

GARDENING NOTES

(By MR. J. JOYCE, Landscape Gardener, Christchurch.)

Winter will soon be a thing of the past. Spring will be here immediately, and therefore all work in the garden should be pushed ahead as much as possible. All the digging and manuring should be got ahead, also the pruning and spraying of fruit trees. A general tidying-up of the garden should be well in hand, so that there may be no drawback to the sowing of seeds and planting of flowers and vegetables on the advent of spring. When the soil is in a suitable state, some early peas, broad beans, and lettuces may be sown, and should be protected from the birds by wire netting, or some other means. Early potatoes may be planted in a warm situation, where the frosts cannot get at them. When the stalks appear above ground, a light covering of dry litter should be put over the rows for protection from the late spring frosts. Cabbages and cauliflowers should be planted out in well manured ground.

HOTBEDS.

Now is the proper time to commence the preparation for the making of a hotbed. Anyone who has a garden frame should not be without a hotbed in which to grow his early plants. To the amateur gardener nothing could be more interesting than the propagating of plants in a hotbed. Seeds germinate freely and grow quickly in it, and cuttings root without the least trouble, whilst a large quantity can be raised in a very short time. The only attention it requires is to lift the lights a little at the top each day, so as to regulate the temperature, and an occasional syringing of the plants when they are in need of water. A can of water should be kept in the frame, as by doing this the temperature of the water will be in keeping with the heat of the frame. By preparing the bed now, it will be ready by the beginning of August, which will be a very good time to make a start with the growing of tender annuals and other plants. A hotbed for a frame of three lights requires about four loads of fresh stable manure. This manure must be thrown into a heap and sprinkled with water. This will cause it to ferment more quickly. After three or four days the manure should be shaken out thoroughly, sprinkled again, made into a heap as before, and left for about a week. In the meantime the centre of the heap should be stirred up once or twice to let out the steam, as it will be now getting very hot. After a week it will have to be thoroughly shaken out and well mixed. It may be now made into a bed. Choose a sunny position, which is well sheltered from cold winds. Commence by driving four stakes into the ground. The space marked out should be a foot or eighteen inches wider and longer than the frame. When the bed is completed it ought to be about four feet high, but the weight of the frame will cause it to settle down considerably. It should then be left for three or four days, and occasionally forked up a little in the centre to let out the steam. A covering of three or four inches of soil should be placed over the manure. This will keep down the fierce heat. The seed boxes can now be placed in the frame, and, if the heat is fairly moderate, the seeds can be sown. They are better sown in pots or boxes, as they are more easily handled afterwards. Great care must be taken to give air every day, and if the sun is strong, the glass should be shaded with a bit of scrim. When giving air, the light must be only lifted at the upper end. On no account should a cold draught be permitted to reach the young seedlings, as it would materially affect their growth, or, perhaps, kill them off. When the heat has fallen somewhat a few seeds of cucumbers may be sown in the middle of the bed, so that when the seedlings are removed, the cucumbers will occupy the frame, and give a good return for the labor spent upon them. When the seedlings have grown to a suitable size they should be transplanted into other boxes, where they will have more room to grow. The boxes may be placed in the frame for a week or two, until the young plants have recovered from the transplanting. After that they can

be removed into a cool frame or to a shady part of the garden, when they will be free from cold, drying winds. Care should be taken that they are not allowed to get a chill after being taken out of the warm atmosphere of the frame. The better plan is to keep them under glass until they are completely hardened off. After a while the heat in the frame will diminish, but this can be renewed by placing a good quantity of stable manure around it. This can be done again and again as required. When the warm weather sets in, the heat of the sun is sufficient to keep up the temperature of the frame without any artificial aids.

Hokitika.

(From our own correspondent.)

July 13.

The death of Mrs. G. Herd occurred at her residence, Kanieri, on Saturday. Besides a husband, a family of eight are left to mourn their loss. The sympathy of many friends will be extended to the relatives in their bereavement. The remains were brought to St. Mary's Church by the members of the Hibernian Society, the funeral taking place yesterday. The deceased was a native of South Westland, and was 38 years of age.—R.I.P.

An esteemed resident of Hokitika, in the person of Mr. Thomas Hutchison, passed away at the Westland Hospital on Friday evening. Mr. Hutchison had been suffering for a good many months past, and his end was not altogether unexpected. Deceased, who was a widower, leaves a family of three—two daughters and a son—the youngest being seventeen years of age. The late Mr. Hutchison was a native of Kanieri, and 42 years of age.—R.I.P.

The bride was gowned in natter blue,
With shoes and toque of 'tango' hue;
The bridegroom, in a suit of brown,
Looked quite the smartest 'sport' in town.
And while confetti filled the air,
A tearful mater kissed the pair.
And sobbed, 'My love! be always sure
To take your Woods' Great Peppermint Cure.'

What a lot of odd jobs in a house go without being done for the want of a few good common

TOOLS.

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