

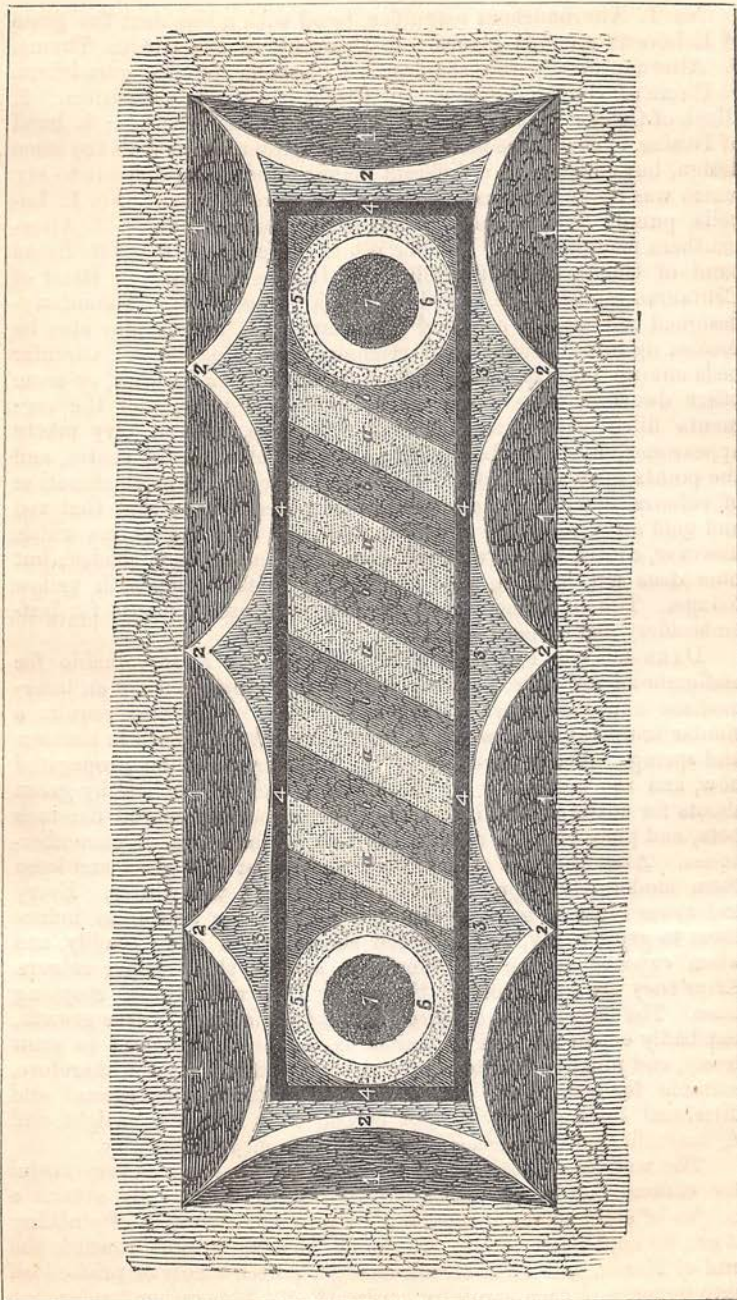
## LEAF-EMBROIDERED FLOWER-BEDS.

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NUMEROUS examples of leaf-embroidered flower-beds to be met with in the public parks and private flower-gardens in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, afford the best possible evidence of the high estimation in which this style of bedding is now held. Since it was first introduced it has undergone considerable modification, and it is now much improved, for the value of the several leaf-plants is better understood; moreover, there is a greater wealth of material at the command of the planter, and the results altogether are more tasteful and satisfactory. Much might, of course, be urged against this style of planting, for it has its disadvantages as well as its advantages; but when we consider that beds filled with leaf-plants present a most beautiful appearance, and from the day they are planted until far into the autumn, it will at once be seen that the general employment of plants with ornamental leaves can be strongly recommended. To plant the beds in a manner that will produce a rich and artistic effect, some knowledge of the true colours of the leaves and the habit of the plants are necessary, and those who are not acquainted with them will do well to pay a visit to one or more of the public parks in London sometime during the next two months. The best examples are as usual presented in Hyde Park and Victoria Park, both of which are most convenient of access. Although a visit to the parks is recommended, a good idea of the character of the plants and the colour of the leaves may be obtained by a careful perusal of these remarks, and by strictly following the directions which will be given for the propagation and management of the various subjects there will not be much difficulty in carrying out a moderately elaborate scheme. Attention is directed to the matter now, because the work of propagating a stock must be commenced this month, and although a large number of plants may be propagated in the spring, it is desirable to provide sufficient stocks of the majority now unless there is a well-appointed propagating-house in the garden. In the latter case it will suffice if about one-third of the number required is propagated in the autumn.

No attempt will be made to write an elaborate essay on the arrangement of leaf-tints, as it is considered that details of the proper management of the plants required will prove more useful, although, perhaps, less interesting. Moreover, the illustration of an example I had the pleasure of seeing a short time since in the gardens of an enthusiastic amateur in the neighbourhood of London, will afford a good idea of the style of planting best adapted for producing a good effect. The bed here figured is about sixteen feet in length, and six feet in width, and is situate in a conspicuous position upon the lawn. It is one of the best examples to be seen this season, and is so eminently suggestive that it will well repay careful examination. The planting is as follows:—



August.

No. 1. *Alternanthera magnifica*, faced with a line next the grass of *Echeveria secunda glauca*. 2. Crescents of the Golden Thyme. 3. *Alternanthera paronychoides*. 4. *Lobelia pumila grandiflora*. 5. Circle of Golden Feather. 6. Circle of *Cineraria maritima*. 7. Block of *Coleus Verschaffelti*. *a.* Band of Golden Feather; *b.* band of *Iresine*. There was also in the same garden a bed with the same design, but coloured in a different manner, and it was difficult to say which was really the most effective, both were so good. No. 1. *Lobelia pumila grandiflora*. 2. *Cerastium tomentosum*. 3. *Alternanthera magnifica*. 4. *Lobelia White Perfection*. 5 and 6. Broad band of *Cineraria acanthiæfolia*. 7. *Iresine Lindenii*. *a.* Band of *Centaurea ragusina*. *b.* Band of *Coleus Verschaffelti*. A similarly-designed bed may be coloured in several ways, and it may also be broken up into diamonds and triangles with good effect. Circular beds cut up into segments with lines of Golden Feather, or some other dwarf-growing silvery or golden-leaved plant, and the segments filled with *Alternantheras* or *Coleus*, have a very pretty appearance, as also do beds with a star of *Coleus* in the centre, and the points filled with Golden Feather. As regards the combination of colours, it will serve all practical purposes if it is said that red and gold are best placed in conjunction, and blue and white; white, however, contrasts well with red, chocolate, and crimson shades; but blue does not produce a good effect in juxtaposition with yellow foliage. The undermentioned are the most useful plants for leaf-embroidery and carpet-bedding.

**DARK-LEAVED PLANTS.**—*Alternantheras* are most valuable for leaf-embroidered beds, but they require the temperature of an intermediate house or stove during the winter. They also require a similar temperature in which to strike the cuttings, both in autumn and spring. About one-third of the number should be propagated now, and the remainder in the spring. Select the healthy green shoots for cuttings, and insert them in properly-prepared five-inch pots, and place them in a shady position in the stove or cucumber-house. After they are struck, place them near the glass, and keep them moderately supplied with water during the winter. Every endeavour must be made in the early part of the season to induce them to grow freely, as the green shoots strike more readily, and when exposed to the sun they soon assume their proper colours. After they are potted off in the spring they will require stopping once. The best is *A. magnifica*. *A. paronychoides* is of free growth, but badly coloured; and *A. amæna* is too highly coloured to grow freely, and must be planted quite close together; it is not, therefore, suitable for amateurs. They are best adapted for second and divisional lines, as they do not exceed four inches in height, and *A. magnifica* covers a space of about five inches in diameter.

The well-known *Amaranthus melancholicus ruber* is very useful for centres and second lines of large beds. It usually attains a height of eight or ten inches, but by a judicious system of pinching it can be kept much lower. It should be sown in heat, towards the end of March, and when strong enough, potted singly or pricked off into boxes, and then carefully hardened off. It is rather tender, but

it may be had in perfection with a moderate amount of care. It is most valuable for those who have no convenience for keeping tender plants through winter. When it is desired to keep it down, the pinching must be commenced as soon as the plants are established in the beds.

The *Coleus* are most useful, but they must have a moderately-warm position. To obtain a stock for next season, the best course is to reserve a few plants of the several kinds which have been grown in pots during the summer. They require a stove temperature during the winter, and to be kept rather dry at the roots. In the spring they can be propagated to any extent. After they are potted off allow them to remain in the stove until established, and place near the glass to insure a short jointed growth. Plants raised from cuttings struck now may also be wintered most successfully. The best sorts are *C. Verschaffelti*, dark chocolate, and *C. Verschaffelti splendens*, bright crimson.

The dark-leaved *Iresine Lindeni* is well-deserving the attention of those who have not the convenience for wintering coleus, as it does well in the greenhouse. The cuttings should be struck in the autumn and potted off early in the spring. As it is naturally of upright growth, stop the leading shoots once or twice when the plants are in the pots, and commence stopping at an early stage after they are planted out if it is desired to keep them dwarf. Plant about six inches apart in the beds.

The *Perilla* is too coarse for carpet-beds, and all the other dark-foliage plants, such as the *Ajuga* and *Oxalis*, are comparatively worthless, so that it is of no use to say anything about them.

SILVERY-LEAVED PLANTS.—Several of the plants belonging to this section are quite hardy, and therefore within the reach of the humblest amateur. The dwarf *Antennaria tomentosa* is very useful for front lines, as it forms a dense carpet of silver not exceeding two inches in height. To propagate a stock it is simply necessary to divide clumps into small tufts and plant where required; it must not be allowed to suffer from drought when newly planted or it will perish. It also thrives most satisfactorily in light, friable soil, as the tender roots which push from the young growth can strike more readily into it.

The well-known *Cerastium tomentosum* still remains one of the best plants of its class for edging purposes, as it can be kept to any width with but little trouble. To have it in good condition it must, although quite hardy, be replanted annually. Cuttings struck now in boxes and wintered in a cold frame will make capital edgings next year, and quite surpass in neatness edgings formed of old plants taken up in the spring and divided.

*Centaureas* are useful for large beds, and may be raised from seed sown now, or by cuttings; the former will be the best plan for amateurs, as the cuttings do not strike very freely. It is simply necessary to sow the seed in shallow pans, and place them in a cold frame. When large enough put them in small pots. They can be wintered in a cold frame, or in the greenhouses. *C. ragusina compacta* and *C. argentea plumosa* are the two best for carpet-bedding.

In propagating by means of cuttings, select the small side-shoots, insert round the sides of five-inch pots, and place in a cold frame. Pot them off in the spring, and plant out at a distance of six inches apart.

The cultivation of the *Echeverias*, which are most valuable for marginal lines, was fully described in the FLORAL WORLD for June by Mr. Cannell, therefore it is not necessary to allude to them further than to say small offsets taken off during August and September, inserted rather close together in shallow boxes and wintered in a cold frame, will be of the best size for bedding next spring.

The grey-leaved *Veronica incana* deserves a word for its neat growth and hardiness. To increase the stock, it is simply necessary to divide it into small pieces and then plant it in nursery-beds, or in the flower-beds. It usually attains a height of four or five inches.

**GOLDEN-LEAVED PLANTS.**—The new Golden Thyme, *Thymus citriodorus aureus*, is extremely valuable, for it is readily propagated, quite hardy, and very neat and rich in appearance. The points of the young shoots taken off now and inserted in shallow boxes, will soon strike, and may be wintered in a cold frame. In the spring they may be potted separately, or be pricked off into boxes, according as may be most convenient. It is necessary to keep them near the glass to maintain a dwarf growth.

Several yellow-leaved *Pelargoniums* may also be turned to good account in carpet-bedding. The best are *Meridian Sun*, *Robert Fish*, *Sybil*, and *The Moor*. These should be struck now in the open border, and when nicely rooted put in three-inch pots at the rate of three plants to each pot. In the spring they must be potted and carefully hardened off. It is important to keep them near the glass, to maintain a dwarf, stocky habit.

The *Golden Feather*, although now exceedingly common, is certainly one of the most useful golden-leaved bedders we have. To insure a stock of plants in the spring without having to raise them in heat, sow in boxes in September, and keep them out of doors all the winter in a sheltered position. In the spring they can be planted in nursery-beds, to afford them an opportunity of acquiring strength by the time they are required for the flower-garden. It is desirable to plant rather thickly.

### BEAUTIFUL TREES AT ASHBURY, NORTH DEVON.



WITH much interest I read your paper on "Beautiful Trees for Kind Climates," in the March number of the FLORAL WORLD, and would mention a few shrubs that thrive luxuriantly without protection in the gardens at Ashbury, in the centre and cold part of Devonshire, north of the Dartmoor Hills, and seven miles from Okehampton. A small plant of *Escallonia macrantha* was planted in the open ground about twenty-five years ago. In severe winters the leaves