



"Remember when you plant trees that they grow up . . . or they may have to be trimmed to allow for the power-lines"

though. An inch or two of stem will at least tell you where not to dig.

Plants that don't please you where they are now, but would look dandy somewhere else, can be moved almost any time in winter, but it's a good idea to do something about them during the general cleaning up. At the same time clumps of plants that have satisfied territorial ambitions can be broken up and the bits replanted. For this replanting the outside juicy shoots are best, rather than the woody growth near the centre. Once everything is cleaned up, the clear patches of the bed should be cultivated and manured. Digging deeply with the spade every year would only cause havoc in an established flower garden—in that way it's different from the vegetable plot—so the ground should be well broken to a good depth before plants that are more or less permanent are first put in.

At this time of year lime is used pretty freely in the vegetable garden. It's not necessary to be so open-handed among the flowers. Some plants—rhododendrons, azaleas and camellias, for instance—loathe the stuff. But when a certain amount of mixed fertiliser or animal manure is used, this should be balanced with a small application of lime. An ounce a year to the square yard should be ample, and even if a year is missed it shouldn't be fatal.

This fertiliser should be worked into the permanent beds by "pointing." This was a new term to us and momentarily we saw ourselves standing frozen like a game dog and feeling a bit silly. But pointing apparently means shallow digging with the point of the spade or fork. This, needless to say, shouldn't be done when the ground is wet and sticky—only when it's reasonably dry. It is better to dig during the change from dry to wet than the other way round, for reasons which shouldn't be hard to find.

Roses are not the best choice for the haphazard gardener. If you're in that

class but plan to startle your neighbours of the dawn patrol by becoming a constant cultivator, waterer and sprayer yourself, then now is the time to do it. There are many varieties of roses available, and as a change from those most often grown—the hybrid teas—the newer floribunda roses, which are cluster flower varieties, will give plenty of blooms right through the season—though the flowers will be slightly smaller than the ones you've been used to. Before the plants arrive the ground must be well prepared. This is even more important than with trees and shrubs. There will be no soil on the rose roots when they arrive, so initial care is vital.

It is fast getting past the time for planting most spring flowering bulbs, except for tulips. If not done before it should be done immediately—any further delay and you've had it for this season. Hardy annuals to provide the artistic members of the family with cut flowers during November and December should get their start in life now. Seed should be sown before the end of April in its permanent place—the place, that is, where you hope the flowers will eventually bloom. This should be somewhere warm and sheltered, if that's not asking too much of your district. The northern aspect of a fence in many areas is often quite good enough. Clarkias, cornflowers, nigella, larkspurs are examples of hardy annuals.

Flowers are no doubt very nice, but in cold weather the Plain Gardener's fancy is more deeply seated than his optics. As some anatomist remarked while standing on his head, the way to his heart lies through the stomach. This is true also of the vegetable garden. To be hearty it must be fed, and now, we gather, is the time to feed it. First, however, you must get it, as you might say, to open its mouth. This, alas, again means digging. All crops whose harvest has finished—pumpkins, beans, marrows, tomatoes, and so on—

can be cleared away for composting before you make a start, or you may prefer to dig them into the lower soil along with any other organic material that's available. This, however, isn't the thing to do if the crops have pests in them or are otherwise diseased—these are better burned than buried.

If possible the ground should be well dug. There's no need in your new found enthusiasm to disappear to hat-level in your plot, but at least once in three years you should trench the land—dig it, that is, two spades deep. For easier digging, especially in stony ground, some experts recommend sharpening the spade. This can be overdone so that more living matter goes into the soil than you can afford.

Now the ground is dug, what comes next?

According to taste—not that they're meant to be eaten, of course—you can now sow on the land not needed a cover, or green manure crop of lupins, oats, barley or mustard for later digging in. This crop will take up the plant foods in the soil and hold them in suspense until they're needed. In this way you guard against losing them—you'd be surprised at what the winter rains can wash out of the soil. Growing cover crops, like putting "cabbage" in the bank, is good economy and it has the same added incentive of a profit on the deal. This profit is substantial when the cover crop is leguminous, for legumes—peas, lupins, vetches—also takes nitrogen from the air.

This is a good time of year to apply lime on land that's going to lie fallow through the winter, or which won't be used for a time. Two to four ounces to a square yard is enough in most soils, but in districts where the rainfall is heavy and lime is continually lost from the soil double this quantity may be needed. Where a green crop is sown, a dressing of lime some time before it is to be dug in will help it to rot, as the bacteria which break it up don't thrive in acid conditions. Some sowing and planting is generally still necessary in late April and May, especially if miscalculations or phenomenal growth threaten to bring your supposed winter vegetables to the table too soon. But more care must be taken now than with sowing and planting in warm months. Those who think soggy soil ideal for planting are probably just seeking a bit late in the day that glorious mud-pie feeling most of us got over when we were very young.

One method of deciding whether your soil is fit for sowing is to take a swift canter across the garden. If you bog down or fall over because your boot-soles are concave with sticky soil, it's too wet.

Broad beans and spinach are the two main sowings you should make now. The name of the former is not always apt, for some varieties of broad beans are as long as they are broad. These are often preferred for their heavy cropping, but some people think them not so tasty as the more squat variety. Spinach is best grown in well-drained ground, and a raised bed about three inches high and wide enough for you to get at the middle without falling flat on your face is ideal. It was once believed that prickly seeded spinach was superior to the round seeded variety in length and yield, but the back-room boys have proved that there are long and short standing varieties in both round and prickly types. It should also be remembered that, especially in poor conditions, there is more feed to go around if the plants are thinned while young. The survivors then have a real chance to prove their long standing qualities.

Any other planting and sowing done now depends on just what's possible in your district. If you've never found out or have just arrived on the scene, you could just as well put in the "possibles" to find out what happens. If nothing comes up—well, it's all experience. And though that will make pretty thin eating in the spring, the experts say it's the stuff to accumulate if you really want to graduate some day from the forlorn band of Plain Gardeners.

ON THE AIR

Talks on gardening will be heard from NZBS stations next week at the following times:

Thursday, May 2—3YZ (7.15 p.m.)
Saturday, May 4—1XH (10.15 a.m.),
1YZ (10.30 a.m.)
2XG, 2XN (10.0 a.m.)
2XP (9.0 a.m.)
2YZ (10.0 a.m.)
2ZA (10.15 a.m.)
2ZB, 3ZB (9.0 a.m.)
4ZA (10.0 a.m.)

