BALD SPOTS IN THE GARDEN

BY AMELIA LEAVITT HILL.

About the middle of the summer we often find that our gardens, in many ways at the height of their beauty, have sad surprises in store for us, due to the "bald spots" left by the dying down of spring and early-summer flowers.

In place of actual nothingness some departed blossoms have left behind a mass of greenery, peaceful and decorative, it is true, and satisfactory enough in effect for the average gardener. But some enterprising flower lovers aspire to introduce among this nest of verdure some suggestion of its earlier glory and, by a skillful management of flower grouping, to insure a succession of bloom throughout the entire summer.

Chief among the blossoms which leave unfortunate gaps crying aloud for filling are the spring bulbs—daffodils, hyacinths, tulips and narcissuses—which have not only ceased to bloom, but which are literally sere and yellow by July.

With the exception of the tulips, none of these is likely to be lifted, and though tulips are not lifted by many gardeners, others feel that in order to insure the best results they should be dug up after they have ripened. We need not go into a discussion of the relative merits of the different methods here; the point is, in the present case, the replanting of the bald spots to the best advantage.

Most experienced gardeners make provision for midsummer's quota of greenness or bareness by the planting of a seed bed of annuals, from which flowers which have yet to bloom may be moved to beautify the desert wastes of passed spring loveliness.

SEEDLINGS THRIVE ON MOVINGS.

If you have already planted annuals throughout the garden, however, it is possible that even without such preparation you will have a supply of extra seedlings which will answer the same purpose. Most annuals thrive all the better for one or two movings, so that your efforts to keep the garden bright will accordingly benefit both plants and vacant spaces.

Petunias, balsams, marigolds—either the low-growing red-and-orange French variety or the tall yellow African marigold — prince's-feather and nicotiana are especially well adapted to such use, since they are both decorative and prolific.

If the place to be filled be sunny, portulaca will fill the void charmingly and the annual aster will provide many cheery blossoms for autumn cutting. Obviously we may note that late-blooming flowers are particularly well adapted to bald-spot use, since they provide color at a time when this is at a minimum, have ample time to become established after their installation and are too small at the time of transplanting to interfere with their dying neighbors.

In this connection cosmos may be mentioned, although this, to obtain the best results, should be transplanted while still small. The reason for the selection of annuals in filling in, apart from their almost immediate effect, is simply that they are not so deeply rooted as to interfere with the plants among which they have been placed.

When your spring plants, therefore, begin to leave you, set rows of annuals between them to carry on the bloom. If the plants which the annuals are to replace are not to be moved, the annuals may be set more thickly; but, for example, if tulips are to be lifted—which, if done at all, will be as soon as they are ripe—the newcomers must be so placed as to allow ample room for digging without becoming actively involved in the process themselves. As the foliage of the departing plant shrinks and yellows the smaller ones will increase in stature until the ultimate withering of the foliage which marks the ripening of the bulb is itself concealed by the prolific new plants.

Seed, too, may be sown in the required spots; the slight foliage of the bulb plants will not interfere with the seedlings, nor will the latter attain a size which will interfere with them until their bloom is past.

PROVIDING CONTINUOUS BLOOM.

The gorgeous Oriental poppy leaves a void which calls for decoration when its bloom is over, but care must be exercised in providing it with a neighbor. Though one of the loveliest additions to the garden, it is exceedingly temperamental, being hard to establish and, even when established, very jealous of interference. I have known these plants to be set in the same bed with the perennial coreopsis, which completely concealed the unsightly gaps left by the passing of the poppies, and the result was perfectly satisfactory; but it was obtained only at the price of ruthlessly weeding out and breaking off the coreopsis plants which ventured to trespass too near the poppies when they began to stir from their summer sleep early in September.

The iris, which remains a cool, soft mass of green long after its flowering is over, really needs no aid in adding effect to the garden, unless you are desirous of color everywhere. Its season may be considerably prolonged by the combining of the so-called German and the Japanese varieties, for the latter will take up the tale when the earlier variety is passed.

The iris may be given color by scattering throughout it clumps of phlox or, even better, by the inclusion of gladioluses. These latter will bloom ninety days after planting, and may be set out from time to time so that the season of their bloom will be prolonged. Their foliage is much like that of the iris, with which they harmonize excellently, and they may be tucked in here and there among the rhizomes wherever they are needed.

There are gardening magazines which give the names of wholesale dealers in these lovely flowers, who will supply comparatively small quantities at prices well below the usual retail rates; so that, although the scattering of gladioluses broadcast throughout the garden may sound like the wildest extravagance, it is really not a particularly expensive luxury.

When it comes to actual planting, gladiolus bulbs should be set from four to nine inches deep, according to the size of the corm or bulb, and six inches apart, and should, of course, be lifted every autumn.

The dahlia root, or "toe," is set just below the ground, and must also be lifted at the end of the season. Dahlias are set a considerable distance apart in order to permit the free development of the plant.

In transplanting seedlings, or indeed plants of larger growth which are grown from seed, a word as to the method to be used may not be amiss. The most commonly employed—and the easiest—is simply to move the plant to the desired spot, to give it a good watering and to await the result. This generally involves a complete wilting down of the plant in question and its subsequent revival after a day or two of prostration which has sapped it of vitality and impeded its growth.

If, on the other hand, you will lift the plant with a little earth about it, fill the hole which has been made for its reception with water and set the plant in it, piling in dry earth upon the water, the seedling will stand in liquid mud and will almost invariably survive without undergoing the weakening wilting and reviving process entailed by the other method.

It need hardly be said that the roots should be supplied with ample space in their new home, and should never be tightly pa l together; the earth should be pa l down firmly about the plant, and in the heat of summer a piece of newspaper should be laid over transplanted plants during the heat of the day to shield them from the rays of the sun.

Although such transplanting may seem to entail much extra labor, you will find some compensation in the fact that it will not be necessary to move a very large number of plants in all. It is surprising to see what large and attractive growths will result from a rather scattered planting.

Generally we sow annual seed thickly and have not sufficient hardness of heart to thin extensively, and the result is a mass of bloom born upon minute plants. If, however, you will in transplanting set your petunias, four-o'clocks, balsams and other annuals perhaps six inches apart, not only will your labors be greatly reduced but you will be surprised to see what showy and decorative growths will result.

Apart from the treatment of unavoidable bald spots in the garden it will be found that actual flowerless spaces can, by a little care, be reduced to a minimum. This is done by the simple process of keeping the flowers blooming, which is an easy task, since it consists only in preventing the formation of seed pods.

I know of cases where Canterbury bells were enjoyed well into August by merely pinching off these pods when they formed, after the passing of the flower. This does not mean the cutting off of the entire stalk with the sacrifice of some bloom, but simply the removal of the pods as they form along the stem.

Larkspurs will bloom a second time if cut back when the first bloom is over, as will phlox if the flower heads are removed as soon as they begin to fade. Pansies, so popular in the spring and so yellow and hopeless later, may be coaxed into a longer lease of life if in late July or early August the straggling stems be cut severely back.

Forget-me-nots may be kept green and fresh-looking by removal of the seed pods, but this will be at the cost of the lavish crop of self-grown "babies" which will next year more than make up for any winter mortality, and which are dearly bought at such a price.

Of course if flowers be cut profusely the seed-pod problem will not present itself so soon.

I have known of communities, where literally everyone boasted a garden, in which this fact was attested by the garden owners who, armed with scissors, went daily through their domains cutting off blooms, which were left on the ground to die because the house was already filled with flowers and there was no one in town who was not similarly well supplied.

Of course such cutting does prolong bloom, and in the case of roses adds a supplemental pruning as well, which is beneficial to the plant. When many railroads, however, offer free transportation to flowers which are traveling to hospitals or missions, it seems almost cruel to let our cutting be to so little purpose and to terminate with our own needs or those of our gardens.

Variations in Egg Quality.

Eggs when laid vary considerably in size and color, and somewhat as to shape. Size is a matter of very great importance because of the fact that eggs are sold by the dozen and not by the pound. It is generally accepted that a standard dozen eggs should weigh one and a half pounds, or an average of two ounces for each egg.

If the current price is based on two-ounce eggs, the consumer has a right to expect some reduction in the price of eggs smaller than the standard. Similarly, the producer has a right to expect a premium for eggs that are uniformly larger than the standard, provided all are equally good in other respects.

Color of egg depends, for the most part, on the breed of the hens laying them. Certain breeds lay white-shelled eggs, whereas it is equally characteristic of other breeds to lay eggs having brown shells. Of course there are to be found all gradations between the pure white egg at one extreme and the very dark brown shell at the other.

Consumers, naturally, have individual preferences with respect to shell color just as they have with respect to the color of roses or neckties or any other commodity in which color variation exists. In certain markets the preference for either white or brown shells is so general and so marked that the daily quotations for eggs show a consistent difference in price between brown and white eggs of equal size and equal interior quality.

While the casual buyer of eggs is indulging his preference as to shell color, the shrewd housewife, who knows that chemiscally there is no distinguishable difference in the interior quality as related to shell color, is looking for other measures of quality while making her purchases.

Don't Wait to Cull.

The annual culling season is here and care should be taken to start the elimination of the loafer hens just as soon as any of them appear. The real poultryman is no longer satisfied with one or even two cullings a year. He is finding it pays to make a culling every two weeks for a considerable period in order to get the boarders out of the way as soon after they stop laying as possible.

In making these early cullings all that is really necessary is to be able to tell a laying hen from one that is not. This can most easily be done by examining the vent, the abdomen and the spread of pelvic bones.

The vent of the non-layer, whether she be a good or a poor hen for the year, will be more or less dried and shriveled in comparison with the large, moist vent of the laying hen. If a yellow-skinned breed is being observed the return of yellow color to the vent will aid materially in picking out the vacation hens. Similarly the abdomen loses its soft, velvety condition when the hen stops laying.

The pelvic bones are always fairly well spread when a hen is laying but close up when she stops. The non-layer can easily be identified by this condition. The hen that stops laying in July is usually not much of a hen, provided she has had a fair chance and good management.

She can be culled by the three points suggested. In the later cullings more care must be exercised and hence more factors considered.

Seed Wheat.

Experiments at the O.A.C. show that for the best returns it is important to sow seed wheat which is (1) large; (2) plump; (3) well matured; (4) unbroken and (5) unsprouted.

In the average of ten years' experiments wheat sown at the College from the 26th of August to the 9th of September has been more productive than that which was sown at later dates.

Winter wheat sown on summer fallow or after clovers or alfalfa gives better results than that sown after timothy, buckwheat, etc.

Quality pays regardless of whether it is in the goods you sell or the goods you buy. The added price of quality products shows value received in the added service or satisfaction one gets from them. Quality often makes the difference between success and failure in farming.

If You Are a Blonde.

The changing of pretty, light-blond hair into that despised "dishwater" shade can easily be avoided and without the least injury to the hair. I am—well—past thirty and still have pretty, light hair.

Steep two ounces of camomile in two quarts of water until the tea is quite strong. After the last rinsing of the hair pour this tea well over and into the hair. Do not dry thoroughly with a towel, but rather let the hair dry slowly, thus gaining the full benefit of the camomile.

If the hair has been wrung well after the last rinsing the camomile solution can be bottled for use in the next washing. If you object to the faint odor which will remain for a few days, add some powdered orris root to the tea. The camomile rinse will not bleach or lighten the hair—it merely gives it the original shade.

Never use tar soap if you are blond. It will surely darken the hair. So will petrolatum, olive oil and the majority of hair tonics. I have found that a good soaking of the scalp once a month with kerosene will keep it clean and not harm the hair or its color. For the shampoo scrape some pure soap into a little water, let dissolve and pour onto the hair. Rinse well, being sure that no soap remains.

A little borax or soda can be used, but if the hair is very dry and brittle after washing discontinue their use. I wash my hair once a week and have never found it injurious. The injury in frequent washing lies mostly in using the wrong soaps or hair lotions and in improper rinsing.

If possible, always wash in soft water and dry the hair in the sun. As a general thing, blond hair looks its best when waved or curled. I roll mine up with rags, preferably cut-up old stockings, and if this is done before the hair dries after a washing, the curl will stay much longer.

Be sure the curls and waves are large and soft; frizziness is infinitely worse that straight hair. If you succumb to the bob, don't have the hair cut close to the head or shingled. That is for brunettes. A blonde will always look better with a rather long straight Buster Brown cut and the ends softly curled.

Really pretty, light hair on adults is rare and well worth preserving. Try the camomile for a year—you will be pleased with the rsult.

Doll Dishes.

On her birthday my daughter asked for a set of doll dishes big enough to eat from when her little friends came in to play. We went shopping for them in toy departments of stores and found such sets expensive. But in the house-furnishings section we bought from open-stock china better dishes at half the price.

We bought six bread-and-butter plates of a dainty flower pattern, six afterdinner cups and saucers, the smallest meat platter, an individual teapot, sugar bowl and cream pitcher. My daughter says any pieces left after doll days she is going to put away to form the nucleus of her own housekeeping dishes.

A Poppy Bouquet.

Do not deny yourself the pleasure of a beautiful bouquet of rich red poppies right in the house where you can see them. Early in the morning cut your poppies and be sure to get freshly opened ones.

Dip the tips of the stems immediately in very hot water, then arrange them in a large pitcher or crock of cold water and set them in the cellar for the day. They will droop at first but straighten up later and if they do not need to be moved about will often last two or three days.

Inches of Time.

We housewives are often held in the kitchen, watching the progress of whatever may be over the fire, waiting for things to get done. I used to chafe at these wasted moments. But I don't waste them now—not since I thought of establishing in my kitchen, on a convenient shelf, a worthwhile book to read at those times. I have read in this way a number of fine books that I could not have gotten through with otherwise. Busy women who think they have no time for reading will find that they can accomplish much in that line if they really wanted to, just by using their inches of time.—Alice A. Keen.

OUR VACATION AT HOME

BY GRACIA SHULL.

Last year we spent a most enjoyable and profitable vacation, and we never left home.

A quarter of a mile back of our farmhouse on a beautiful knoll is our large orchard, and at the foot of the slope is a brook fed by a spring as clear as crystal. In the centre of the orchard we constructed a "cook shack"; about twenty feet away we made a platform of rough boards, measuring 16 x 20 feet, and then pitched a tent over the platform. The tent was waterproofed and then painted a dull moss green to eliminate the glare.

This was our dining room and living room—whenever we could prevail upon anyone to stay inside. Meals were carried from the cookroom to the dining tent on a huge tray; only two trips were needed to carry the entire meal for the seven of us.

Wash water and water for cooking purposes were carried from the spring. We slept under the apple trees in hammocks or on cots and even on rugs on clear nights, but on damp or rainy nights the women slept on cots and pallets in the tent and the men slept in a large hay barn just at the edge of the orchard.

We closed up the house as though we were going away for a long visit and promptly forgot all about it. We took old, plain dishes—mostly tinware—plenty of cooking utensils, all of our old cotton clothes, dressed the youngsters in rompers, overalls and sunbonnets and turned them loose.

Horses were turned out to pasture, but the men had to milk eleven cows twice each day, feed and water the hogs, tend 150 hens and about 300 young chickens and other poultry.

Occasionally a little weeding in the garden was indulged in or a little wood gathered and cut for our camp, but not one stroke of unnecessary work was done.

The men went on fishing trips nearly every day. We women gathered, preserved, pickled and canned nearly 300 quarts of berries, grapes, watermelon rinds and tomatoes.

We made forty gallons of the finest apple butter from windfalls and sold the greater part at two dollars a gallon to tourists and summer camps. We made one hundred and sixty glasses of jelly and sold it at thirty cents a glass. Forty quarts of cucumber catchup we sold at fifty cents a quart, and twenty quarts we kept for home use. We made about ten gallons of tomato catchup and sold part of it, receiving twenty cents a half-pint bottle for it.

Our canning was all done in our cook shack and the men made trips to the cellar every few days to store it, but the women never went near the house during the months of July and August.

BUSY, HAPPY WEEKS.

We bought our bread and butter and eliminated pastry. We broiled fish, meat and fowl over a camp fire. We roasted wienies and we rolled whole picnic hams in clay and baked them in our camp fire. We used a long-handled toaster to broil meats, thus saving burnt fingers and faces. We did our laundry work at the brook and did not iron a single garment in two months. We wore knickers and one-piece bungalow aprons that had seen better days. The men wore tennis shoes, old colored shirts, old wash trousers or overalls. We rigged up a shower bath under a V-shaped tent of muslin. The youngsters went barefoot and mother and I wore sandals.

The fruit, berries, and so forth, were clear profit except for the sugar, vinegar and spices used in canning them, as we had never tried using windfall apples before, or berries and wild grapes, picked in fence corners.

The youngsters grew brown and strong. The horses grew sleek and fat and lazy—the men also—and I found time to make many dainty pieces of needlework for the coming Christmas box, read many good magazines and books, write letters to neglected friends and relatives and dream many happy dreams under the stars at night.

Altogether we were a busy, happy lot, and when the last week in August rolled round and we made a bonfire of our old clothes and sent the men down the hill to open up and air out the house for our homecoming, it was with real pleasure that we looked back over the happy weeks of our delightful vacation.

Curtain Tricks.

When hanging fresh curtains, remember that there are tricks to this part of housekeeping as well as any other.

If the thin ones have shrunken so they look like a little girl's skirt at the window, hunt up some old thin white material and lengthen each curtain from the top, covering this seam with a valance, set on straight or pleated, of some bright material in color harmonious to the room.

Straight curtains which have split with age may be ironed into pleating, then fastened back with cords or bands.

White net or lace curtains may be washed and starched and put on the rods wet to dry. Pull out the edges with the fingers when perfectly dry. This is most successful when there are two rods, top and bottom, as for French windows.

Don't try to fasten tie-backs with pins pressed in by the finger. Hold the pin firmly and pound it in with a hammer.

Iron net curtains and marquisette, damp from the line. It saves time and the result is as pleasing as when dampened.

Pongee curtains hold a nicer sheen when ironed quite dry.

White bone rings make an excellent lengthener for a sash curtain, serving also as insert for the rod.

Two yards of percale, ruffled, makes a dainty, washable and gay kitchen curtain for less than fifty cents.

Don't forget the possibilities of the dye-pot for faded curtains. Color is being used more than ever and, if this is not desired, try creaming or buffing dingy white ones. Even the "tints" added to the last water give excellent results.

We take all possible pains to wash clean our pails, pans and cans, but sunshine can make them still purer and sweeter. They should be turned up in the open air every day to let the sun's rays find their way into them.

This photograph, taken in Trafalgar Square, London, shows the opening of the first canister of Canadian peonies, donated by Mr. W. Ormiston Roy of Montreal and shipped in cold storage.

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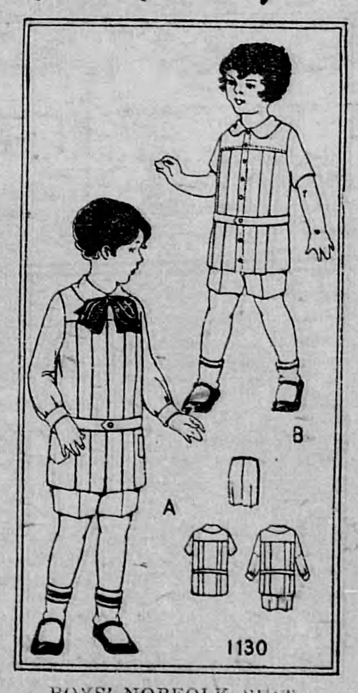

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