

THE FLORAL WORLD

AND

GARDEN GUIDE.

NEW SHOW PANSIES.

(With Coloured Illustration of Five Varieties.)



E avail ourselves this month of the opportunity of presenting illustrations of five new show pansies, selected from the seed-bed of Mr. Hooper, Widcomb Hill, Bath, who is now one of the principal raisers and trade growers of these showy flowers. In introducing these beautiful varieties to the notice of our readers, we have no desire to unduly extol the merits of the pansy, or to recommend its cultivation in preference to many other flowers. But it may be said with safety that pansies are especially deserving the attention of those amateurs who have gardens of limited dimensions, and who do not possess the convenience of a heated atmosphere. A large collection can be grown in a frame or pit of moderate size, and the plants are hardy enough to withstand the effects of a severe winter, with no further protection than that afforded by a covering of long litter or mats over the glass. Damp is the greatest enemy to pansies; and if the soil is not kept too wet, and the foliage is maintained in a moderately dry state, there is not much danger of their suffering from frost. In favourable localities they may be wintered safely in the open beds, provided the winter is not very severe; but the risks are so great, that it is not prudent to attempt to winter a good collection without affording some protection.

The names and descriptions of the varieties here portrayed are as follows:—

No. 1. *Shirley Hibberd*.—Dark self, rich cobalt blue, shading to deep purple; eye yellow; very large and massive, and of grand form.

No. 2. *Golden Queen of England*.—Yellow self; deep golden yellow, with maroon blotch on the lower petals, and small blotch on side petals; large, of fine form, and well finished.

No. 3. *Mrs. Felton*.—White self, with dense blotches of deep purple; very large, and superbly finished; fine and attractive.

No. 4. *Richard Dean*.—Yellow ground; rich yellow, belted with

light bronzy red, and dark blotch; very stout, and of splendid form; a neat and attractive flower.

No. 5. *Beauty of Bath*.—Yellow ground; deep yellow, with well-defined belt of deep purple, and dark blotch; fine form, and beautifully finished.

The above-mentioned varieties will, no doubt, be distributed in the course of the forthcoming season, and may be depended upon as possessing considerable merit. Of the varieties which were distributed in the spring of last year, the following may be considered the most desirable in their respective classes:—

Black Bess, dark self, medium size, top jet black, under petals blackish purple; *Black Gem*, rich dark self, fine and distinct; *Cyril*, white self, of fine form and quality; *Ebor*, deep golden yellow, belted with dark bronze; *Kate Lawden*, cream white, dark purple belting; *Luna*, light yellow, dark purple belting, dense blotch; *Mabel*, creamy white, belted with light purple, dense blotch; *Mrs. Horsburgh*, golden yellow self, of fine form; *Miss Adamson*, pure white, narrow belting of bluish purple, first-rate; *Mrs. Turner*, white self, of good form and substance, large solid blotch, first-class; *Prince of Wales*, deep yellow, with bronzy purple belting; *Queen of Buffs*, yellow, belted with bright buff, smooth and fine; *Rising Sun*, deep yellow belted with crimson, fine; *Toison d'Or*, rich golden yellow self, of fine form; *Tom White*, deep golden yellow, bronzy purple belting, dense blotch; *Wm. Young*, yellow, with broad bronzy purple belting, fine.

THE CULTIVATION OF SHOW PANSIES.

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ONE of my favourite flowers being the Pansy, I gladly comply with the request to offer a few hints on the management of a general collection, and in doing so, it will be necessary to deal rather fully with the several details so as to make them as useful as possible to the amateur who may happen to take them in hand for the first time. We will commence by describing the best plan of raising a stock quickly.

SEED-SAVING AND SEED-SOWING.—Increasing the stock by seed is very easy, but it ought only to be practised where there is plenty of time and space, with the idea of raising kinds superior in colour or form, or a combination of both, to those already in cultivation. It is certainly a very good plan to save a few seeds when a stock of plants is wanted to be raised quickly for the borders, and the stock is too limited to allow of its being done by means of cuttings. Difference of opinion exists as to the best time of sowing the seed. But after many years' practice, I have found the spring

and summer-time to be the most suitable seasons. The plants have then plenty of time to become strong before winter sets in, and are thus able to withstand the rough weather better. The seed-sowing is simple enough, and managed in much the same way as other hardy plants. If the quantity of seed is considerable, and frame room limited, mark out a bed in a shady part of the garden, and after making the surface soil fit for the reception of the seed, it can be sown and covered with a sprinkling of fine soil—old soil from the potting-bench is first-rate. Supposing a bed cannot be made up in the shade, a few branches of evergreens stuck in will answer every purpose, as far as regards shade. It will be as well to say, that during dry weather it will be necessary to keep the bed moist, or the seeds will not vegetate; even if they do, the young plants will be dried up before they can make their appearance above the surface. With a limited quantity of choice seed, the safest way will be to sow it in a pan or shallow box, and place it in a cold frame. A mixture of loam, leaf-mould, and sand, is the most suitable for filling the pans. Prick off the young plants, whether in the pans, or in beds out of doors, directly they are large enough to handle. For if they remain crowded together for any length of time, they will be drawn up weak and spindly. The best way to deal with them at this stage is to select a border or piece of ground where the subsoil is rather dry, and, if poor, prick in a little rotten dung or leaf-mould. The plants should be pricked out in rows fifteen inches apart, and nine inches in the rows. This gives room to run the hoe through them, if necessary, to keep the weeds down. A sharp look-out must be kept for slugs, more especially in damp showery weather; they are especially fond of the foliage when young and tender, and will soon clear a moderate-sized bed of plants. Evening and morning are the best times to look for them. A few branches of Scotch or spruce fir, stuck amongst them in sharp weather, will be useful in preventing too sudden changes and rapid thaws acting upon the plants. This part of the subject is necessary from me; for any one endowed with an ordinary amount of intelligence will know when they flower; discard all the worst, and plant out the middling ones in the mixed border, if required, and increase the stock of the very best by cuttings, supposing the raiser to have any worth that trouble. Unless under exceptional circumstances, never propagate seedlings unless they are as good or better than the best of the existing kinds, for it costs about as much time and labour to grow bad kinds as good ones.

SELECTING AND STRIKING CUTTINGS.—Begin this work early in June, and strike them all under cover. I have a frame in a partially-shaded corner, in which a bed is made up annually for this purpose, about a foot or nine inches in depth, and which consists of loam with plenty of leaf-mould and silver sand, with a thin layer of sand over the surface, to dibble the cuttings in. The soil in the beds is made rather firm, by beating it with the thick part of the spade. It is impossible to fasten the cuttings properly if the surface of the bed is loose; and unless they are put in firmly a large proportion will not strike. This is applicable to other plants besides pansies, even if

they have the good quality of being free-rooting. The bed should have a moderate watering through a fine rose, to settle the soil before the cuttings are put in.

Now for a few words about the selection of the cuttings, for upon this, in a great measure, depends the cultivator's success. The best cuttings are those taken from the moderate-sized side-shoots that are clean and healthy. The main shoots, which have been flowering and growing freely all the spring, will be found, on examination, to be quite hollow, and are not suitable for propagating. The best, as I have said before, are stout little side-shoots that are about two or three inches long. Cuttings of this description will generally have three pairs of leaves, and, if very short-jointed, four. The cutting should be cut clean through the bottom joint. Use a sharp knife, to prevent its being bruised, and the lower or two lower pairs of leaves, as the case may be, trimmed off.

The simplest way to insert them, and at the same time to prevent confusion, is to begin at the left-hand side of the frame, and dibble them in rows about four inches apart. Place a tally to each variety as they are put in, to prevent mistakes happening. After the frame, is filled, or the cuttings exhausted, the bed should have a sprinkles and be shut up and shaded in bright weather. The main point is to keep the foliage fresh, without the atmosphere being sufficiently close and moist to rot the cuttings. Very little remains to be done after this beyond keeping the frame shaded and the bed sprinkled when necessary. A few days after the insertion of the cuttings, a little air must be left on through the night, and gradually increased until they can bear a little during the day, when the atmosphere is rather close and the wind still. This must go on increasing until the cuttings are rooted, when, of course, the lights can be removed altogether.

AFTER-MANAGEMENT.—The first matter requiring attention after the young plants are ready for removal from the frame, is to make up some beds of good compost in which to plant them. In many instances the ordinary soil is sufficiently good without any special preparation, but where it is poor, six inches of good turfy loam and a thin coat of well rotted cow-dung forked in will be the best dressing to give the ground. It is not well to make it too rich with manure. The best situation for the beds is where they will be partially shaded for a few hours through the hottest part of the day. If there is a position of this description available, choose the next best to it, and avoid hot dry corners. Dull showery weather is the most desirable in which to transplant pansies; but it is not always advisable to wait for it, as the plants may become so much crowded as to be partly spoilt before it comes. Whether the weather is wet or dry, the beds should be made moderately moist and the plants have a liberal watering a short time before their removal from the frame. This should be done as soon as they are nicely rooted, and taken up with a trowel, to avoid their being broken and injured. The rows should be a foot or fifteen inches apart, and the plants nine inches from each other in the rows. When the planting is finished, give them a thorough watering, and

do not let them suffer for want of that element afterwards. Until the young roots begin to strike into the new soil, some means should be adopted in bright weather for shading the plants from the sun. About September they will be ready for taking up and potting.

POT CULTURE.—This is my principal way of growing pansies, even when I require cut flowers for exhibition. By this system, with ordinary attention, there is very little danger of losing any plants, for a proper control as regards moisture can be had over the roots at all times. We prepare a lot of three-inch pots by putting a good drainage in the bottom, and seeing that they are perfectly clean. When these are ready and the soil mixed, which should consist of three parts good turfy loam and one part decayed cow-dung and leaf-mould in equal quantities, lift the young plants with a nice little ball, and pot them at once. From the potting-shed take them to a frame, where they are to remain through the winter. Pansies are impatient of being kept in a close and stagnant atmosphere; and to avoid this, have a ventilator about six inches wide throughout the entire length of the frame, both back and front, fixed immediately under the framework which supports the sashes. By the aid of these a continual circulation of air can be maintained without the risk of the soil in the pots becoming too wet during heavy rains, or when the plants are in bloom of the flowers being knocked. Keep the ventilators rather close for a few days after the plants are first taken up, and then plenty of air should be admitted at all times, excepting during very boisterous or frosty weather.

With proper care, the pots will be full of roots in February, which is the time for transferring them to their blooming pots. Use five or six inch, according to the strength of the respective plants, but the last is the principal size employed here; the compost being the same as that used at the first potting. When they are nicely established, the sashes can be drawn off altogether in favourable weather.

WATERING.—Although the pansy luxuriates in a cool, moist position, the plants must not be over-watered at any time, but have sufficient and no more. Avoid the use of liquid manure; they do better without it, and my belief is that the cause of many plants dying off can be attributed to the use of powerful stimulants.

CULTURE IN BEDS.—Turn the plants out of the three-inch pots early in the spring, in the same kind of bed as that recommended for the young plants when first struck. And if the flowers are required for exhibition, screen them from the sun, and give water if the weather should happen to be dry.



NEW SHOW PANSIES.

- 1. Shirley Hibberd.
- 2. Golden Queen of England.
- 3. Mrs Felton.
- 4. Richard Dean.
- 5. Beauty of Bath.