

## GARDEN NOTES.

## THE VEGETABLE GARDEN.

To get successful crops of anything in a dry, hot spring it is necessary to thoroughly soak the land before sowing. If seeds are sown in hot, dry soil, without some precaution being taken, they will not grow till rain comes, and not do so well even then, unless it comes quickly. In dry weather it is a good plan to mulch early peas with manure, and give a good soaking of water after.

Crops that are through the ground, especially young cabbage and cauliflower, should not be allowed to suffer for want of water, as club root is very much more liable to attack them when in a dry condition than if kept well watered.

## THE FLOWER GARDEN.

There is a very praiseworthy tendency nowadays to substitute hardy plants for the usual bedding stuff, and those who have adopted that plan find it a pleasant change, but for a good blaze of colour it is hard to beat a combined bed of pelargoniums, zonals, geraniums, calceolarias, and lobelia as an edging.

Tender annuals, such as asters, stocks, marigolds, phlox Drummondii, etc., should be in such a forward condition now as to require pricking out in boxes. Use good rich loam, sand, and old manure put through a sieve, placing a good layer of rough siftings at the bottom of the boxes for drainage, filling up with the fine material, pressing down fairly firm, and pricking out in or 2 in apart. Give a good gentle soaking, and keep rather close and shaded for a few days.

Geraniums and such plants in pots or boxes for bedding purposes should be placed in a cool, sheltered position outside to harden prior to planting in their beds. I do not recommend that they be planted out before the first week of November. This, I think, is the best time, and the safest for bedding out either annuals or such plants as geraniums, as there is always a chance of getting them partially spoiled during October.

## THE LAWN.

A garden without a grass plot or lawn is scarcely worthy the name of a garden at all. Small or large, it should contain a grass plot. At this season it is quite possible to give such help to the autumn-sown grasses as will last through the whole year, and the satisfaction derived from the lawn will be proportionately greater. If there are any bare patches, scratch them over with a fine iron-toothed rake and sow fresh seed rather thickly; scratch it over again; then sift on a light dressing of clean loam. Though this may be a little unsightly, it will soon pass away, as the growth will be stronger, greener, and brighter as a result. For lawns that show signs of weakening or turning pale green there is nothing better as a stimulant than nitrate of soda or sulphate of ammonia, used at a rate not stronger than 1oz per square yard.

For young lawn grasses the first season at least care should be taken not to cut the green too low. The proper length may be got by raising the knives. As to lawns that are to be made in the spring, no time should be lost in getting the seed in, as if sown late in the spring or summer the young grasses are almost sure to get injured by scorching. A friable condition of the soil is necessary to procure a fine surface, and frequent raking and rolling and treading are necessary to get the surface in a fit condition to receive the grass. Repeated rakings assist in clearing the ground of stones and such objectionable things. A rolling should take place after every raking to ensure a firm and smooth surface. Grasses, particularly the finer kinds or varieties, are too fragile to force their way through clods, and many seeds will be lost altogether if they are buried to a greater depth than a quarter of an inch.

Sow the seed at the rate of 80lb per acre; rake carefully in, and give a light rolling to settle the seeds, or many of them will be lost by exposure, leaving them an easy prey to the birds.

## THE GREENHOUSE.

When I say "greenhouse" I mean the unheated greenhouse. This will require a considerable amount of attention just now by way of watering and shading. Watering the plants in the morning and damping the floors and plants overhead in the evening will be very necessary during a dry spell. If the plants are allowed to become dry and the atmosphere in the same condition for long they are sure to become a prey to numerous enemies, such as thrips and green fly. When either of these makes its appearance fumigate at once with some kind of fumigant, such as nicotine. When doing this always pick a quiet, dull, and wet night for the job, as it is much more deadly to insect life at such times than on dry, windy nights.

## THE CRUCIFIX.

(By Lieutenant C. Ment, in "Forethoughts.")

You are under orders to move up into the front line, and your route lies by way of Dead Mule Gully and the Crucifix—let me describe your path: A winding track made of odd duck-walks scattered about the shell-holes leads off from the plank-road lined with wrecked waggons, and, crossing a spur, gives you a glimpse of the "gully." About half a mile long and two hundred yards wide, it is but little different from the many valleys which slope gently to the Flanders plain, except that its sides are steeper and it runs parallel to the fronts of the two armies, affording on account of these two characteristics protection from ground observation to the force in occupation. Before the war it was a pretty and peaceful glade, green fields lined with tall trees and trimmed hedges and with a few cottages, brightly coloured with red tile roofs and whitened walls, cosily nestling in a group of orchards on the sunnier slope. A winding road wandered down the valley bottom, lined by straggling yews and elms, and climbed the southern spur on its way to the city near by.

After the German advance in 1914, their line was pushed forward two or three miles beyond the valley, and its position and contours strongly appened as a position for his artillery. For three years his guns flashed out death and destruction from the vale, for the same period our retaliation searched the valley in quest of revenge, and now the place is ours. But what a change! A reeking wilderness of shell-craters, brimful with the winter rains—trees felled, splintered and buried—cottages to be located only by odd bricks churned to the surface by the never-ceasing shells, and placed oddly on the low ground, several German "pill-boxes," massively built in steel concrete, but shattered and wrecked by fire. After the capture of the gully, a plank road was built leading up to its head, but, beyond giving the place its suggestive name the track merely provided a new morsel, in the shape of log planks, for mastication by the explosives hurled over. The track to the line crosses the gully, and a feeling of depression occasioned by the appearance of the ground gives place to sickened horror as the traveller flounders along the track. The valley has seen some of the bitterest and bloodiest battles of the war, not so much on account of its own powers of resistance, but because, on the ridge forming its head, there lies a wood which is world-famed as a battle-ground and for the ownership of which the two armies struggled for months. For the army not in possession of the ridge the gully was a death-trap, and a number of units which have discovered this is evidenced in ghastly fashion by the shells, with their sickening alternation of disinterment and reinterment. The fragments of German artillery equipment, mangled and partly buried round the concrete slabs, prove his former activities here, and as for our part, no one has attempted the suicidal project of establishing guns in that region of death, but along the whispy trail of splintered logs which marks where the plank road was built, there lies a sinister trail of carcasses, which named Dead Mule Gully. No one lingers in this region, for day and night the shells come shrieking over the ridge and plough the foul, stinking ooze, while the infantry reliefs scramble and flounder in haste to pass the hateful area. Casualties in Dead Mule Gully are a nightmare to those in command, for the carrying out of dead and wounded is a colossal undertaking, and delay in these regions means greater loss to a party, whilst from the point of view of the sufferer, a wound ordinarily slight becomes in these surroundings a matter of great concern, for the soil is reeking foulness itself—teeming with the life which comes of death.

Passing through the gully and ascending the other ridge we see the Crucifix, and though the surroundings are not such as would encourage reflection, there are few who pass the cross without giving a thought to its weird persistency. The area surrounding it is, perhaps, the most heavily shelled in the sector; hardly an hour passes by night or by day but the drifting cloud of a shell-burst hangs around it; the ground for miles around is torn and threshed, yet the few square yards of ground which contain the crucifix are untouched. It is riddled through and through with bullets, shrapnel, and splinters; it has had poisonous gas fumes around it a thousand times, shells have been shaking the country for years, but the black timbered cross is erect and square and is looking down on the gully this day. To the incoming relief it appears as a solemn and warning guide; to the carry party on the tracks adjoining, it stands as a symbol of death and eternity, and to the outward-bound troops it

it seems sadly to bid them good-bye. There are no New Zealand traditions up in that sector, the names in that locality have not been immortalised as those villages and places which have seen the Maorilander in attack, but in spite of this there are no scenes more indelibly printed on his memory—no names more fixed in his brain than the crucifix and Dead Mule Gully.

## MOTORING NOTES.

## TO REMOVE WHEELS.

Here is an easy way to remove a wheel from the axle. Get a stout rope and tie it across the wheel, leaving enough room to insert a jack between the rope and the end of the spindle. Place the foot of the jack against the rope and the head against the end of the axle and work the jack slowly so that a pulling force is exerted on the wheel through the rope.

## LUBRICATING SPRINGS.

It is a custom in one of the largest repair shops in the world to lubricate and preserve the chassis springs of motor-cars whenever they are disassembled for an overhauling by painting them with a mixture of graphite and cylinder oil. This mixture prevents the accumulation of rust between the leaves, and improves the riding qualities of the springs. The mixture is prepared by simply mixing powdered or flaked graphite with cylinder oil to a pasty consistency; and it is applied with any suitable paint brush. Another method is to glaze the working surfaces of the spring blades with beeswax shavings, which is a cleaner job and lasts a long time.

## DISMANTLING THE ENGINE.

In order to look over the parts of an engine and to restore the worn or defective components it is necessary to take the engine entirely apart as it is only when the power plant is thoroughly dismantled that the parts can be inspected or measured to determine defects or wear. If one is not familiar with the engine to be inspected it will be found of value to take certain precautions when dismantling the engine in order to insure that all parts will be replaced in the same position they occupied before removal. There are a number of ways of identifying the parts, one of the simplest and surest being to mark them with steel numbers or letters or with a series of centre punch marks in order to retain the proper relation when reassembling. This is of special importance in connection with dismantling multiple cylinder engines as it is vital that pistons, piston rings, connection rods, valves, and other cylinder parts be always replaced in the same cylinder from which they were removed, because it is uncommon to find equal depreciation in all cylinders. All parts should be thoroughly cleaned with petrol or in the potash kettle as removed, and wiped clean and dry. This is necessary to show wear which will be evidenced in cases where the machine has been used for a time, but in others, the deterioration can only be detected by delicate measuring instruments.

## KEEPING THE CAR NEW.

The present day owner, using modern methods, may keep his car looking new all the time, nor will he have to spend more than a few minutes a day to accomplish this end. For instance, there are now on the market a number of liquid and wax polishes, which will give admirable results, if they are used as directed. In the use of wax polishes the first step is thoroughly to clean the body of the car. The polish is applied to the surface with a piece of cheesecloth and then another clean cloth is used to distribute the wax evenly all over the surface. The polish will last for from four days to a week and after it has been applied at the beginning of the week, a little rubbing with a clean cloth will bring out the lustre again. The wax polish may be used for body, fenders, hood, and other lustrous surfaces and it will also be found that if the under side of the fenders are cleaned and given a good coating of wax, less mud will be deposited and what there is may be easily removed. The present day owner must not assume that these really useful aids to beautifying the motor car have superseded plain water. The contrary is true. The car must be washed just as formerly, after which the polishes do bring out the lustre of the original finish.

The Government accepted the Lords' amendment to the Ministry of Mines Bill, substituting for the proposed Ministry a Department under the Board of Trade.

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