

## NEW NOTES ON DEUTZIAS.

BY A KENTISH GARDENER.



THE charming *Deutzia gracilis* and the stronger-growing *D. crenata flore pleno* are so valuable for spring decoration, that they should be grown in the smallest garden in which a frame or greenhouse is to be found. They are, especially the first mentioned, very popular with all classes; but they are not often grown so well as one could wish, because of the cultivator not having sufficient knowledge of their cultural requirement. For many years past I have grown them rather extensively, and have tried a considerable number of ways of growing them, for it is of great importance to us to adopt, in the cultivation of plants, those systems by which the best results can be obtained by the smallest amount of labour. The best of the various plans I have tried is to plant them out, and cut them back to obtain strong, well-ripened shoots; and this I shall proceed to describe as briefly as possible. Instructions will be given for striking the cuttings; but it is well the reader should know that, in case no plants should be available for furnishing cuttings, strong plants, out of pots, may be obtained at the principal country nurseries at six shillings per dozen.

To propagate them successfully, cuttings should be taken early in March. Placed in silver-sand, and put in a sweet bottom-heat, they will strike as readily as verbenas, although not quite so quickly. They usually require a month to become well rooted. They must then be potted in three-inch pots, in moderately light sandy soil; after this they should receive the benefit of bottom-heat for a fortnight. A warm greenhouse will then suit them till they have filled the pots full of roots, which will be about the middle of June; after this expose them gradually out of doors for a week.

My plan of proceeding for the after-management is as follows: A piece of ground under a south-west wall is well manured and carefully forked out; here the plants are turned out of the pots a foot apart each way, and during summer they are weeded and watered when necessary. The following March they are cut down to within an inch of the ground; the vacant spaces are then lightly forked up, and about a couple of inches of good rotten manure laid between the plants, which will act as a mulching through the summer. In this position they will make a good growth, much more so than by any system of pot culture that can be adopted, and with infinitely less trouble. If it is desirable to flower some of them the next season, every alternate plant must be lifted and potted early in October, and receive the protection of a pit or frame to encourage them to make fresh roots before winter sets in. The other plants are left in the ground. Those potted for flowering are encouraged to make roots by being syringed, and shut up early in the afternoon of bright days. Hardy as they are, those for forcing ought not to be exposed to more than three or four degrees of frost, just to harden the wood, and send them to rest early. The plants

remaining in the border must be cut down as in the previous year, then fork in neatly a good quantity of manure and a little leaf soil to promote vigorous growth, and by the next autumn they ought to have made shoots two feet in length. Deutzias, under ordinary cultivation, produce their flowers upon the previous year's wood. This leads many to suppose that their course of treatment is the correct one, but this is a mistake, for, immediately the plant has done flowering, all the old or last year's wood should be cut out; and while the operator is doing this he will observe a number of young shoots springing up from the bottom; these should be left, and by taking away the old wood these young ones receive all the strength of the roots.

Those who wish to grow them on in pots should cut them down one week previous to potting, when a great part of the old soil should be shaken away from the roots, and pots a size larger be used for the shift. A mixture of good turfy loam and well-decomposed stable dung is a suitable soil for them, and they must always be potted firm. The most important object being to encourage a strong growth, if too many young shoots should spring up from the bottom, they should be thinned out; for a 24-sized pot, not more than seven should be left. They must have every chance of making a quick growth, which they will do better if they can be shaded from very bright sunshine up to the end of September. The shade of a south-west wall suits them admirably. After this they should be fully exposed till they have had 5° or 6° of frost. This exposure will ripen the young wood, and the frost will arrest vegetation; and if after this they are kept pretty dry at the root, they will be fit for forcing by the first week in December, if they are wanted thus early.

The system of pot culture is a troublesome and needless affair, and I cannot understand why we should go through all this routine of potting and watering, when there are other means more simple and more satisfactory. The above plan of cutting down has not been practised by many, but I am confident those who once adopt it will never return to the old method, for not only has the plant a more healthy and luxuriant appearance, but the individual flowers are much larger, and plants so grown have altogether a much more prepossessing appearance as compared with those that are flowering upon old wood.

The plan which can be highly recommended for all ordinary circumstances is the following: As soon as the plants have done flowering, cut out the old wood, and in a few days after turn out the plants in some rich piece of ground in the kitchen garden. I am in this case presuming the plants have flowered naturally, so that the planting out will not take place till all danger of frost is past, which might check the young wood which they always make when they are flowered under glass. The plants will want water in dry weather, until they have obtained a firm hold of the ground, which will be about the end of June. The remarks which I have made above about potting and syringing will be applicable in this case if they are wanted to flower early; if otherwise, pot them and place in a



frame or greenhouse, and give a moderate supply of water till the flower-buds are showing, when it must be increased.

To grow the plants from cuttings, to make nice specimens is, I know, a work of time; still very much can be done by good cultivation. A good stout plant can be had for a shilling, and it is of such plants as these that I shall now speak. A few years since, I received, early in the autumn, a dozen such plants to fill a small bed in an herbaceous garden, and I determined to see what could be done by the liberal use of good fat dung and copious drenchings of manure-water through the season of growth. The plants flowered the first and second year in this bed under the cutting-down system, and they had done remarkably well; but as they were not strictly herbaceous plants, they were considered unsuitable for the position they occupied. But they were suffered to complete the season's growth, which I encouraged by the application of stimulants, for I was anxious to see to what length and substance the young wood could be grown in one year. At the end of the year some of the shoots measured 3 feet 9 inches. The plants were potted, with their roots considerably reduced, at the end of November, and placed in a cold pit secured from frost; and as leisure permitted I took them to the greenhouse, and there trained some of them into a variety of shapes—some on wires and some on sticks. It is a great recommendation that the young wood may be twisted and turned into any shape that may suit the taste of the cultivator. Amongst the number of plants which were subjected to the unnatural plan of training was one of a globe shape. It flowered naturally in a cool greenhouse, and was in its greatest beauty about the middle of April. It was certainly magnificent, for it was literally covered from top to bottom with a sheet of white flowers, with just sufficient of its pea-green leaves to show its full character. I am, however, no advocate for the use of many sticks and ties; to me a plant never looks better than when it is allowed to flower in the way that nature has provided, but still there are many cases in which some training is desirable. To secure such plants as the above, they should be allowed to stand through one winter without being moved. This, of course, can be easily done if enough plants are obtained and planted out, and half of them allowed to stand every year.

The beautiful *D. scabra* blooms in July, and is, therefore, of but little use for pot culture; indeed, the best place for it is the shrubbery border, where it can grow without being interfered with. It may be pruned slightly if the plants are growing out of shape, but, unless necessary, it is not desirable to prune them, for they do much the best when allowed to grow in a similar manner to the lilac.

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POMOLOGY.—M. L. Van Houtte, of Ghent, announces the separate publication, under the title of "Nos Poires," of a number of illustrations of first-class pears, comprising coloured plates of 50 varieties, and woodcuts of 36 others. For the descriptions M. Van Houtte has availed himself, with due acknowledgment, of the labours of Decaisne, Hogg, Leroy, Dumortier, and others, and has added the results of his own experience.