

FEBRUARY.

Rich in content, in Nature's bounty rich
In herbs and fruits; whatever greens the spring,
When Heaven descends in showers or bends the bough,
When Summer reddens and when Autumn beams.—THOMSON.

The Weather—Directions for Gathering Fruits and Seeds—Weeding—Sowing Autumn Crops—Pruning—The Flower Garden—The Greenhouse and Vinery—The Lawn.

THIS, the first autumnal month, like that of August in England, usually displays more of the characteristics of summer weather than that of autumn. Vegetation is still in the midst of luxuriant growth, although the weather is generally hot and dry, so much so as to suspend, in a great degree, the usual duties of planting and sowing, and to restrict the operations of the garden to the collection of ripe fruits for preserving. Apples, pears, peaches, plums, and raspberries will now be ripening in great profusion, and ought to be collected only when perfectly dry; for fruit gathered and boiled in a wet state is sure to ferment.

Collect also all kinds of ripe vegetable and flower seeds. Hoe between growing crops for the destruction of weeds, and single out advancing crops of carrots, parsnips, turnips, onions, beet, and other large growing roots, which can only attain perfection when thinned to a reasonable distance.

Ripening crops of onions, garlic, eschalots, and other bulbous roots, may be drawn and stored. Weed and thoroughly clean asparagus beds, afterwards strewing the surface with a sprinkling of salt; remove the smaller and lower heads of globe artichokes; if rain should fall towards the end of the month, commence the usual autumn sowings of early York, drum-head, and other cabbages, cauliflowers, savoys, curled greens, red pickling cabbage, and Brussels sprouts for late autumn and early spring planting. Sow also white stone turnips for winter use. Continue successional sowings of radishes, cress, mustard, lettuce, and endive for salading; and prepare land for a large breadth of onions, for the sowing of which see next month's calendar.

Continue to thin out all unnecessary wood in fruit trees; and if American blight should happen to show on apple trees, exercise unremitting diligence in painting every spot or twig with linseed or other oil, which, if persevered in, will effectually destroy the disease.

Frequently water and stake flower border plants which require moisture and support during the periods of blooming; continue the propagation of pinks and carnations by pipings and layers, as previously directed.

Collect ripened seeds of choice annuals and perennials, especially of verbenas, polyanthes, pinks, carnations, dahlias, and other esteemed flower border favourites, the seeds of which are imported with difficulty, because of their liability to lose their vitality during the voyage; hence the greater necessity for a judicious care over those sorts we possess—the varieties of which may be greatly augmented, and the colours and habits of the parent plants greatly diversified in the well defined characteristics of a vigorous offspring.

Greenhouse plants, throughout the whole of the present month, will require a similar attention to shading and watering, as well as by sprinkling them overhead from the fine rose of a watering-pot; or still better, by dewing them, gently, with a hand syringe, which has a very renovating effect after the depressing influence of hot dry weather.

Grapes grown in vineries which have received but little forcing will now commence to colour; the lateral and other growing shoots ought now to receive a final stopping, and the borders and atmosphere of the house may be kept as dry as possible, which will ensure grapes of a high colour and rich flavour.

Should grass walks and lawns at this season lose their greenness of colour from excessively dry weather, one or two heavy waterings sprinkled all over the lawn in the evenings will preserve its colour throughout the summer, and maintain the freshness of appearance peculiar to well kept lawns in the earlier part of the season, when all is green and luxuriant.

MARCH.

At last
The clouds consign their treasures to the fields;
And, softly shaking on the dimpled pool
Prelusive drops, let all their moisture flow
In large effusion o'er the freshened world.—THOMSON.

Vegetation—Celery—Winter Greens—Radish—Lettuce—Cress—Mustard—Endive—Turnips—Prepare Land for Autumn-sown Onions—Broad Beans—Cabbage, Cauliflower, &c.—Spinach—Budding—Strawberry Planting—Bulbous and Tuberous Flower Roots—Vineries—Lawns and Shrubberies.

AUTUMNAL showers, at short intervals, throughout the greater portion of the present month, may always be predicted with complete certainty. The effect upon vegetation, in the heated state of the soil, thus slightly cooled and moistened by these frequent showers, is almost instantaneous, rapidly exciting a second spring-like growth, and even a second profusion of blossoms upon many sorts of flowering plants which had already bloomed at an earlier period of the year.

These rains indicate the arrival of a suitable time for the renewal of our exertions in active planting and sowing, which should first be devoted to the planting of late crops of celery, as well as second crops of all the sorts of winter greens previously named.

Seeds may now be sown of radish, lettuce, cress, mustard, and endive; and this is especially the season for making a large sowing of early white stone turnips, which will yet give a moderate crop of remarkably sweet and tender turnips throughout the whole of the winter and early spring. The most suitable ground for all of these crops will be that from which early potatoes have been dug.

Now is the best period of the year for preparing the land for a large breadth of autumn-sown onions; for this indispensable and valuable vegetable, sown *early* in the present month, becomes sufficiently established to withstand the winter, and during the following summer to produce much larger and finer bulbs than those sown in spring; indeed, so well is this known in the northern settlements, that onions are very generally sown at this season, and the crop is well known to be often an astonishingly profitable one. It is, however, here requisite to introduce a caution against extending the autumn sowing of onions, as is sometimes unwisely done, to the end of April and May; for if sown so late, they have not had time to root sufficiently deep to secure themselves, when the first thaw that succeeds a sharp frost is sure to throw them upon the surface. It ought, therefore, to be distinctly understood, that if onions are not sown in March, or by the first week in April, they are best deferred until early spring.

Broad beans sown at this season will withstand the winter, and produce an abundant crop in November. All the varieties of cabbages, curled greens, savoys, Brussels sprouts, and cauliflowers may now be sown for transplanting in spring; another sowing of spinach may be made.

Transplant lettuce and endive for winter use; mould up celery; tomatoes and capsicums may be gathered; ripe onions may also be gathered, dried, and stored; and some of the latter sorts of annual pot-herbs will still require to be collected and dried.

Continue the budding of fruit trees, and regulate once more the shoots of vines, apricots, peaches, and other choice fruit-bearing plants; make new plantations of strawberries from well-rooted and established runners, giving an especial preference to the variety known by the name of Kean's seedlings.

Bulbous and tuberous flower roots, lifted about the end of summer, may now be re-planted; polyanthes, auriculas, primroses, and cowslips, now starting forth into new growth, from the altered character of the weather, may be lifted and increased by division of their roots; these and other herbaceous plants which have finished blooming will, during the showery weather of this and the succeeding month, readily bear this easy mode of augmenting their numbers.

English hollies and several other evergreens, having completed their summer's growth, and now about to push forth an autumnal one, can be transplanted with certain success at this season, especially if showery or cloudy days are selected for the operation. The same period and mode of procedure will be found alike applicable to young blue gums and other Tasmanian trees and evergreen shrubs.

Greenhouse plants, from the greater humidity of the atmosphere, will now require less frequent watering, especially those which have done blooming, many of which may now be headed back; and the cuttings thereby afforded, if placed in a gentle bottom heat, will root rapidly, and speedily increase the stock of flowering plants for another season.

Maintain in vineries a perfectly dry atmosphere, and give an abundance of air every fine day. Grapes should now be highly coloured and perfectly ripe, and can readily be preserved, plump and fine, for a period of five months, in a dry temperature, with a free circulation of air.

Evergreens of various kinds can now be planted out upon grass lawns; the showery character of the weather and softened sunshine will be found highly conducive to success, and the growing period of autumn is yet sufficiently long to allow of the plants thoroughly establishing themselves before winter. They will thus be ready in spring to start forth into rapid growth, considerably surpassing those the planting of which has been delayed to the more dormant season of mid-winter.