

seedling turning up a trump, what an advantage it will be to have a ready made stock of it; and on the other hand, what a disadvantage will you be at if a seedling comes out grandly in the second or third year, and you find you have but one plant, the propagation on promise having had no attention.

It may be well to offer a few advices to amateurs who propose to "make assurance doubly sure" by careful manipulations of selected flowers. If you have the patience to examine the pedigrees of roses, of which, by the way, we have very few that are authentic, you will find that the pollen parent is the most important of the two. The old rule of going to a flower of high colour for pollen, and to one of good form for seed, has been considerably modified by recent experiments and observations. Look to your pollen parent first of all, and, generally speaking, think of *form*, *substance*, and *colour*, without reference to doubleness, because amongst the seedlings from varieties that are strong in form, and substance, and colour, a goodly proportion of thoroughly double flowers will come, for, as a matter of fact, doubleness is more easily obtained than any other quality. This is not orthodox teaching, but it is true. Hitherto writers have made it a point that seeds should be obtained as much as possible from double flowers. Our advice is that you starve the doubles into singles, looking for form, substance, and colour, without reference to doubleness, and trusting to your own power to *make petals* when you want them, provided you secure seedlings remarkable for perfection of form, distinctness or perhaps richness of colour, and the substance of a calf skin or piece of pile velvet, or the parchment of a big drum of the very best maker. Pray don't be in a hurry about doubleness, so long as you take seed from first-rate varieties, for the doubleness is in the blood, and will come out as time and food and sunshine contribute to the stamina of the plant. S. H.

WINTER FLOWERS FOR THE CONSERVATORY.

BY JOHN BURLEY, F.R.H.S.,

Hereford Road, Bayswater, W.



O have a good display of flowers in the conservatory during the winter months is by no means an easy matter, and it requires some years of practice to discover the most suitable things for winter decoration unless advised by those who have had some experience in the matter. Knowing this I have thought a few observations upon the decoration of the conservatory in winter would be of considerable service to a large body of readers. In passing I would add that for many years past the character of our business has compelled us to devote special attention to winter flowers, and unusual facilities have consequently been enjoyed for arriving at correct conclusions respecting the merits of the most popular subjects adapted for winter decorations. I shall be as brief as the

nature of the subject will admit, and mention those things only which are specially adapted for small gardens.

To succeed the chrysanthemums which belong to the autumn, the autumnal-flowering Azaleas will be found valuable. One of these is known by the name of *Striata autumnalis*; the other is the old *Double Purple*. Both come into flower about November without any forcing in heat. The sweet little *Azalea amoena* and its companion *A. obtusa*, are also very early and have small rosy purple flowers. To follow these kinds, the old *Indica alba*, white; *Triumphans*, purple; and *Roi Leopold*, scarlet, should be kept in the forcing house. These are the best kinds for forcing for early work, and will be sure to flower freely.

The *Chinese Primula* will be nicely in flower from December onward. These should be sown about the end of April, and potted on and kept growing all the summer and autumn, shifting them as required. They require plenty of light and air when growing, and must never suffer for want of water in the hot days of summer.

A few *Cytisus racemosus* will be in bloom early, if they were pruned back after blooming last spring, and then partly shook out from the old soil, and repotted in some good sweet loam and rotten manure, so as to give them a start again into growth. The *Tropaeolums* make a good show, especially *Ball of Fire*, which is one of the best for winter work. Nice plants may be had for this purpose by placing a few cuttings in pans or pots, about July, and keeping them growing on until they flower. *Violets* also may be had at this season; especially must I mention *Viola arborea*, *King of Violets*, and *Queen of Violets*, the last named being a large double white kind and deliciously scented. So also is the pale blue *Neapolitan violet*, and the curious *Striata*. These should have been plunged in pots all the summer, in a north border, and not under the drip of trees.

In country places, *Roses* at this season should be had in quantity for they are easily managed. All you have to do is to cut back a few pot plants of the *common China roses*, and such varieties of this class as *Fabvier* and *Cramoisie Supérieure*, in August, and keep them plunged out of doors until October, when they may be taken up and placed indoors; they will, in due course, be covered with buds, which will open in succession for some time. That excellent tea rose *Gloire de Dijon*, also that pretty noisette *Aimée Vibert*, and a few more of that class, will be also found useful. A capital late and early rose, and a rich rose too, is *Souvenir de la Malmaison*.

There are a few bright-berried plants that may be used with great advantage and effect at this season in the conservatory; I refer particularly to the *female Aucubas*, if fertilized. The common green-leaved female variety is one of the most valuable, for it is very neat, and usually produces a profusion of berries. *Solanums*, of sorts of the type of *capsicastrum*, especially *Weatherhill's Hybrids*. A few of these berry-bearing shrubs mixed up with fine foliage plants look cheerful and bright, moreover, such hardy plants as *Skimmia japonica* and *S. oblata* may be made useful in the conservatory at this season.

Jasminum grandiflorum is a very useful plant in the winter season, and the blossoms being white and very sweet-scented makes it very desirable for cutting from for bouquets, etc. This plant is easily propagated by cuttings in the spring. After the plant has done blooming let it be cut back, and repotted in a mixture of loam, rotten hotbed manure, sand, and leaf-mould, in about equal proportions. When the new growth is made, and, in fact, all through the summer, they should be kept plunged out of doors in cocoa-nut fibre, leaf-mould, or any similar light substance. Give them water when required, and in the autumn they may be lifted up and taken indoors, where all the winter they will be much prized for their delicious perfume and snowy blossoms.

The *Tree Carnations* are most valuable for winter blooming, and there is no difficulty in having flowers on them from September until the May following. But to have them in flower during so long a period, it will be necessary to have *strong young plants*, which were struck early in the year, and kept growing all the spring and summer. I must just mention that they require very little water during the dull days of winter; give them just enough to keep them moist, no more.

The old free-flowering *Coronilla glauca* may be had at mid-winter one mass of golden-yellow blossoms. It is very easily managed, and about as cheap as chickweed. It bears almost any knocking about without injury, but treated as recommended for jasminums, it will repay for the extra trouble by extra richness of bloom in the winter. It appears at all times to like a warm sunny spot with plenty of air, and to be kept at all times rather dry at the roots than otherwise. It is also moderately hardy, as it will bear eight or ten degrees of frost without any injury.

To follow in succession we have the *Cyclamen persicum* in its innumerable varieties of colour. They are very desirable for our purpose; for they are deliciously scented, and they continue to bloom in succession from Christmas to quite the end of April. After the plants have done flowering in May, they should be removed to the shelf of a greenhouse or to a frame, where they will have plenty of light and air. They should have little water given them, but beware of drying them up. In about six weeks, the corms will have a sound and ripe appearance, and the old foliage will be mostly withered. Then repot and start them into fresh growth. Have ready a mixture of good sweet turfy loam (the top spit from a meadow) one half, the other half to consist of equal portions of sweet powdery hotbed manure, leaf-mould, brown peat, and gritty sand. The plants may remain in the cold frame until the end of September, when they should be removed to the top stage of the greenhouse again, and close to the glass, where they may stay until they come into bloom, and are fit for decorating the conservatory.

The *Cinerarias* should be gradually coming into bloom after Christmas; these will continue gay for some months. The best way to obtain good varieties of these is to purchase a packet of seed from a good strain, and sow it in pans in the month of May, and when the young plants are strong enough, prick them off in

small pots, and keep them growing all the summer, shifting them into larger pots as they require it. They like a compost of two-thirds sandy loam and one-third rotten manure. They should be grown in frames all the summer, and be kept close to the glass, and have at all times abundance of air. They should also be kept well watered during the summer. Fumigate about once a fortnight, to keep them free from green-fly. Nothing more need be done to them until the autumn, when they must be removed to a place of safety from frost, but where they will receive plenty of air on fine days, and be kept safe on frosty nights.

Some *Epacris* will also be coming nicely into bloom in January. The cultivation of these plants is so well known that I will say but little about them. After they have done blooming, they should be cut back to a nice close compact head, and removed to a cold pit or frame to break afresh. If the soil in the pot is low down, let them have a top-dressing of good sandy peat, and the plants occasionally to have a sprinkling of water overhead; this will strengthen the young wood, and make them break close and bushy. They may stand all the summer out of doors, in a half-shady spot, but not under the drip of trees. The following six kinds will be found valuable for general cultivation, viz., *Carminata*, *Delicata*, *Hyacinthiflora fulgens*, *Lady Alice Peel*, *Salmonea*, *The Bride*.

A few pots of Mignonette can be easily had in the winter by sowing the seed in July. Let the soil be rich loam—three parts to one of manure; and let there be over the crocks in the bottom of the pot a handful of manure alone. To grow good mignonette, the soil must not only be well pressed down, but actually *rammed down*; the plants do the better for it, as all who have tried can testify. Of course they must have while growing all the light and air possible.

I find the *Echeveria retusa*, with its orange-scarlet flowers, a good plant for winter work. It will last in bloom a long time, and bear any amount of knocking about at all times without injury. It is also easily grown in any ordinary glass structure. The cuttings may be put in early in the spring, and, when rooted, potted off in a sandy loamy soil, and watered when required during its summer growth. About September they will throw up their bloom-spikes, and begin to show colour about November; from that time until quite April they will form a conspicuous object in the conservatory, especially if they are grown as I have seen them—several plants together in large pans and pots; thus giving a mass of bloom that cannot fail to be attractive. They must at all times be sparingly watered, especially in the damp days of winter, when but very little will suffice for them.
