

# State Agricultural Journal.

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## State Agricultural Journal.

R. T. FULGHUM, Conducting Editor and Prop'r.

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## Department of Floriculture.

C. B. DENSON, Editor.

NOTE.—Letter of inquiry as to Osage Orange received. Answer next week with pleasure.

### Semi-Tropical Plants.

We have now fairly reached the season for the employment of the class of plants which requiring some protection in winter for the most part, yet repay that little care with the most brilliant effects on the lawn during the long summer days, revelling in the heat so destructive to the delicate bloom and foliage of our spring growing plants of the temperate zones. Very few years have passed since it became plain that to keep up a brilliant display in our long hot summers, it would be necessary to draw upon the resources of the greenhouses, or the cold pits. As the taste for ornamental gardening grew, people were not content to pass the hot months without something fresh and bright to cheer the eyes, and so experiment after experiment resulted in giving us a choice catalogue of flowers for outdoor bedding, that were formerly never removed from the greenhouse, and where there was no greenhouse kept, they were abandoned altogether.

Now what is necessary to make up a fine tropical group? Select a circumscribed spot, small enough to be well cared for, and near enough to the house to receive abundant supplies of water. If rich enough already, so much the better. If not, let it be dug deeply, and well enriched with old and very thoroughly rotted manure; also woods mould, or leaves that have been composted and reduced to utter dust—half decayed leaves will do harm. You will begin planting on a cloudy day, but if bright and sunny wait until an hour or so before sunset. Your plants are in pots, or you have received them per express, and they are bound in moss, or the earth in which they grew wrapped in thick paper and tied. Gently remove the moss or paper, and plant a little deeper than they grew before, breaking the earth gently away from the roots, and mixing with the new fresh—let the new damp soil cover the old ball lightly to the stem. Be sure to press the soil firmly. You will of course begin at the centre of your bed in planting, placing the tallest plants there, unless you are planting a narrow strip against a fence or wall, when you will put the tallest specimens against the back.

When all is over, water liberally, and if you will continue to afford liberal supplies of water every evening after the heat of the day has passed (whenever it is not sufficiently moist of itself from the rains), you will surely succeed. Old planters will excuse the details for the benefit of those whose experience is yet to be gained. The question of the water supply is important. If the ground is dark and moist on the surface, and the particles are easily impacted by the fingers, do not water. You may induce rot, mildew, damping off, as it is called. If the ground is dry, burned, cracked, or there is no dampness at the depth of the finger, lose no time in watering, but first break up the soil, and do not deluge the plants

with one bewildering shower, but with a little patience, let us follow nature.

The watering pots, brought from the North, are often flimsy things, with a single bottom of thin tin, that soon rusts out, and when they begin to leak, to the discomfiture of cambric and percale, the watering is discarded and the plants "go to grass." Suppose you get a good honest watering pot, with double bottom, of XXX tin, and a couple of roses, for heavy and light showers. Our friend Mr. L., of Raleigh, has the right article manufactured upon short notice. To stir the ground; the best thing is a strong steel digging fork, with polished handle, suitable for the use of amateurs, light and pleasant to handle, but effective.

Now for the plants. In the centre, there may be *Arundo Donax Variegata*, one of the loveliest foliage plants in the world. It will reach eight feet in height, and with its tall spikes of purple in the fall, far exceed that, the leaves growing from one and a half to three feet long, and brilliantly striated in lines of white and green, with usually a heavy border of white toward the edge. It preserves the variegation all the year in cooler climates, but turns entirely green here in the late autumn especially if in a very dry spot. But it is eminently attractive for the greater part of the season, and only needs cutting off and covering with a slight mound of earth. If planted in rich soil, it branches heavily from root-stocks under ground, and grows finer each succeeding year. The brilliancy of its white affords a fine relief, to the colored plants, massed with it.

Or you may make your central plant the Pampas Grass, (*Gynerium Argenteum*), a very fountain of green, shooting up tall stems, surmounted by glittering plumes, which continue attractive for weeks. In three years we have grown a comparatively small plant to a splendid specimen with thirty seven plumes. These are not only beautiful in their natural estate, but afford exquisite ornaments when properly colored. This fact was taken advantage of by the eminent horticulturists from France who paid us outside barbarians of the South a kindly visit not a great while ago. They sold some of our friends in Raleigh strawberry trees that produce the famous St. Petersburg berries in great profusion of the size of hens' eggs, and invitingly set upon branches that did away with the necessity, a la Warner, of a cast iron back, when picking season came on. Yes, and a great many other curiosities which some of our friends the purchasers, are now modestly hiding away. Well, these gay and gallant Frenchmen took themselves to Savannah, Ga., and filled their pocket-books pretty rapidly with ten dollar and twenty dollar notes for plants warranted to produce plumes of the gold, scarlet, mauve, blue, and purple plumes of Pampas Grass, most scientifically dyed. Indeed they could furnish any required shade, so that a fair lady might have a parterre to suit her complexion. How should florists of the backwoods in the South know as much as these elegant gentlemen of Orleans (possibly of Toulon) who really spoke French, and were so interesting when they tried to explain their brilliant pictures in English, but unfortunately could not make their explanations intelligible. Georgia awoke at last, but by the time some of her far famed militia had reached the scene of action, exeunt Frenchmen, swindle, dollars and all, 'over the water to Charlie.'

And since we have wandered from plants to pedlars, and especially those of the Gallic style, we will simply state that the writer of this veritable chronicle, chanced when looking up the novelties in the floral world, to come upon these very Frenchmen, with their stock newly landed from a steamer, ensconced in a costly store, upon Broadway itself, where the glittering brass of the modern policeman is seen at noonday, and his rapping doth resound by night. There did they brazenly open their stock of blue roses, and yellow lilacs, and impossible wonders, until the room looked like the retreat of a botanical maniac. Lilies of portentous size and color, amaryllis that looked like a Turner in his wildest freaks had spread his glowing tints, cemetery plants, depicted with funereal darkness of a Dore—in short all that the pure revels of the imagination could shadow forth. Sundry roots and

bulbs, and dry stocks and seeds, were to bring into existence these imaginary wonders, and only a few hundred dollars would be the 'open sesame!'

"Joost vit huntart tollare, sare, and you sall ave the choix premiere of each von!" Poor "Caroline du Nord"—any man who acknowledges himself from that barbaric region was of necessity a fool, to put it mildly.

It appeared straightway what manner of men they were, and we not long after ascertained that immediately on their arrival, the distinguished Mr. Wilson, of Astoria, offered these men ten thousand dollars cash if they could produce a growing plant with a single bloom of their blue rose, and yet these philanthropists who said they had plenty at home, within twelve days steam, insisted upon postponing the sending for the blooming plant, and gave away, absolutely threw away the dormant stocks of it that they had with them, for only five and ten dollars apiece.

If anybody would compare the floral knowledge of our people to their discredit, we will simply remark that these very swindlers sold an immense amount of this false stock both at private sale and at auction, in the very heart of the city of Philadelphia, where florists are as plenty as blackberries, and horticultural societies do most abound, and absolutely wound up their enterprise to their satisfaction in the very neighborhood of such men of honorable fame and future as Buist, Dreer, Dick, Meehan and the rest.

We have gone so far from our plants, that we shall simply return to mention a few more central sorts, for the bed.

*Erianthus Ravenna* may be used in place of the Pampas; it is rarer in cultivation. The plant is taller than the Pampas, with feathery plumes of silvery white, exceedingly graceful. *Cyperus Papyrus*, the famous old paper plant of Egypt, may sometimes be obtained, though it is scarce. It is only five feet high, but has some twenty-five stalks to a good clump, each terminates in a mass of light green filaments a foot high and a foot through the light ball, much like so many rising balloons at a distance. *Amoranthus Tricolor Giganteus*, will reach five feet in good soil, and in the fall assumes a variegation of bronzy crimson and orange, with some brilliant scarlet. The sun should strike it freely, as it abhors shade. Let us remember too, *Gymnotrix Latifolia*, (there is no common name that we know of, for the plant is a recent one), an ornamental grass, which attains nine feet, and in our climate favorably situated, would doubtless hardly stop short of twelve; the mature plant furnishes thirty or more stems, with leaves reed like a foot long, and a couple of inches wide. It may be treated precisely as the Canhas.

Cannas make a fine centre to the bed of semi-tropical plants. They have been so improved that the flowers have reached the size and brilliancy of a fine *Gladiolus*, while the different styles of foliage some of dark purple, others deep green, or brilliantly variegated, and as elegant and rich in effect as those of a large hothouse *Maranta*. *Canna ne plus ultra* has very large foliage of the most splendid purple and bronze, with flowers of bright scarlet. *Nigricans*, *Bihorelli*, *Warszewiczii* and others are good. Give ample supply of water. You may take it up in the winter like a *Tuberose* or a *Dahlia*, but if you plant in a spot that is high enough to be dry in winter, you can preserve in our climate with a mound.

When Mr. Barnes reached the culminating point in describing the initiation of an Odd Fellow, in his charming lecture a few nights ago, he remarked that they opened the closet door, and took down—, well, he really didn't have time to say what. Which is our case, as the space is full, and we must wait for next week.

[From Macmillan's Magazine.]

### Plant Migrations.

(CONCLUDED.)

Taste became less severe under the Empire, and flower-pots were introduced in windows, and even the houses of the poor in Rome had little gardens in front for ornamental plants—equivalent to our window gardens—while the villas had highly decorated gardens attached to them, and there were parks and pleasure grounds in the heart of the city.

The favorite garden trees were the pine, for its refreshing odor, the bay for its beauty and fame, and the box for its shade. Trees were regarded as the temples of the gods. The simple peasants, savoring of antiquity, do still, says Pliny, consecrate to one god or another the fairest trees, and we ourselves worship the same gods in the silent groves with not less devotion than we adore their images of gold and ivory in our stately temples.

We proceed to notice a few of the plants in their passage westward in different ages, without attempting to fix the exact date of their arrival at different stages, or to settle disputed dates. Cæsar found in Britain the apple, hazel, elder, bullace, sloe, raspberry and blackberry; and his successors left us the vine, cherry, peach, pear, mulberry, fig, damson, medlar, walnut, &c.

In all probability, some of the trees cultivated in the gardens of Roman Generals, or Governors, in Britain, were afterwards lost, as would necessarily be the case with neglected plants, especially in the case of those whose seeds do not ripen in our climate; and they were reintroduced in the monastic age. The sweet chestnut, for example, had long passed from Sardis to Tarentum and Naples, where it was cultivated with much care and success, and the Romans would bring such a rapid growing and favorite tree to ornament their English villas, as surely as they brought the rose herself; and the disputants who denied us the chestnut until late in the middle ages, are refuted by common sense as well as by Giraldus Cambrensis, who, writing in the twelfth century of the trees of Britain which Ireland wanted, mentioned the chestnut and the beech.

As to the sorbus, or true service tree, there is no dispute; and it is singular that one of the few habitats where it is still found wild in England is in Wyre forest in Worcestershire, near the remains of a Roman villa, and of the orchard attached, in which, perhaps, it was first planted. The same orchard may have ripened the first of many of our fruits, sheltered perhaps by the first nursery of the narrow-leaved "English Elm," and in the garden near may have been planted the first rosemary and thyme that had lately blossomed on Mount Hymettus.

The plane passed from Asia to Sicily, thence into Italy, and, as Pliny informs us, had reached the northern shores of Gaul before the year A. D., 79. The peach was common in Gaul in the time of Agricola, so that these, with the box and poplar, followed the cherry which came here within five years of the settlement of the Romans. The apple, though not perhaps native, preceded them by some German route, and had given a name to the British Avalonia, afterwards called Glastonbury; but it profited by the rural industry of the Romans, and soon spread over the whole island to Ultima Thule. Early among the fruits came the walnut, called *Juglans*, *Jovis glans*, in remembrance of that golden age when the gods eat walnuts, and men lived on acorns.

[From Chamber's Journal.]

On the sides of the steepest rocks in the Pyrenees, the traveller sees with surprise a large tuft of leaves with a pretty bunch of blue flowers in the centre. The roots of this plant (*Ramondia Pyrenaica*) penetrate into the smallest fissures of the stone, and grow vigorously without any other nourishment than the water they absorb, and the air they breathe. It is curious to find that, limited as it is to these mountains, and to those of *Mont Senat* in Catalonia, it is the only representative in Western Europe of the exotic family of *Cyrtandaceæ*.

The two kinds nearest to it grow in the mountains of Roumelia and in those of Japan; all the other species are spread over Nepal and the Indian Archipelago. It is evidently a stranger in the midst of its surrounding vegetation. In the same mountains, botanists discovered a few years ago, at a height of from six to eight thousand feet, a low-growing plant with a very strong stem, which turned out to be one of the family *Dioscoreæ*, to which belongs the *Ignama* of China and other kinds which are spread over tropical Asia and America. This is the only European representative; and it is no less surprising that it should

[CONTINUED ON THIRD PAGE.]