



In Birmingham's Annual Calendar

Lawn and Landscaping Time



Now is the time when everyone of us can know the thrill of making something grow! It may be a flower pot geranium. It may be a sloping little rock garden at the side of the house. It may be a big, rambling garden of an acre or more. To guide you in your Spring gardening plans—we've planned this Special Page... check full of news, facts and figures about growing gardens most successfully.

Plant the Hardier Annuals Now

"That long-waited time of year when all danger of frost is past" has not yet arrived in most sections of the country.

Even so, those impatient gardeners whose flower seeds are burning holes in their pockets may safely sow the seed of a number of favorites now, according to Gilbert Bentley, flower expert of the Ferry Seed Station.

Seed of certain popular annuals is not damaged by cold weather, he explains, and seedlings that come up will prove able to withstand late cold spells. The important thing for the pre-season gardeners to remember, Mr. Bentley says, is the names of those flowers hardy enough to stand the early cold weather.

Here they are: Annual Alyssum, Bachelor Button, Clarkia, Calendula, California Poppy, Chelidonium, Snow-on-the-Mountain, Larkspur, Pansy, Petunia, Annual Poppy, Portulaca and Snapdragon.

Of these flowers, Clarkia, Larkspur and Annual Poppy may prove even healthier if planted early, for growth in cooler environment is more natural to them.

Where this early spring planting is performed, Mr. Bentley advises that the seed be broadcast, and then raked lightly into the soil.

Plant at least a few of the outstanding novelties this year. Many of them are improvements over old varieties, and will be a welcome change.

Draw your garden plan this year. You will be glad you did it once you get the habit.

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• There's a fact about gardening that many people don't realize. We're passing it on to you because it will save you plenty of work, and assure you a lovelier lawn. Put on a complete plant food early! Right now, before the frost is out of the ground.

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Gardeners' Corner

(This column is conducted for The Eccentric's readers, at Mrs. Marc Fatten, Box 16, Bloomfield Hills. Questions on gardening matters may be addressed to Mrs. Fatten and they will be answered in the Gardeners' Corner or directly by mail.)

INSECT CONTROL

Before the good weather arrives permanently, (if ever!) there is still time to stock your garage with the insecticides prepared for the summer battles with insect and fungus diseases. At first thought the whole subject is very depressing. There seems to be a special pest for each flower, and fact some have more than one. Add to this the fact that some are suckers, some chewers, some borers then some nibblers, and the various stages of development. So many remedies are suggested that, except for the sad instruction: to burn every leaf and branch, one is not always in a position to follow the directions. It is especially with the following, one should be at least able to hold one's own: A spray gun varying in size from a simple hand pump holding about a quart to apparatus holding as much as fifty gallons. Choose a model that can be easily cleaned. Lately a model to attach to the garden hose has appeared. It is especially good where shrubs are to be sprayed although, it does not replace the spray gun entirely.

A duster, to spread powdered fungicides. Here again, the size of the garden determines the type needed. A salt shaker is a good duster for larger gardens. Arsenate of lead for checking insects. Nicotine sulphate for sucking insects.

Measures and pail for mixing. This list of chemicals is very brief. There are dozens of excellent sprays on the market and most gardeners have favorites that to them are next best to curatives. When you buy a spray find out what it is meant for, what other uses are next best to curatives, and follow the instructions carefully; too much will often harm the plant more than the insect would. Think of spraying and dusting as preventive measures and your success will be more certain. In every case use disease-resistant stock wherever possible (as rust-resistant snapdragons); keep the plants strong and healthy and spray before you see signs of trouble. Follow a definite schedule and stick to it. Keep garden clean and free of rubbish.

and burn all diseased leaves and plants. When distress signals appear, look up the plant in your garden handbook under the plant disease and you will probably find the symptom listed with adequate directions for the cure. Need I say, follow them over if it means digging up and destroying the patient! Let us have healthier gardens, so, don't plant more than you can care for!

PLANT LABELS
Clean-up time often means the loss of plant labels. Be sure you aren't sweating away your labels with the winter covering. And by the way, are your labels still legible after the snow and rain of a long winter? There are labels on the market which will stay bright and shiny after years, although the name is written with an ordinary pencil. For seed flats and short time jobs, the white painted wooden labels are good enough. For permanent labels on trees, shrubs and in the border, acid on metal is one solution, though embossed metal labels are the ones used in parks and arboretums. These can be purchased to order or you may find the proud possessor of a stamper among your friends. Keep a record of your plant purchases in a book in the house and on a label in the garden. For your future reference write down the full name; where you got it, and the date.

Give Lawn Plant Food in Early Spring



Salpiglossis
The gardener who plans ahead, as to avoid a late rush, will be glad to know that the spring feeding of the lawn can be made very early. In fact, this is not only the most convenient, but the very best time to feed your lawn. When the ground is thawing, the soil is in a porous condition, honeycombed and creviced. Plant food works down in the crevices when applied, and prevents very little of the product from being carried away when the ground becomes completely thawed out. Late snows and spring rains come along and the plant food is carried down through the soil to the roots, in time for the hungry plant to assimilate it just as soon as growth begins.

ways greater there. If a pane of glass is kept over the box at night, moisture will be conserved, but always lift an edge of this cover during the day, for ventilation; wipe off moisture which condenses on it, and remove it entirely when the plants grow high enough to touch it. Watering must be thorough; soak the soil whenever it grows dry; and do this without washing the soil.

Seed boxes handled this way seldom suffer from "dampening off" which is a fungous disease that kills little plants. But if you do have this trouble, then disinfectants can be obtained which will minimize it. Being constantly under observation, the seed box enables the grower to learn at first hand the way seedlings grow, and the conditions which encourage healthy progress. The temperature of the home is usually satisfactory to the plants, provided it is not too hot. Day temperature not over 70 degrees and a night temperature not below 55 degrees is satisfactory for most subjects. Watering must be done carefully at all stages, being careful to let excess water drain away, and not to allow the soil to become dry.

Look after the lawn. Give it seeding where needed and apply plant food. Also roll it when the frost is out of the ground. Make up your list of annuals. Try two or three that you don't keep this year to add interest to the garden.

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Put a Seed Box in Sunny Window

A small box in a sunny window will give the seeds of a few favorite varieties of flowers or vegetables several weeks' headstart this spring.

If you have no cold frame or hooped, yet do not want to be limited to the selection of plants usually in the market, the seed box offers a way to grow your own.

The name "flat" is usually applied to the seed box. It may be of any convenient size, from a cigar box to the standard florist's flat, which is usually 14 by 20 inches, 4 inches deep. Holes may be bored in the bottom of the box to assist drainage, though if the boxes are not watertight, excess water has no difficulty in escaping through the cracks. A cigar box should be reinforced by wire to keep it from falling apart.

Soil used in a seed box should always be put through a sieve. The coarse soil may be used in the bottom, the fine on top. Florists' potting soil is the best, or a fine garden loam, about half sand.

Seed may be broadcast on variety to a flat, or sown in rows, which allows several varieties to be grown in the same box, each row being labeled. The broadcast method has some advantage with tiny seeds like petunias.

Seeds which are broadcast are usually less crowded than those in rows. If you sow in rows, use the edge of a ruler to make shallow indentations in the soil; sow thinly, cover lightly, and firm the soil with a block of wood.

By lowering the box in a tub of water, the soil may now be thoroughly soaked without danger of washing the seeds from their places. A wet blanket of newspaper may be placed over the soil to keep it from drying, and the box set in a warm, dark place until the seeds sprout.

Immediately after sprouts appear, remove this blanket, and place the box in the sunniest window you own. A kitchen window is good, because humidity is al-

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