

compared with our recollections of an English winter, the corresponding season here appears of comparatively short duration; and, besides, has the redeeming merit of affording an occasional beautiful day.

Seed sowing is now entirely suspended, but suitable weather will afford opportunities to continue pruning and transplanting; for now is the season for pruning all sorts of apples, pears, plums, and other fruit trees, the young wood of which should be shortened back one-third of its length, and all the weaker shoots spurred in, removing every branch which either crosses another or seems to interfere with the symmetrical form of the tree. Excessive pruning, however, which new comers are too apt to indulge in, ought not to be allowed; for severe pruning only fills a vigorous tree with a rush of young wood instead of fruit, thus proving that pre-acquired home ideas of pruning are too often, in New Zealand, very much at fault.

The transplanting of all sorts of fruit trees may be continued; and the present is also a suitable season for the planting of all sorts of forest trees, evergreens, and ornamental shrubs, and also for thorns, privets, sweet-briars, and other plants suitable for hedges, as well as such of the native shrubs and trees as are known to bear removal. These are all best transplanted at this season; for dull days, a moist atmosphere, and occasional rains, may be all regarded as circumstances favourable to successful transplanting.

Now is a suitable season to commence planting eschalots, garlic, and potato or underground onions, first manuring and digging the ground, then laying it off in beds four feet in width, with four rows in the bed, and from seven to nine inches from set to set. The bed may then be topped off with a thin covering of wood-ashes—a material in which all bulbous roots, whether useful or ornamental, seem to luxuriate.

New plantations of rhubarb may now be made. The usual mode is to plant two rows in a bed four feet wide, and two feet apart in the rows.

Asparagus beds may now be formed, not in the costly manner often resorted to in England, but by amply manuring and digging a piece of good land, then marking it off in four-and-a-half-foot beds, on each of which plant three lines of one year old roots at nine-inch distance, then shovel from the intervening paths just sufficient soil to cover the crowns of the plants, then give a heavy dressing with salt, and finish off with a covering of six inches of well decomposed manure. Beds so planted will yield several good gatherings the second summer after planting, and from the third season will afford an abundant supply of this delicious vegetable, which in no portion of the world is produced in greater perfection than in New Zealand.

Flowering bulbs, such as crocuses, snow-drop, jonquils, hyacinths, narcissus, and tuberous-rooted plants, such as anemones and ranunculus, and even more fibrous-rooted plants, like lily-of-the-valley and other convallarias, should now be planted; for the early spring blossoms of these lend to the flower borders their first attraction, and when judiciously blended with the choicer sorts of autumn-sown annuals, are capable of awakening in every true lover of floral beauty a deep feeling of admiration.

Recently planted trees and shrubs of large size, to ensure their greater stability, may possibly now require to be staked or otherwise supported, for strong south-westerns, accompanied with drenching rains, have a tendency to lay over newly planted trees, thereby breaking their recently formed roots, which careful staking will entirely obviate.

Maintain in the greenhouse as dry a temperature as the character of the weather will allow, taking advantage of every fine day to give plenty of air.

Vines which have fully ripened their wood, and from which the grapes have been gathered, will now require to be pruned; this will be best performed by spurring in to two eyes each of the side-shoots, and shortening the leading cane to one-third of its length. The outer rough bark, presenting a ragged appearance on the old wood of the vine, may now be removed, after which every inch of the vine should be effectually brushed with a hard brush, so as to dislodge the existence of insect life, which usually harbour beneath the loose bark of the vine, in a state of torpor, during the dormant months of winter, ready to emerge into active life with the first warm weather of early summer.

Choice plants standing upon grass lawns may now require some degree of protection to enable them to withstand the severity of the frosts which occasionally prevail during this and the succeeding month.

Where the plants to be protected are of moderate or of small size only, the simplest means of protection is a canvass awning in the form of a pyramid, sufficient to cover the plant; or a still simpler means is to place stakes around the plant to be protected, meeting them at a point above its top and filling in over and around the plant with dry fern.

JULY.

... Mysterious round! what skill, what force divine,
Deep-felt in these appear! a simple train,
Yet so delightful mixed, with such kind art,
Such beauty and beneficence combined.—THOMSON.

Winter Frosts—Sow Peas and Beans—Cress, Mustard, Radish, and Spinach—Commence Planting Early Potatoes—Pruning and Transplanting Fruit Trees, Shrubs and Hedge Plants—Beds for Rhubarb and Asparagus—Remove Sea-kale—Manure—The Flower Garden—Plant Bulbs, &c.—Prune and Transplant Roses—Sow Sweet Peas and Mignonette—Flowering Bulbs in Greenhouses—Dress Vines to Destroy Insects.—The Care of Shrubs, Lawns, Borders, and Walks.

WE are now in the depth of winter, and must be content with occasional rains, alternating with bright days, succeeded by sharp frosts at night, which usually attain their greatest intensity between the beginning and middle of the month. These, however, are not more severe than the frosts of an English November, and are just sufficiently sharp to produce a clear healthy bracing atmosphere. Such weather, of course, seldom interrupts the ordinary seasonable operations of gardening; for even now we begin to anticipate approaching spring, by commencing to sow peas and beans on all light dry sandy soils, the earliest sown crops of these being by far the most productive, especially when sown on land which has been under repeated cultivation.

It is also desirable to risk a small sowing of cress, mustard, radish, and spinach at this season, although these sowings are less to be depended upon than those made during succeeding months.

Even now the planting of early potatoes may be commenced, provided due precaution is taken to plant only on perfectly dry land not liable to become flooded; for wherever surface water stands after heavy rains, the sets of newly-planted potatoes are sure to perish. Indeed, the only object gained by planting thus early is the lightening of duties at a more advanced and busy period of the season.

Continue the pruning and transplanting of fruit trees as previously directed, as well as ornamenta trees, evergreen shrubs, thorns, and other plants suited for hedges.

The formation of beds and mode of planting, advised in last month's calendar for rhubarb and asparagus, may be successfully continued. The present is also a season suitable for the removal of the roots of sea-kale, which may be planted in beds five feet in width, with three rows in each bed, and two feet distant in the row; after which, the crowns may be covered with six inches of sea-weed, or well-rotted stable manure—the former being preferable: for both sea-kale and asparagus, being submarine plants, retain, even under garden cultivation, their predilection for salt and sea-weed.

Established beds of sea-kale may now be forced into early growth by the application of fermenting stable manure, which will excite an immediate growth, thereby affording an abundant supply of this delicious vegetable in from twenty to thirty days from the time of covering in. For later crops, however, and especially where forcing appliances are not conveniently obtainable, it may readily be produced in high perfection, by simply covering the crowns with from nine to twelve inches of light dry soil taken from the paths of the beds on either side, and thrown over the crowns, through which the stems will stretch themselves until they reach the surface, when, by clearing away the soil, they will be found to be nicely blanched and fit for gathering.

In flower gardening, continue the planting of bulbs and other flower roots; the subdivision and increase of herbaceous flowering plants; the pruning and transplanting of roses, and other similar hard-wooded flowering plants. Make the first sowing of sweet peas for early blooming, and even now you may risk the first sowing of mignonette.

Proceed with the continued preparation of land digging or trenching for the further planting of fruit and forest trees, for very much of their after success depends upon a reasonable amount of preparation of the land in which they are permanently to stand. The planting of trees may be continued, selecting weather during which neither sharp frosts nor excessive rains unduly prevail.

The gaiety of the greenhouse in early spring may be secured by the introduction of pots of early flowering bulbs, such as crocuses, snowdrops, anemones, ranunculus, hyacinths, lily of the valley, together with early blooming heaths, epacris, and, gayest of all, the Chinese primrose, in white, pink, and fringed varieties; these of themselves, if introduced in profusion, will enliven the dull months of winter and early spring, and impart to the greenhouse an attractive and progressive gaiety, increasing with the progress of the season. Vineries, when early forcing is not resorted to, require little care at this season beyond painting the vine, to destroy any remaining traces of insect life. These having been previously pruned and well brushed, paint them all over, from top to bottom of their stems, with a liquid composition of soft soap, sulphur and camphor, dissolved in spirits of wine, with the addition of some common clay; all of these may be mixed and made to the consistency of cream by the use of tobacco water, and if this be applied with a painter's brush, it will effectually destroy the spider, brown scale, and other insects destructive in a more or less degree to the fruit and foliage of the vine, the depredations of which are easily prevented by resorting to this timely precaution.