

deep and brilliant scarlet, and therefore most effective. The plant is rather long-jointed, but its other good qualities quite atone for this trifling defect, and it may be recommended as one of the finest of its class, and well worthy of general cultivation. It was one of a series distributed for the first time by Mr. H. Cannell, of Woolwich, in the spring of last year, and the accompanying illustration was taken from a truss produced in his nursery.

THE IDLE MAN'S CONSERVATORY.

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SUCCULENT and hard-leaved plants are especially deserving of the attention of business men, who are usually away from home all day, for they require but little attention to keep them in good trim, and they do not suffer materially in health if forgotten for a few days. They also possess a very interesting and attractive appearance throughout the whole year, and by those who have a collection they are much appreciated during the winter season. It will be thus seen how much better adapted they are for small gardens, where the proprietor is seldom at home, and no regular gardener employed, than the usual stock of soft-wooded plants, which require unremitting attention, and, unless they have it, quickly become infested with green-fly, red-spider, and other plant pests, and ultimately perish. With a stock of succulents, the proprietor of the conservatory will always have something to admire, and be able to leave home without having any occasion for fearing that any individual in the collection will suffer for the want of water, or any other attention, whilst he is necessarily absent. The fact of being able to cultivate a moderate collection in the glass cases attached to suburban villas, which are usually designated conservatories by the builders, is a great point in their favour. In these little structures it is, even with the greatest care and attention, extremely difficult to grow geraniums, fuchsias, and other soft-wooded plants, with any degree of success; but they are just the place for the agaves and other succulents, as they will thrive in a temperature sufficient to roast more tender subjects.

One of the principal matters to consider is the selection of the most distinct and ornamental kinds suitable for the formation of a small collection. Indeed, with the purchase of the plants all difficulties are made an end of, for they are most easily managed. Amongst the Agaves are some very ornamental subjects. *A. Americana*, *A. a. variegata*, and *A. a. medio picta*, are bold and handsome in appearance, and can be highly recommended. *A. Celiciana*, *A. coccinea*, *A. Salmiana*, and *A. Schidigera*, are of medium size; and *A. appplanata*, *A. Besseriana candida*, *A. filifera variegata*, *A. macrodontha*, and *A. Verschaffelti*, are of small growth, and form neat

specimens about a foot in height. A few of the Aloes are desirable; the best for a small collection being *A. glauca*, *A. mitraformis*, and *A. rubro-cincta*.

The Beaucarneas are of comparatively tall growth, with gracefully drooping leaves. In some respects they may be likened to a slender-growing, green-leaved *Dracæna*, excepting that the leaves droop in a very graceful manner. *B. glauca* and *B. recurvata* are both good, but the latter is the most desirable of the two. *Bonapartea juncea* is another very elegant-growing subject, with deep green leaves.

Several of the free-growing Cactus are desirable, for they have a distinct appearance, and the majority bloom very freely. They differ considerably in character, and the most distinct and desirable are—*Cereus azureus*, *C. Dr. André*, *C. eburneus*, *C. flagelliformis*, *C. grandiflorus* (commonly known as the night-blooming Cactus), *C. M'Donaldi*, *C. peruvianus*, *C. Schotti*, *C. speciosissimus*, and *C. Victoria*. *Cotyledon Hookeri* and *C. marginatum* are both distinct and good. *Crassula Cooperi*, *C. ericoides*, *C. lactea*, *C. perfoliata*, and *C. verticillata* present us with a distinct type of vegetation, and are very desirable in collections.

Echeverias are most useful, and, from the large number in cultivation, I have selected the undermentioned as being the best, namely, *E. atropurpurea*, *E. Californica*, *E. macrophylla*, *E. metallica*, *E. metallica glauca*, *E. navicularis*, *E. pubescens*, *E. pulverulenta*, very beautiful, but rather scarce and expensive, *E. retusa*, *E. retusa major*, *E. retusa splendens*. *Retusa* and its varieties are all valuable for flowering in early spring. *Euphorbia splendens* is useful for training up pillars and walls. The *Kalosanthes* bloom most profusely with ordinary management. The most showy are—*K. coccinea superba*, *K. Madame Celeste Wynans*, and *K. Otto Deines*, all of which have richly-coloured flowers. *Kleinia repens* is interesting and ornamental.

The *Mesembryanthemums* are remarkable for the peculiarities of their growth and their showy flowers. The most useful are—*M. blandum*, *M. coccineum*, *M. cordifolium variegatum* (useful for baskets), *M. formosum*, *M. polyanthum*, and *M. tigrinum*. *Mamillaria elongata* is very striking in appearance, and in every way desirable.

The *Optunias* are valuable for the variety they afford, and a few should be grown. The most distinct are—*O. clavarioides*, *O. cylindrica*, *O. imbricata*, *O. Rafinesquiana*, *O. tunicata*; *Pachyphiton bracteosum* is very beautiful, and should be in every collection.

A few of the *Sedums* are useful, especially *S. Sieboldi*, *S. Sieboldi variegata*, and *S. spectabilis purpureum*. *Rochea fulcata* is very interesting in appearance at all times, but when in bloom in the autumn it is exceedingly beautiful. The *Sempervivums*, which can be the most strongly recommended, are—*S. azoideum variegatum*, a neat, small grower, forming miniature trees. *S. arboreum*, a tall grower, forming bushes several feet in height. *S. arboreum variegatum*, a beautifully variegated variety of the preceding, which should be one of the first to be purchased. *S. arboreum atropurpureum* has dark purplish leaves when the plants are fully exposed

to the light, *S. canariense*, *S. Donckelaari*, *S. palma*, *S. tabulæforme*, and *S. velutinum*, have massive leaves, and are remarkably striking in appearance.

The Yuccas are all very bold and handsome, the most valuable for growing under glass being *Y. albo-spica*, *Y. aloifolia*, *Y. aloifolia variegata*, *Y. filamentosa variegata*, *Y. filifera*.

It is necessary to state that in commencing the culture of succulent plants a considerable amount of patience is necessary. They are all of slow growth, and as it will be some years before the house will be well furnished, unless more are purchased than is really necessary, a few other subjects which consort well with them should be added. One of the most useful of these is *Agapanthus umbellatus*, which, whether in and out of flower, is very ornamental. Then there are the free-growing Cannas, of which at least twelve varieties should be grown, for they require but little attention, provided the pots are stood in saucers of water. A few small-growing Palms, such as *Chamærops humilis*, *C. excelsa*, and *S. Fortunei* may also be added with advantage.

All the succulents thrive amazingly in a compost consisting of turfy loam, with which liberal quantities of small crocks, sand, and old bricks broken up very small, have been incorporated. The plants will not require repotting more frequently than once every two or three years, and then an experienced man from a nursery may be obtained, at a trifling expense, to do the work. It is necessary to have the pots properly drained, and to water carefully. During the summer season the soil should be kept in a nice moist condition, but during the winter it will require to be kept rather dry.

CAMELLIAS IN AUTUMN AND WINTER.

BY JAMES CALVERT.



BELIEVING in the value of a word in season, I have ventured to contribute a few notes on the management of Camellias during the autumn and winter. In doing so, I have alluded as briefly as possible to the several points demanding most attention at the hands of the cultivator.

In commencing, I would observe that those who are so favourably situated as not to be obliged to place their plants out in the open air during summer, will have nothing more than the ordinary routine of watering and air-giving to think of in connection with them at this season of the year. But with those who have not the desired convenience to give them summer quarters under glass, the case is very different, as, being under the necessity of placing them in some sheltered place out of doors, the time is now come when they must be thinking of their removal to more secure and favourable quarters. As this part of the management of plants so treated