

# YOUR GARDEN AND MINE

By Ann Earncliff Brown (No. 45)

"Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone."—Song of Solomon.

**T**HOUGH it is not "the voice of the turtle" but the screech of the pukeko that calls me, yet the day I find the first sprigs of mint showing round the edges of the swamp-garden (more swamp than garden, to be truthful, but quite lovely), is always a special day. The wild spearmint is perhaps well behind your garden patch when there is a favoured spot, warm yet moist for it, but no tame mint can mark the arrival of the growing days so infallibly. This year I was able to pick enough wild mint to make mint sauce on August 26—much earlier than last season. On that day, too, I gathered the spearmint's first cousin, the delightful swamp herb we call Eau-de-Cologne because of our joy in inhaling its fresh scent. Yes! the swamp garden is disconcertingly ahead of schedule—or I am possibly behind—for even today I see the leaves of the water-lilies beginning to poke their furred "brollies" above the water—and I have not yet given the pond its spring cleaning. Grasses, watercress and even a clump of raupo have invaded the pool, and a wiser water-gardener would have cleared them out before this.

There are so many hardy water lilies in shades of rose, crimson, copper and gold, as well as the old lovely chaste whites, that a lily pool can now be a very gay affair. The blue shades are a little less hardy, but in sheltered pools thrive well too.

Where lily rhizomes are planted in a natural pond with muddy bottom, the roots should be enclosed in a wire or wicker container packed round with peaty or a heavy loam soil and sunk in the mud. Cow manure and coarse bone meal are appreciated in the lily bed. A simpler method of planting is also often quite as successful. The rhizome is sandwiched firmly between two thick turfs, bound here and there with flax and sunk where desired. For the nymphaea varieties, about three feet of water is recommended.

Lilies in artificial garden pools are usually grown in pots or tubs. The soil should be 2 parts turfy loam, 1 part cow manure, and ½ part sand. Lilies grow quickly, and must not become pot-bound. In the spring when the plants begin to shoot, they should be divided and re-potted. Divide as you would Bearded Iris rhizomes. Now is your chance to secure bits from your friends and start even a tub or two if you have no large pool to work on. As indoor

## "Talking" To Sharks

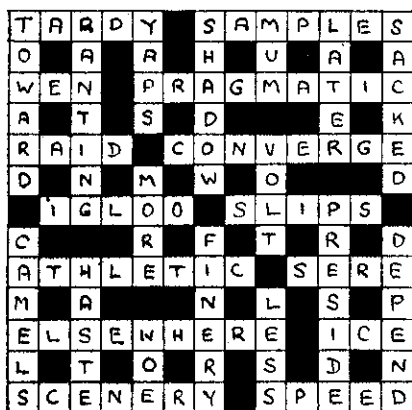
Each island group in the South Seas has its own fishing custom. In Papua nets of tremendous strength are made from the webs of giant spiders. The Santa Cruzians use spider webs in an even stranger manner. Out of the coconut fronds they construct an octagonal kite, the tail of which serves as a fish line. The lure is merely the mass of cobweb trailing along the water. When the garfish leaps for it he entangles his recurved teeth in the sticky substance and is then easily taken. In Australia the fishermen of the Great Barrier Reef use dynamite in a special way. Ordinarily the detonation bursts the bladder of the fish so that they sink and must be gathered up by diving. But it has been discovered that if the dynamite is placed near tree coral this result does not take place and the stunned fish float to the surface. The Cook Islanders know where to find the resting places of sharks. Diving until he finds one a diver will "talk" to the shark. His right hand strokes its throat while his left with forgivable duplicity slips a noose around the body of the great fish, which is then hauled tail first to the surface.—Victor Heiser.

decorations for a floating bowl the water lilies are fragrant and beautiful.

If unfortunately you have holes instead of lily pools in your lawn, now is the time to patch them up. I myself have been filling deep hoof-marks from wandering stock, while you, even if you keep your garden gate shut, may have removed weeds, or possibly just have bald spots to re-grass. Ram deep holes firmly to lawn level. Rake lightly and sow with good lawn grass seed. Sprinkle with red lead or disinfectant powder to keep birds off and cover lightly with sifted soil and roll.

Larger areas are successfully treated with germinated seed thus: To 1lb. seed add 1 bushel of fine soil. Mix well and spread on a shed floor. Damp it and allow seed to germinate. When sprouts are just visible, cover bare places and pat down with back of spade. Leave for a few days, and then roll. Birds do not worry this germinated seed, which comes away well.

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