

# THINGS OF BEAUTY

By Peggy Baird

THE rampant tidal wave of a field of wild flowers inspires most adults to nothing more than an industrious cultivation of the star of weedy geraniums in the front yard. This shows a lack of perspective in the idea of beauty. It is false to believe that if flowers are beautiful they will retain that quality no matter how or where they are placed; and few realize even now that there is a science of garden growing. If our roses fail to bloom, we blame the rain or the want of it; the poverty or luxury of the soil; or, with greater naïveté, the malignancy of the powers above. We are neither surprised nor disappointed if the results of our efforts resemble nothing so much as an old maid's hat trailing on Sunday to a back-country sermon.

Fortunately the days of haphazard planting are nearly ended. People who can afford beautiful homes are not spending their whole appropriation on the lady who decorates the front parlor in late Chinese and the back in early Venetian with a touch of baroque thrown in for good measure; they are using some of it for exterior decoration. Although landscape gardening in this country has not arrived at the finished point as in England, France, or Japan, we are nevertheless making great progress. Many books are now being published on the subject and it is an important fact that the majority of these are useful to the amateur as well as to the professional gardener.

Perhaps the most important of the recent works on garden culture is Albert Taylor's "The Complete Garden". It is a thoroughly scientific work, filled with information on everything pertaining to the raising of flowers, shrubs, trees, or vines. Take for instance the instructions for transplanting. One has to be very careful in this work, know the dormant period exactly; for transplanting is a violent act and stops the tree's vital activities. Mr. Taylor has made valuable charts which show the great variance of the dormant period in different localities, with only 57 days in which to plant evergreen trees in northern New York and about 182 in Oregon.

As one can easily see, it is better to have exact knowledge when planting, whether you have a ten acre space to cover or a ten foot square in front of a suburban five-minutes-from-the-station dwelling. One of the chief points of Mr. Taylor's book is his specific exactness, and part of its charm lies in the fifty illustrations showing what garden beauty can be like if one is

willing to take the trouble. He has also made charts of pruning seasons which are similar to those for transplanting. Quite evidently these are useful, as nearly all my friends went rapidly through the book to find out when to prune their one rambler rose.

To Mr. Taylor then belongs the honor of having achieved an invaluable book for the gardener who has not every bit of his work at his fingers' ends. He leaves nothing to the imagination, and for this reason his book should be in the hands of all amateur gardeners, whose usual tendency is to depend on the imagination for everything.

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The Complete Garden. By Albert D. Taylor.  
Doubleday, Page and Co.