

also realized by the late digging, and that is, the ground not being previously soaked by the heavy rain of winter, the warm but genial showers of spring have freer access to the roots, and thus increase the fertility of the soil.

HEAD GARDENER.

NOTES ON GLOXINIAS.

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GLOXINIAS are so similar to the Achimenes in their requirements, that in speaking of them it is not necessary to allude to the general details, for a reference to the paper on the last-mentioned flowers, which appeared in the February number, will furnish the desired information. The manner of increasing Gloxinias is very different, and for the information of those who are fond of propagating plants and have the proper convenience, I will offer a few hints on the subject.

In the first place it must be stated that there are two ways of increasing Gloxinias, one by seed and the other by cuttings of the leaves, and also that to be successful the aid of a hotbed or stove will be required. Nothing better than a cucumber or melon frame, or an early vinery, could be desired, and wherever there is one of these structures there also may these flowers be propagated *ad libitum*, and grown to a state bordering on perfection. Perhaps the best course for a young beginner to pursue would be to purchase shortly a dozen or so of small corms, of the best of the cheap kinds, and then save his own seeds. The next best plan will be to buy a packet of seed from a reliable seedsman, and sow it as I shall advise, with as little delay as possible. There is but little danger of being supplied with seed saved from inferior flowers, for the simple reason that few varieties, excepting those which are really first-class, are to be met with in either trade or private collections. It must, of course, be understood that the Gloxinia does not reproduce itself true from seed, and even where the greatest care is taken in the matter, a very considerable number will not be equal to the best of those from which it has been saved. At the same time it is quite possible that some of the seedlings will surpass their parents, and it is certain that all will be sufficiently attractive to be of considerable value for decorative purposes.

Having procured the seed, prepare a sufficient number of pots, by filling them first to about half their depth with crocks, and the remaining space with a mixture of peat, leaf-mould, and sand, broken up very small and the rough portions removed. The soil must be made fine to admit of the seedlings being transplanted without receiving any considerable amount of injury. Make the surface level with a piece of board or the bottom of a flower-pot, scatter the seeds thinly and regularly over it, and cover with a sprinkle of silver sand. It is not desirable to apply water immediately after the seed

is sown, and for that reason give the soil a thorough watering previously. Place the seed-pots on the hotbed, or in a hot-house, and lay a piece of glass, or a little moss which has been scalded, over the pot, but the glass is preferable. Keep the soil moist without being in a state of saturation.

When the young plants are fairly above the surface, tilt the glass a little on one side, and in a week or so afterwards remove the glass altogether, care being taken to prevent the exposure of the young plants to the sunshine or currents of air immediately afterwards. It is important to transplant them into other pots, or to pot them off singly as early as possible, but it must not be done before they have acquired sufficient strength for them to be handled without risk of injury, and that will be when they have two or three leaves each the size of a fourpenny piece. The pots will require a few pieces of crock in the bottom, and to be filled with a light, open compost, as advised for the *Achimenes*. Fill the soil in rather lightly, make a hole with the finger where the plant is to be inserted, lift the latter out with a small flat piece of wood, and drop it into the hole, and press the soil about the roots and sprinkle them overhead. Afterwards they can be placed with the general stock. A few may flower in the autumn, but whether they do so or not is of but little consequence, for a stock of corms capable of making a grand display the year following will have been secured.

In propagating them by cuttings, take the full-grown leaves which have become firm with about half an inch of the leaf-stalk and insert them rather close round the sides of five or six-inch pots, and put the pots in the same structure as advised for the seed-pots. The leaves that will not strike will soon decay, whilst the others will remain quite fresh. Those which remain fresh will quickly become furnished with roots, and in the course of a comparatively short period corms will be formed; sometimes the latter will push up young leaves, whilst at others they will remain quite dormant. Those which start into growth early will require potting off separately, and the others should remain in the cutting-pot until the following spring, when they can be potted off separately, and otherwise managed as advised for those raised from seed. The object in putting them in separate pots is to afford them greater facilities for acquiring strength, and consequently if they do not produce young growth until after the end of July or middle of August, it will be quite as well for them to remain undisturbed.

Gloxinias are always grown singly, and for the first year five-inch pots will be quite large enough, but in subsequent years either six or eight-inch pots may be employed. It is not desirable to use very large pots, for as the whole of the compost will be quite fresh when they are started in the spring, they will have an ample supply of nourishment. A moderate degree of atmospheric humidity is highly conducive to a vigorous growth, but as the flowers, owing to their waxy texture, are so soon injured by moisture, syringing overhead must be discontinued, or the plants must be removed to a drier atmosphere. The conservatory is the proper place for them when in bloom.

March.