

and from it I have selected the undermentioned as being decidedly the best: namely, *Blue King*, light blue; *Brilliant*, deep blue; *Mazarine Gem*, bright blue; and *Speciosa* (a fine stock from cuttings), of the type represented by the latter; *Alba cœrulea*, light blue; *White Pearl*, white; and *Pumila grandiflora*, blue, belonging to the *Pumila* section, and from those intermediate in growth between the two classes, I have selected the following:—*Compacta alba*, white; *Imperial*, dark blue; *Omen*, purplish lilac; and *Purple Prince*, purple. All the above-mentioned may not be required in any one garden, but they are all good and can be selected according to the colour and character of the plant required. It is, however, preferable to grow several varieties, as it enhances the interest attached to the garden.

The *Violas* do not continue in bloom throughout the season unless the situation and weather are especially favourable to their growth. They are, however, exceedingly good during the early part of the season, and when planted alternately with silvery variegated geraniums most charming effects are produced, and if the *violas* cease to bloom freely towards the end of the summer, it is of not much consequence. The best of the series is Cannell's *Queen Victoria*, *Perfection*, *Enchantress*, *Magnificent*, and *Lutea Major*. These should be propagated now, and wintered in a cold frame.

The best of the *Heliotropiums* for bedding still continue to be *Mrs. Lewington*, *Miss Nightingale*, and *Jersey Beauty*.

The best of the leaf plants with silvery foliage are *Centaurea ragusina*, *Cerastium tomentosum*, *Echeveria secunda glauca*, *Veronica incana*. The most useful of the golden-leaved plants are the *Golden Chickweed*, *Golden Feather*, *Mesembryanthemum cordifolium variegatum*, *Coprosma Baueriana variegata*, and the *Golden Thyme*.

The best dark-leaved bedders are *Alternanthera magnifica*, *Coleus Verschaffelti*, *C. Verschaffelti splendens*, *Amaranthus melancholicus ruber*; and for large borders, *Perilla nankinensis*.

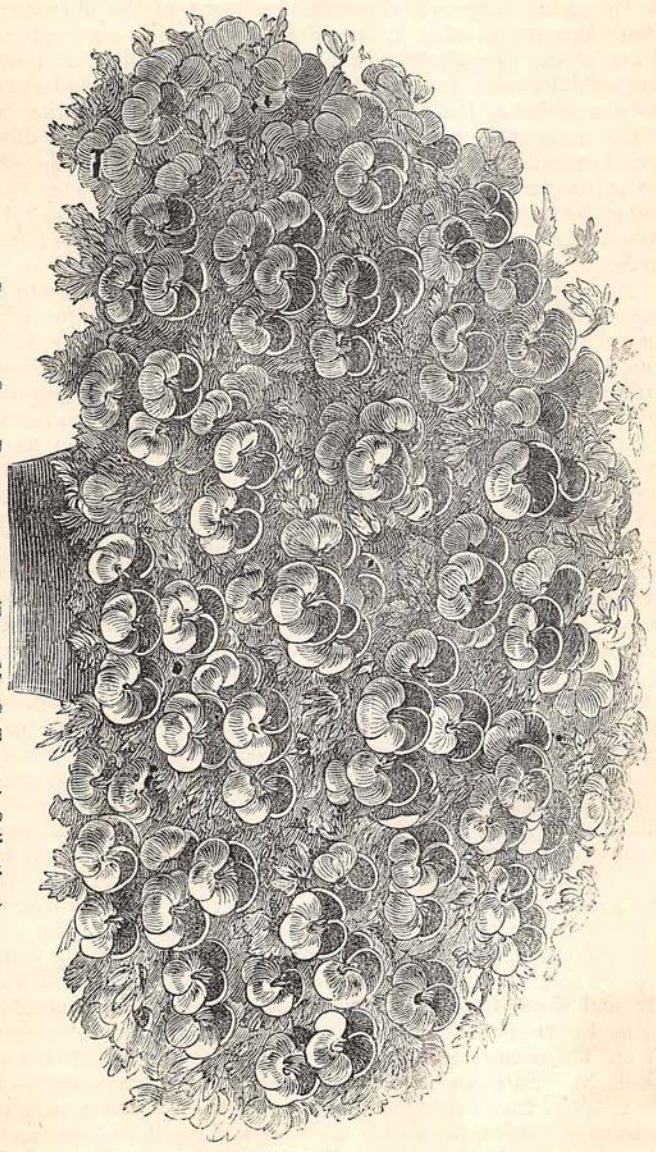
## SPECIMEN PELARGONIUMS.

BY CHARLES TURNER,

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IN speaking of the cultivation of specimen pelargoniums of the show class, in which, as the majority of your readers are well aware, I have been engaged for many years past, it will be well to make it understood that large specimens are not required for ordinary decorative purposes. There is, of course, no objection to the employment of large specimens in the embellishment of the conservatory, and, no doubt, many amateurs would find a considerable source of pleasure in their production, and in showing their friends the results of their skill in plant-growing. For exhibition purposes, specimen plants



SPECIMEN SHOW PEARAGONIUM. (From Mr. C. Turner's Collection.)



are imperatively necessary to place the exhibitor at the head of the prize-list.

To produce large well-flowered specimens, of the character and size of that represented in the illustration, which is a good portrait of one of the many large specimens we have exhibited at the principal exhibitions in London and the provinces during the last twenty years, a period of three years will be required. When they arrive at this stage they may be maintained in good condition during a period extending from three to ten years, according to the skill of the cultivator and the constitution of the variety. Fancy varieties cannot be kept in a flourishing state for so long a time, but even these differ considerably in this respect. The current month is most favourable for making a commencement.

As they can now be propagated to any extent, and strong plants may also be purchased, those who take them in hand for the first time should purchase well-established plants in three or five inch pots, and if they have not been already pruned, cut them down to within about three joints of the base of each of the young shoots; or, if they are only furnished with one stem, to within about three inches of the surface of the soil. Provided the wood has been properly matured previously, and the plants sprinkled overhead occasionally, they will soon commence to make new growth. As soon as the young shoots are about an inch in length, turn the plants out of the pots, remove the greater portion of the soil, and after pruning the roots moderately, return them to pots of the same size, and, of course, use a fresh compost, and this should consist of mellow turfy loam, enriched moderately with leaf-mould and thoroughly decayed manure. The drainage must be good, and the soil pressed rather firm. Until the end of September the plants may be allowed to remain in the open air, and supplied with water as required until the end of September, but it is preferable to place them upon a bed of coal ashes in a cold frame, and to leave them uncovered, excepting in wet or otherwise unfavourable weather. After the end of the above-mentioned month, the greenhouse stage will be the best position for them. When newly potted they will require a moderate amount of water overhead, and afterwards sufficient at the roots to keep the soil in a nice moist state. During the winter the foliage must be kept perfectly dry, and very little water at the roots will suffice to keep the plants in health. In the spring of the second year the plants will require shifting into pots one or two sizes larger, and the young growth stopped when between two and three inches in length. As they become established increase the supply of water, and commence as soon as necessary to tie out the young shoots to form as it were the framework of the specimen. This can be done by inserting a few short stakes round the pot, and then tying the shoots down to it if the plants appear to be thin. After the shoots have been stopped and commence to grow freely again, they may be stopped again, as it is a matter of prime importance to secure a bushy growth from the first.

As they go out of flower in the summer, place them out of doors on a dry hard bottom, and water sparingly, to promote the thorough

maturation of the wood. In some cases it will be desirable to screen them from the sun during the middle of the day, to prevent the heat scorching them up. This is especially necessary when there is no alternative but to remove them from the shady conservatory or plant-house to the open air. The wood will assume a deep brown colour when well ripened, and the plants should be pruned without further delay, and repotted when they commence to make new growth, in the manner already described.

The following year it will be necessary to stop the shoots in the spring, and to commence a regular system of training to insure well-developed specimens. Very frequently wire hoops are employed, but stakes alone are preferable. After a little practice there will not be much difficulty in training out the shoots in a satisfactory manner. To enter into details upon this point would require more space than, I feel assured, can well be spared—moreover, there would be a difficulty in making oneself understood. The surface of the plant should, when fully grown and in bloom, present the appearance of an ordinary watch-glass, as here portrayed.

In conclusion, it is desirable to state that the plants must at all times be grown in a light and airy house near the glass, for the purpose of maintaining a firm, short-jointed growth. It is also equally important to keep the foliage free from green-fly, which can be readily done by fumigating the plants as soon as the fly makes its appearance.

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## ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF PLANT AND FRUIT HOUSES.

BY A KENTISH GARDENER.



PERSONS who contemplate building glass-houses for the cultivation of fruits or plants should well mature their plans before commencing, so that no expensive alterations may be required, either as the work proceeds, or after the houses have been erected. As a large number of amateurs who have horticultural structures erected in their gardens have but little practical knowledge of the matter, and have not the assistance of an experienced man to advise them, I have thought that a few remarks just now would be of considerable service. There can be no doubt that the first and most important point to consider is, the purpose for which the house is to be erected. This point is only imperfectly considered by many, for, as taste differs in most of us, so also are we subject to prejudices, which exercise a certain amount of influence against this or that particular form of house. A certain amount of taste in arranging a house or any number of houses is desirable, providing the essential features of the design are consistent with the purpose for which the structure is required. But taste in these matters ought always to give way to a reasonable extent when the outlay is ultimately expected to