

conservatory. To secure large plants, remove the first flower-spikes before the flowers expand, and use liquid manure alternately.

PHLOX DRUMMONDI.—The varieties of this phlox are all of great value for conservatory decoration. They can be grown singly or several in a pot, and when large specimens are required, the last-mentioned course will be the best. They may be grown in a pit or greenhouse until they are in flower. They will require stopping once or twice, and should be supported with neat stakes when necessary. The scarlet and purple varieties are the most attractive.

THUNBERGIA.—All the varieties are useful for baskets, but they may be grown advantageously as dwarf specimens. To produce these, sow early in the month, and place the seed-pots in heat. Prick the seedlings off into five-inch pots, and immediately they are nicely rooted transfer them to pots two sizes larger. Then fix in the pots a wire trellis or a few branches of birch, for the growth to trail over. Syringe them frequently overhead, to prevent red-spider, which are very partial to the leaves, taking up their quarters upon the foliage.

FUCHSIAS AS BEDDING PLANTS.

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AS the bedding season is once more at hand, it appears desirable that we should consider the claims fuchsias have upon us as bedding plants. Their value for conservatory decoration is well known and appreciated, but their capabilities for garden decoration are not estimated so highly as they should be.

In the cultivation of fuchsias as bedding plants there are three essential points to which special attention must be directed. The first is to select beds in moderately sheltered positions, the second to well prepare and to liberally enrich the staple soil with manure or leaf-mould, and the third to put out strong plants. It must be distinctly understood that fuchsias do not thrive satisfactorily in a dry, hot position, fully exposed to the rough winds, and they are therefore quite unfitted for terrace gardens or other situations similarly exposed; neither are they adapted for geometrical gardens. The best way, in my opinion, to deal with them, is to select a bed in an isolated and rather shady position, and then fill it with several sorts, somewhat regularly intermixed as regards the colours of the flowers. Then if they make satisfactory progress they will soon form a solid mass of healthy green foliage, regularly studded with their pendant flowers.

With reference to preparing the beds, it is only necessary to say that the soil should undergo a preparation by first dressing it liberally with well-decayed hotbed or stable manure, leaf-mould, or vegetable

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refuse, or a mixture of two or more of these fertilizers, and then digging it up rather deeply. The grand point is to place within the reach of the plants plenty of food, and to make the soil sufficiently open to enable the roots to extend freely, and take advantage of it. If the soil is heavy, a barrowful or so of road or other grit, in addition to the manure, will be of considerable service in promoting a healthy development of growth and flower.

The importance of putting out strong plants has been already alluded to, but it is desirable to remark that large plants are not absolutely required, provided they are well established and thoroughly hardened off. Plants raised from cuttings struck about twelve months since, which early in the present season were cut down nearly to the surface of the soil, and have made a good growth since, are perhaps the most suitable. The size of the plants must be taken into consideration in filling the beds, and the distance between them regulated accordingly. After they have been planted a month or so, the surface of the beds should be covered to a depth of four or six inches with partly-decayed manure or flaky leaf-mould, to maintain the soil in a nice cool and moist condition, and in dry weather a few thorough soakings of water will be of considerable service. They should also be sprinkled overhead occasionally in dry weather. This can be done with the garden engine or syringe, or it may be done with a watering-pot, to which a moderately coarse rose has been affixed.

All varieties are not alike suitable for bedding, and from my large collection, which comprises nearly two hundred and fifty sorts, I have selected twenty as being exceptionally good for the purpose in question. They are as follows:—

Dark varieties: Constellation, Lizzie Hexham, King of the Doubles, Rifleman (double), Norfolk Giant, First of the Day, Tower of London, and Mr. Lyndoe. *Light varieties*: Wiltshire Lass, Marginata, Minnie Banks, Prince Alfred, Arabella, White Perfection, Alba coccinea, and Evening Star. *Varieties with white Corollas*: Conspicua, Emperor of the Fuchsias, Vainqueur de Puebla, and Mrs. Ballantine.

Some of the hardy varieties are splendid objects planted in beds or in the front of shrubberies, and I would strongly recommend their being more extensively planted than is the case at present. The fact is, few amateurs are aware of the existence of the most attractive of the hardy kinds. *Riccartoni* and *Longiflora* are two fine species, and Mr. Bland, gardener to Lord Kilmorey, has succeeded in raising several hardy hybrids, with flowers large in size, and partaking of the characteristics of the vigorous-growing show varieties. These will, I believe, prove valuable acquisitions, but as they are now in my hands for distribution, I do not feel justified in saying anything further respecting them.