersede *Dell's Beet*.

Nutting's Dwarf Red (Barr's selection), purple flesh; a very pure stock, with medium-sized roots, and for flavour surpassing all other beets.

White's Black, very deep crimson flesh, roots large; a fine sort for those who prefer a large beet.

Turnip-shaped Dark Red Egyptian, rich in colour and flavour; valuable for shallow soils.

The Chelsea Beet, in size and shape resembles *Cattell's Crimson*, but of a richer crimson; flavour exceedingly fine, certified by the Fruit Committee, in Oct., 1869.

From the descriptions given there will be no difficulty in selecting the variety desired; and it may be said with safety that all are thoroughly good.

CHOICE BEDDING PELARGONIUMS.

Selected from the Royal Horticultural Society's Trial in the garden at Chiswick.



AMONGST other trials of flowers and vegetables in the Gardens of the Royal Horticultural Society at Chiswick, last summer, that of Bedding Pelargoniums was by no means the least important. Nearly 350 varieties, comprising the best kinds in cultivation, were grown; and from that number the following are selected as being the very best in the several classes. It will be seen that some of the old varieties still hold a high position, whilst, on the other hand, some of the most popular sorts are, when thoroughly tested with others in the same classes, comparatively worthless. As being more easy for reference, we shall follow the classification adopted by the Royal Horticultural Society. The description will be as brief as possible, and, to avoid the necessity of repetition, it must be understood that all are really first-class. A few of the varieties are now in course of distribution for the first time, but the majority are procurable at prices ranging from four to nine shillings per dozen.

PLAIN GREEN-LEAVED.

FLOWERS SCARLET.—*Ascendant*, bright scarlet; very free-flowering, and a good grower.