

botany in all its branches, I have always remarked and made notes of anything out of the common, in the growth of plants. First, I shall take the line of coast reaching from Larne to the Giant's Causeway, and extending, I should say, two miles inland; we meet with plants commonly to be seen in greenhouses, there growing in luxuriance in the open air, both winter and summer. Amongst these are the *Clianthus*, a plant of which covers the side of a house, height about twelve feet, and continuing to grow rapidly; and not only is it covered with its gorgeous scarlet blossoms, like boiled lobster's claws, but bears pods in which the seeds ripen. In this same locality *Desfontania spinosa* flourishes, and blossoms equally well, and all the varieties of *Veronicas* grow like laurels, sowing seeds in profusion, from which young plants spring. *V. Meldensis* in my own garden last year flowered from the autumn until late in the spring, and was commented on by various people. I could also give instances of *Escallonia rubra*, *E. macrantha*, *Rhododendron hirsutum*, *Myrtles*, *Sweet-scented Verbena*, *Yuccas*, which attain a large size, and flower profusely. *Arbutus* and *Bay* also flourish. Bedding plants such as *Geraniums*, *Pelargoniums*, *Calceolarias*, *Gazanias*, etc., remain out during the winter. But the most remarkable instance of a delicate plant standing severe winters, is that of a common *Heliotrope*, which for the last nine years has remained out of doors dying down each winter, and springing up each summer; it grows close to a house, south aspect, nine miles from the sea, in the county Louth, the only protection used is coal-ashes, and that only in case of a very severe frost. Other plants struck from this one have been tried frequently, but without success. Should your readers care for more instances at some future time, I may be able to give some, being a keen observer of nature.

S. A. B.

[We cannot have too many such instances, provided, of course, they relate to plants that are really beautiful, interesting, and more or less difficult to manage, in some localities.—Ed. F. W.]

MAY WORK IN THE KITCHEN GARDEN.

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THE season being considerably later than usual, much work that should have been done in April now remains to be done, and much thoughtfulness and activity will be necessary to keep the work well in hand and prevent anything like a break in the supply of vegetables hereafter.

One of the first and most important matters is that of seed sowing. The main crops of kales and winter greens generally were, of course, sown last month, and the plants are now well up; but there are several

crops for autumn use, and a few for the winter, which must be sown without delay, or the supply will be short at the time it is required. One of the most important crops to be sown early in the month is that of the Broccolis for winter and spring use. Very frequently the early part of March is recommended for sowing the seed of these vegetables; but excepting for the early varieties which are required in the autumn, the first week in May will be quite soon enough. When sown early the plants are frequently crippled with the cold weather usually experienced during the spring, and sometimes they receive considerable injury through remaining too long in the seed-bed. Broccolis are not the only vegetables which suffer from the last-mentioned cause, and it should be distinctly understood that no useful purpose whatever is served by having plants ready for putting out a month or six weeks before the ground is ready for them.

The seed may be sown in small beds, but for small gardens one large bed may be marked out and the seed sown in drills, one or two drills being devoted to each variety according to the number of plants likely to be required.

Lettuce for furnishing the principal supply during the end of the summer and the early part of the autumn should also be sown, the seed of these also may be sown and the plants transplanted when the quarter is ready for them; but, where the ground can be spared, sowing the seed where the plants are to remain is decidedly preferable, the labour of transplanting will be avoided, and the plants will remain longer before running to seed. In a season like the present, and on naturally cool soils, it is not of so much importance to sow the seed where the plants are to remain as it is in dry seasons and on hot sandy soils.

Other crops that may be sown now are Cauliflowers for autumn use, Cucumbers for ridges, Endive for early use, Dwarf French and Runner Beans for main crops, Peas for late crops; Vegetable Marrows for main crops, and Turnips for main crops; small salading may also be sown for successional supplies.

Planting out the various crops raised from seed sown early in April and towards the end of March will also form a large proportion of the work in the kitchen garden during the month of May. The young plants suffer severely when they remain crowding in the seed-beds too long, therefore every endeavour must be made to have the quarters in readiness by the time they have acquired sufficient strength to admit of their being transplanted safely. It is especially necessary to transplant Lettuce as early as possible, for they are soon useless if they are too much crowded in the seed-bed. Cabbage, Cauliflowers, and Kales may be transplanted into temporary beds where the quarters will not be ready for them; put them about four inches apart each way, and when so prepared they will be in splendid condition for filling vacant plots after potatoes; in all cases the plants should be lifted out of the bed with the aid of a small fork or trowel, for when drawn out without the soil being loosened in any way a very large proportion of the fibrous roots will be either broken off or injured. Dull weather must be taken advantage of for all transplanting operations, and, as far as possible, the

plants should be put out just before a shower instead of just after a period of wet weather.

Weeds are now growing apace, and the hoe must be plied vigorously to keep them down. If, at this season of the year, they are allowed to grow unchecked and to flower, the ground will be filled with seed, and in the autumn an immense amount of work will be provided. Bright weather must be taken advantage of for destroying weeds, as they are then dried up before they have a chance of making new roots and becoming established again. It is almost impossible to stir the ground between growing crops too freely at this time of the year where the ground is in proper condition for working. Independent of the roots being exposed more fully to the advantages to be derived from atmospheric influences, the moisture is not dried up so quickly, and a loose surface may be considered as almost equivalent to a mulch of litter or other loose material. Earthing up the Peas and Beans will be of great advantage in affording material support, and it should be done before they are too far advanced.

In sowing Dwarf and other Kidney Beans allow plenty of space between the rows, and also sow the seed thinly, for it is surprising the crops that will be produced from a given space when the plants have ample space for extending on all sides. It is more or less hurtful to all kinds of kitchen-garden crops to overcrowd them. For this reason the beds of carrots, onions, parsnips, turnips, and other root crops, should have careful attention and be thinned out as may appear necessary. It is not desirable to thin the carrots and onions to the fullest extent at first, because of the use to which the thinnings may be put in the kitchen. Spinach is also benefited by thinning, and this should be done by drawing out the surplus plants, a few at a time, and sending them to the kitchen. This is a much better way of securing the first few dishes from each crop than by simply nipping off the leaves from all the plants indiscriminately.

Snails and other pests will now be active, and great vigilance will be necessary to keep them in subjection. One of the best ways of destroying snails is to lay a few lettuce or cabbage leaves down near any bed of seedlings which they are likely to attack: they will take shelter under these during the day, and may then be caught and destroyed. Newly-slaked lime in a powdery state sprinkled about the plants to which they are partial will keep them somewhat in check; but there is nothing like destroying them in the manner indicated above.

The turnip-fly, which in dry weather does so much injury to turnips, and to cabbage, broccolis, and other members of the same family, just as they are pushing through the ground, may be held in check by dusting soot over the beds; this should be done before even the plants can be seen, for not unfrequently the fly eats the plants just as they are pushing through the soil, and therefore before much can be seen of them; the dustings must be repeated until the plants are in their rough leaf, and the morning is the best time for applying the soot.