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THE
GARDENERS' CHRONICLE

A Weekly Illustrated Journal

OF

HORTICULTURE AND ALLIED SUBJECTS.

(ESTABLISHED IN 1841.)

VOL. III.—THIRD SERIES.

JANUARY TO JUNE, 1888.

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The GARDENERS' CHRONICLE

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To the Trade.

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tenths of the total number of the window-boxes are in these towns and their suburbs. Mine are in a street of thirty houses, where, with twice that number of window-boxes we garden partly for our neighbours, so that all the world enjoys our window-boxes, or may do so and welcome. Last year the Fuchsias were the "observed of all observers." On the opposite side of the house Pelargoniums and other lovers of the sun do better in the boxes than Fuchsias.

During the past winter my boxes have been filled with evergreens, including variegated *Euonymus*, *Aucuba japonica*, *Thuja aurea*, delicate *Cupressus*, and some plants of *Yucca recurva* which are much admired. These were all well grown specimens, filling up the boxes handsomely. Small plants would have been looked on askant by the neighbours as poor skinny things. If economy be an object, these same plants may remain in the boxes the whole year round. For the sake of variety, I prefer to remove the evergreens, which are plunged in their pots in the garden on the south side of the house, to be used again next autumn. The boxes are refilled immediately—Crocuses, early Tulips, Hyacinths, Double Snowdrops, Primroses, Hepaticas, and Violets, being amongst the earliest flowers adapted for that purpose. *Anubria* and various alpine may be introduced at this time. I have a box whose edges are at this moment overhung nicely with four varieties of bright green *Saxifragas*, and several other plants of that class which are found in most nurseries clambering over rockwork, or overlapping the face of dwarf walls. It is needless to name all these things, space forbidding it, and the intelligent student of box-gardening will soon discover that the methods of decoration are inexhaustible and that he must necessarily set some limits to the sorts he cultivates. The alpine alone, or Ferns and *Selaginellas*, are charming subjects, especially for north aspects.

Flowers that come next in succession are *Narcissus*, *Anemone*, *Ranunculus*, *Polyanthus*, *Pansy*, *Wallflowers*, *Lily of the Valley*, *Brompton Stocks*, *Daisy*, and *Viola*. Then come *Nemophilla* and *Mignonette*, *Lobelia speciosa*, *Echeverias*, *Cyclamens*, *Musk*, *Heath*, *Amaranthus*, *Cinerarias*, the graceful *Dielytra spectabilis*, and many others, followed by all the flowers of summer. Unless a beginner has great confidence in his or her original genius I would recommend copying the work of others, just as artists in another department study the models of their predecessors. The following arrangement has been admired—the box painted green and planted with scarlet and white *Pelargonium* mixed with yellow *Calceolarias* bordered with *Musk* and *Lobelia speciosa*. But the last touch of art was the arch wreathed with *Canary Creeper* (*Tropæolum peregrinum*, commonly called *canariensis*), and passing from end to end of the box. Arches above window-boxes may be objectionable in some cases, as they obscure the view; but that does not apply to the training of creepers up the sides of the windows, which has a charming effect. The various kinds of *Pelargonium* head the list of summer flowers for boxes, and they are grown now in such variety that contrasts may be obtained without the use of other flowers, except small ones used as edgings; or the *Pelargonium* may be planted with patches of such annuals as *Nemophilla* and *Mignonette* between them, edged with the plants already named, and with *Sweet Peas*, *Convolvulus*, *Canary Creeper*, and *Eceremocarpus scabra* running up the window sides.

Subtropical plants, such as *Dracena*, *Ficus*,

Palms, and others, have become favourites in recent times, but without enlarging on them here, I must be content to notice two methods by which renewals may be effected, namely, by means of one's own reserve garden and greenhouse, or by purchase. The latter is probably the cheapest method, especially in towns where plants of all sorts are provided in enormous quantities, and where private gardening is a costly pleasure. *H. E.*

NEW OR NOTEWORTHY PLANTS.

CYPRIPEDIUM BELLATULUM, n. sp.

This is near to *C. Godefroyæ*. The leaves, however, are blunt, very strong, 10 inches long by 3 inches in width, beautifully marbled with light hieroglyphic spots above, with innumerable brown dots underneath. The immense flower, 11 inches in circumference, is spotted all over, some of the spots being very large; the colour is white, or whitish-yellow. It is an introduction of the indefatigable Messrs H. Low & Co. The staminode is novel. It is much longer than in any other variety, oblong, tridentate at the apex, nearly free from hairs, and beautifully spotted. This peculiarity I have never seen in any of the affinity, and this induces me to make a new species. I have studied numbers of flowers of the affinity. No one, however, has been so liberal in sending specimens as Mr. W. Lee, who, during 1886 and 1887 sent me numbers of flowers of *Cypridium Godefroyæ* always with their leaves. And all that number does not show a single staminode comparable to that of Mr. S. Low's sending. *H. G. Rehb. f.* [Certificated at the Royal Horticultural Society, May 22. *Ed.*]

POLYSTACHYA LEONENSIS, Rehb. f.

This curious little *Polystachya*, described a long time ago from a dried specimen collected by Barter in the Niger Expedition (*Otia Bot. Hamburg*, p. 112) has at length been introduced alive, and may be seen in flower in the Kew collection. It was received from Sierra Leone, and so closely resembles Barter's dried specimen that I have scarcely a doubt it belongs to the same species. The very characteristic thick roots, clothed with white velvety tomentum, the habit, and the velvety peduncle and pedicels, are precisely identical; and, although the racemes are at present a little shorter, I think this is merely a question of development, for I can find no essential difference in the flowers. This specimen enables me to add a note as to the bulbs, also the colour of the flower. The bulbs are globose-depressed, half an inch across, and arranged in a string along the creeping rhizome so thickly as to touch each other. The upper sepals and petals are light green, the lateral sepals suffused with brownish-purple in their lower half, the lip white, with the lateral lobes suffused with light purple behind, the front lobe, the central keel and the basal part of the lip covered with a curious white mealliness. *R. A. Rolfe.*

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE.

ARAUCARIA EXCELSA.

This beautiful Conifer, the Norfolk Island Pine, is at home in the calcareous rock soil of the Mediterranean shores. It has been introduced nearly everywhere, and thrives everywhere, provided there is plenty of lime in the soil and a moderate amount of moisture. I have seen it growing luxuriantly in the Malta gardens, in the Balearic Islands, in Spain, in the *Alameda*, or public garden at Valencia. It thrives in all our Riviera gardens, and is luxuriant at Monte Carlo, and in my rock terraces, in a soil all but entirely composed of lime, with very little vegetable loam. The marine air must remind the *Araucaria excelsa* of its native home—Norfolk Island, in the

Pacific, to the north end of Australia, lat. 29°. The soil of this island is, no doubt, calcareous. I have several of these handsome trees, two more especially, which, although only fifteen years old, rise nearly as high as the summit of the Grimaldi Tower, which is 66 feet from the ground.

They bear the summer heat and drought, but want moisture at some periods of the year to thrive, and must have a considerable amount of soil under them. I planted several on small terraces in pockets on the rocks above and around me; but they only lived, did not thrive. This is the case with *Agaves* and *Aloes*, and with many other plants from dry regions like Mexico, Australia, and the Cape. With little or no soil they live on healthily, but remain small, merely vegetating. Given soil, even in moderation, they go ahead rapidly. I had occasion to transplant a year ago two large trees for the foundation of a house I am building. Not having the proper appliances, and the trees being on the mountain-side, it was a difficult business. I had forty men, however, to assist, so we managed the transfer by cutting a round ball of earth, preserving roots as much as possible, and then raising the entire mass by pulleys and levers, and then dropping them into the terrace lower down destined to receive them, just as the mast of a vessel is raised and dropped into its place. They were freely watered every second or third day all the summer, have survived, and are doing well.

This operation gave me an insight into the root-growth of these trees. There was a mass of fibrous roots that had penetrated into every crevice of the rock, like seaweed on shore rocks. They had found their way into every fissure, and covered the jagged rocks with fibres like a mat. We had always well irrigated these trees; the water had sunk into the rocks, and the root-fibres had followed it everywhere. It quite convinced my garden subordinates that I was right when I talked of "watering the rocks" in winter to secure tree-growth in the dry summer. Before this they had thought me half crazed to water after rain, to get at the rocks. The terrace on which they were growing being below others on the mountain-side, water discharged on the terraces above had constantly filtered down to their roots, which explained their luxuriant growth.

I find that in summer, if the soil or rocks get too dry, the *Araucarias* begin to shed their foliage, so this is now my criterion. The moment the leaves on the lower branches begin to fall I have the soil in which they grow freely irrigated, and they at once cease to fall. I have made one of my numerous tanks overflow at will in the vicinity of my two largest trees, and thus have secured frequent and thorough irrigation in summer. Since I have done this, for the last two years, their growth has been much more vigorous, and the length of the bole between the annually formed whorls of branches and leaves has much increased.

At Monte Carlo there are several fine specimens of this Conifer. They are growing rather differently to what they do with me—more thick-set, the whorls of branches nearer together, more pyramidal in a word. With me, on the mountain-side, they are running up. As in their native home they are said to reach a height of 200 feet, I am in hopes that my trees, well watered and attended to, will become very tall, and right pleasant to the sight, should I live to behold it.

I have the *Araucaria brasiliensis* also, but it merely vegetates. Our winter is probably too cold; I can, however, scarcely understand the *A. excelsa* doing so well in the Mediterranean; for Norfolk Island—where only, I believe, it is found wild, is only 29° from the equator. It is a most beautiful and singular tree, confined to Norfolk Island in the Pacific, 1000 miles north-east of Sydney, and which is merely a few miles in circumference, 5 miles in diameter by 2½. Its flora has a great affinity to the Australian vegetation, I believe, while the *Araucaria* is found in a fossil state in the carboniferous sandstone, or at least, fossil Coniferae of that type are so found. Thus it may be a remains of the vegetable world that flourished on