

YOUR GARDEN AND MINE

By Ann Earncliff Brown (No. 64)

THERE are some "don't's" that gardeners accept unwillingly at times, but before I give these rigid rules let me warn you never to believe me, or even the most experienced experts, if the weight of your own careful observation in your particular garden is against the advice given in general.

For example, I have for years known that certain lilies detest being disturbed and show their resentment by refusing to bloom. For three years I waited patiently for blooms on these bulbs. Early this season I decided that the sulking lilies could do very little more to annoy me than they had done so I energetically uprooted them, thinned them, and since they are one of the very few lilies to like lime and heat, re-planted them with some shell grit in the same warm corner, but very much closer to the surface. Now, those temperamental "Naked Ladies," as we in childhood called them, have rewarded me with an abundant crop of flower stems. Their joy in a shallow bed evidently outweighed the reputed resentment at any even temporary resurrection.

Yet, I venture on a seasonable don't at this time. Don't puddle around in a too wet soil. Planting in wet earth is not good for the plants, and definitely not for the mechanical condition of the garden. Thus I vented my annoyance at a too generous rainfall by a determined weeding of the gravel drive—fortunately short though wide. But even so, I fancy that the warm light drizzle may keep those de-housed weeds very much alive. If I take them off I will also remove precious shingle, so even

path weeding might be a feeble prohibition in wet weather.

Quite certainly don't delay when your potatoes are ripe for lifting. Get your tubers up and stored before wet causes second growth or—even worse—before flood water lies deep on them. Potatoes cannot resist such conditions for many days. Also the last tomatoes, marrows, and pumpkins should now be well out of the way of frost damage.

With April showing on the calendar, we'll be enjoying cosy fires in the evening. If these are wood fires, don't forget that you have treasure to gather in the wood ash. Don't waste bones but make your own garden bone dust thus: Cover the bottom of a large cask or water-tight drum with 6 inches of dry soil, on which place bones the same depth—big bones and little bones, fish bones and marrow bones—any bones at all. Cover thoroughly with wood ashes. Repeat layers of bones and ashes till receptacle is full. Exposure to the weather throughout winter, spring and summer should make the mixture reduce readily to powder. This good fertiliser can then be dug in during the following winter or early spring digging. Naturally the chemical treatment of large quantities of bones is quicker, but the acid used is nasty to handle and must be purchased. Patriotic gardeners who are in possession of bones, woodashes, and plenty of patience will therefore save their waste material and make an excellent improver for their gardens—whether it must be a wartime garden, or once again the old happy plots where men wage their perpetual war against garden foes.

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