

PREPARING AUTUMN AND WINTER VEGETABLES.

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ALTHOUGH the various quarters in the kitchen garden will, at the present moment, be mostly occupied with growing crops, plenty of work requiring attention will be found. In the first place, the hoe must be plied vigorously amongst growing crops to keep down weeds and to loosen the surface soil; the main crops of Brussels sprouts, broccolis, and kales of all kinds should be planted shortly; and the seed of many things for autumn and winter use must be sown.

With reference to hoeing the ground, it may not be necessary to say much beyond directing attention to the importance of keeping the weeds down and the surface soil loose. If the weeds are allowed to grow unchecked they will mature a crop of seed and scatter it in all directions, and when the autumn rains come the seeds will germinate and a vast amount of labour be entailed in destroying them. This work will be found more difficult by-and-by than it is now, as the ground will be moister on the surface and the sun will not be so powerful; consequently a very large proportion will take root again. Provided the work is done properly and in dry, sunny weather, every weed will perish and incur no further trouble.

Many years' observation has shown that crops of all kinds suffer less from drought and heat when the surface soil is loose than when it is quite firm; it would not be difficult to explain this seeming anomaly, but, for the present, it must suffice to state that it is the case.

In regard to planting the crops of winter greens of all kinds, it is with regret I have to acknowledge the existence of the pernicious practice of keeping the plants starving in the seed-beds until late in the season. It is not desirable to plant broccolis much before this month, and if they are put out next month they will do very well; but the kales and sprouts of all kinds cannot well be planted too early. When this work is deferred until late in the season, they have not time to complete their growth, and the crop is small in consequence. Quarters filled with early potatoes should be planted with greens as fast as they are cleared; but if the potatoes are planted the proper distance apart, and there is no chance of their being smothered, they may be planted between the rows at once. In certain cases, where it is not convenient to plant these things out for a short period, select an open piece of ground and prick them out a few inches apart each way; here they will become furnished with fibrous roots and acquire a considerable degree of strength by the time the quarters are ready for their reception. Another good plan is to thin out the seed-bed by the removal of the weakly plants; but it is

only practicable to adopt this plan when there is a larger stock than required.

It is desirable in taking up the plants to partly lift them with a fork or trowel, and thus prevent injury to the roots. In dry weather draw shallow drills and fill with water; when this is not done, the holes are frequently filled with dry soil, which runs down the side of the dibble, and the roots receive considerable injury in consequence.

The colewort is most useful for filling quarters which are cleared a month or six weeks hence, and a sowing made now will yield a supply of plants. They can be put out about a foot apart each way, and will form nice little hearts; they turn in very quickly, and when properly cooked are so fine in colour and delicate in flavour as to make a most acceptable dish. A second sowing, made early in July, will yield a stock of plants for a late crop, which will be in use from November to Christmas.

The crops of such things as beets, carrots, onions, and parsnips must soon have their final thinning; but as the carrots and onions are in constant request, it is not desirable to thin them to their full extent until really necessary, but, at the same time, they must not suffer from overcrowding. The hoe must also be plied vigorously between the rows to keep the weeds in check and the surface loose.

As scarlet-runners are so useful late in the autumn, after the principal crops of peas, cauliflowers, and other summer crops are past, it is a very good plan to make a sowing in the first or second week of this month. Sown at that period, the crop forms a capital succession to the early-sown crops, especially in early seasons. This year late-sown crops will not be so useful as in some years, for those sown early have not as yet made much progress. Dwarf French beans sown towards the end of the month will also yield a supply at a time when they will be much appreciated. All the beans enjoy a deep rich soil, but the dwarf varieties stand the drought better than many other things.

Late peas are generally acceptable; but it is not desirable in small gardens, because of the precarious character of the crop, to sow late. Those who determine upon sowing after this period should select the early varieties, such as Alpha and Ringleader. The Blue Prussian is also a very good sort for sowing. The position selected should be rather cool for sowing peas in summer, but it must not be shady, for all the heat obtainable in the autumn will be required for the production of good crops. The late varieties, of which British Queen and Ne Plus Ultra are the two best, when sown in April, will in ordinary seasons maintain a supply until a very late period. The main crops must have a little soil drawn up on each side of the rows to support them, and the sticks put to them before they attain a sufficient height to fall over. When they do this, it is impossible to stick them without injuring them very considerably.

The crops of turnips from sowings made now will be found very useful. They succeed admirably when sown in quarters from which the earliest crops of potatoes have been obtained, as a moderately rich and well-tilled soil is essential for the production of good crops.

In sowing turnip or cabbage seed during the summer season, it is most essential to keep a sharp look-out for the turnip-fly. As prevention is better than cure, it is advisable to dust the seed-bed with soot occasionally until the plants are in the rough late. The soot must not be too fresh, and it should be applied when the plants are moist from either the dew or rain.

GARDEN GUIDE FOR JUNE.

KITCHEN GARDEN.—Asparagus not to be cut after the 15th, then to be cleaned over, and allowed to grow. Celery to be got into trenches as fast as the ground can be made ready by the removal of other crops. Take up each with a ball, and do not injure a single leaf. Hoe over those that are established in trenches, to break the surface that has been hardened by watering. The ground will be now, for the most part, covered, and everything in full growth. The hoe must never be idle; weeds grow faster than the crops, and exhaust the soil rapidly, and, if allowed to seed, make the mischief worse. Next to keeping down weeds, the most important operation is that of watering. Plants, when first put out, should not be drenched to excess, or the chill will check them more than a drought would, and it is better to trust to moderate watering and shade combined than to keep the soil saturated about plants that have barely taken root. Cucumbers, gourds, tomatoes, and capsicums may be put out; the soil should be rich; and, for tomatoes, a sunny aspect must be chosen. Manure-water should be freely used to all crops in full growth, and especially to strawberries, but there should be two or three waterings with plain water to one with liquid manure. Sow beet, early horn carrots, scarlet runners, and French beans, turnips, lettuces, radishes, cabbages, spinach, endive, cauliflower, and peas and beans. All salad plants should have a shady position, or they may run to seed. Dress asparagus and seakale beds with one pound of salt to every square yard, and give asparagus beds strong doses of liquid manure from horse-dung.

FRUIT GARDEN.—Apricots to be thinned, young shoots nailed in, caterpillars destroyed, and water-engine used smartly, if any sign of fly, which rarely troubles them. Search among raspberries every morning for snails, which take shelter on the stakes and among the side-shoots. If large fruit are required, thin the blooms at once, and give liquid manure. Stone-fruits look well this season, and no blight yet; but it may come suddenly, and must be prepared for. Disbud and nail in. Pot trees to have plenty of water, and, if weakly in their new growth, pretty strong liquid manure will be of material assistance.

FLOWER GARDEN.—French and other asters may now be turned out in the places where they are to bloom; make the ground rich, and choose showery weather. If the place is infested with snails, plant a few small lettuces behind the back row, which may be pulled