

BULBOUS FLOWERS FOR SPRING DECORATION.

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THE most useful bulbous flowers for the decoration of the conservatory and sitting-room during the spring months, are unquestionably hyacinths, tulips, and narcissus. There are a number of other things worth growing, but they are only suitable for those who have plenty of money and an abundance of room in which to grow them. There is certainly no other class of flowers capable of producing so good a display during the season referred to as those mentioned above; and as regards their relative merits, they may be taken in the order in which they are placed. As a considerable number of the readers of the FLORAL WORLD are aware, hyacinths are grown here in immense numbers for Covent Garden, and it appears to me that the amateur should proceed in much the same manner as we do, and grow the best of those obtainable at a cheap rate. It should be understood that some of the hyacinths obtainable at, or about, six shillings, are unsurpassed in their shade of colour, and for ordinary decorations it is quite unnecessary to give more for bulbs of the best quality. Moreover, I should not advise the cultivation of more than half-a-dozen varieties of each colour in each of the single and double sections, for that number will comprise all the best obtainable at the above-mentioned price, and between thirty and forty varieties will be represented. This number will be quite sufficient when they are required for home decoration. I have directed especial attention to this point, because so many amateurs believe that the merit of each variety is represented by its money-value, whereas a large number of those procurable at sixpence are considerably better than others of a similar colour costing treble the amount; and my only object in writing this is to show the amateur the way to produce the finest display with the smallest outlay of money, and the least amount of trouble possible.

The cultivation of the three classes of bulbs included in these remarks is so similar, that they can all be included in the same general directions.

With regard to the purchase of the bulbs, it must be understood that hard, sound, well-ripened bulbs are essential to the production of fine spikes of bloom, which cannot be had from those that are soft and spongy, even if they happen to be large in size.

To ensure large, well-developed spikes or blooms, as the case may be, the growth must be prolonged over as long a season as possible, and consequently early potting must be practised. Pot the bulbs early in October, especially if they are wanted for very early flowering, and have to be forced. This will give them plenty of time to form roots and become well established. When this is accomplished before they are placed in the warmth, there will be little danger of

any of them refusing to push up the spikes at the proper time. Dumpiness can be safely attributed to the bulbs not being properly furnished with roots, and it is a waste of time to put paper caps over them with the idea of drawing the spikes up. The fault lies with the roots, and if they are all right there will be little or no fear of a failure. A most excellent compost may be formed by well mixing together mellow turfy loam and well-decayed cow-dung, at the rate of two-thirds loam to one of manure. Let the loam be chopped up roughly, and mix with the bulk a sixth part of silver or river-sand.

Use six-inch pots, and let them be well drained by placing a layer of crocks in the bottom. Put one hyacinth bulb and three tulip or narcissus bulbs in each pot; press the soil rather firm in the pots, and when they are filled to within an inch of the rim, insert the bulbs and fill the soil firmly about them. The neck of the bulb should show just above the soil. When they are simply placed on the surface with a little loose soil about them, the weight of the spike will probably topple them over. The soil should be used in a moderately moist condition, and then no watering will be necessary until they come from the plunge beds. When all are potted, make up a good bed of coal-ashes, through which the worms cannot penetrate, and stand the pots upon it. This done, turn a small pot over each bulb, and cover with coal-ashes, spent hops, or cocoa-nut-fibre refuse, to the depth of six or eight inches. Here they should remain for five or six weeks, and then they may be brought into the forcing house as wanted, for the pots will be well filled with roots. The young growth must be inured to the light in a gradual manner, and the plants kept near the glass. After they are well started into growth, water liberally, and let them have a breath of fresh air during the warmest part of the day; but it must be admitted without chilling the tender growth.

The bulbs must not be left in the plunge bed long enough for the foliage to grow long and become blanched. Therefore, when the flowers are not wanted until late in the spring, lift them out of the plunging material and place them in a cold frame or pit, where light and air will have free access to them. Those for early flowering must not be exposed to too great a heat, or the flower-spikes and foliage will be drawn up weak and spindly; and at all times keep as close to the glass as possible, because neat, properly-developed foliage that will maintain an erect position without support is nearly of as much importance as good spikes of flowers, for there is but little pleasure in seeing plants with lanky and broken foliage, even if the spikes are of good average quality; but usually if the foliage is drawn the flower spikes also will be drawn, and the plants present a most unsatisfactory appearance.

As these bulbs produce their flowers in March, when grown under glass, without the assistance of fire-heat, I would not advise the amateur who grows a few dozen bulbs only, to force them at all, but when sufficient is potted to maintain a succession, two-thirds should be forced and one-third allowed to bloom naturally. If the above mentioned proportion is forced, they should be introduced into the forcing-pit in two batches.

October.

The following list consists exclusively of varieties remarkable for their quality and easy culture, and which can be obtained at a low price. The varieties are those we grow most extensively for market, and are therefore adapted for conservatory decoration :—

HYACINTHS.—Double Red : *Panorama, Madame Zeutman, Rose Mignonne, Groot Voorst, Waterloo*. Double White : *La Virginité, Penelope, Virgo, A-la-Mode, Anna Maria, La Tour d'Auvergne*. Double Blue : *A-la-Mode, King of the Netherlands, Prince Frederick, Lord Wellington, Grand Vedette, Prince van Saxe-Weimar*. Single Red : *Homerus*, the earliest red ; *Veronica, Belle Quirine, Diebitsch Sabalkanski, Lord Wellington, Amy, Norma, Robert Steiger, L'Ami du Cœur*. Single White : *Elfrida, Alba superbissima, La Candeur, La Pucelle d'Orléans, Madame Turc, Voltaire*. Single Blue : *L'Ami du Cœur, Baron von Tuyl, Charles Dickens, Emericus, Emilius, Fleur Parfaite, Bleu Aimable, Grand Lilas*.

TULIPS.—Single : *Bizard Verdikt, Jagt Van Delft, Lac Van Rhyn, La Reine, Duc Van Thol*, in several colours ; *Duchesse de Parma, Silver Standard, Yellow Prince*. Double : *Duc Van Thol, Duke of York, Gloria Solis, Rex Rubrorum, Tournesol, Yellow Rose*.

NARCISSUS.—*Double Roman, Gloriosa, Grand Monarque, Grand Primo, Groot Voorst, Paper White, States General*.

TOWN ROSES.

BY GEORGE GORDON.



NO doubt a considerable number of the readers of the FLORAL WORLD know, to their cost, that the cultivation of roses in towns is a far more difficult task than in the country, where the atmosphere is at all times pure and free from the noxious smoke, which is such a great enemy to town and suburban gardeners. It is, therefore, especially necessary that the suburban gardener should be well advised upon the principal points in the culture of the rose ; and as the season for buying and planting is once more at hand, it has occurred to me that a few practical remarks upon these important matters will be of especial service to a large body of readers.

Standard roses are, it may be said with safety, most objectionable in country gardens, excepting in the rosarium proper, for they are far from pleasing in appearance, even when in bloom they are quite surpassed by bush roses ; but in suburban gardens they are objectionable on two grounds—the first their ugliness, and the second their utter inability to withstand the injurious effects of a vitiated atmosphere. Of the truth of this we have only to take stock of the gardens in the suburbs of any of the large towns, and of every hundred standard roses met with, at least eighty will be in a starving and miserable condition ; especially is this the case when the grass is allowed to grow close up to the stems, or when they are