



## Uncle Thomas's Gardening Column

This is the third time I have mentioned extending the growing year. Probably you have already put in your second crop of beans, sweet corn and beets, and maybe a hill or two of cucumbers. Of course radishes can be planted and will produce for quite a time yet, if the soil is kept moist until they sprout. But maybe you have wanted to have cucumbers after the frost, or a fresh tomato late in fall, or maybe a head or two of lettuce and like most gardeners have sighed and wished for the frost to come later. Have you considered a small greenhouse?

A quite handsome greenhouse can be constructed with the black plastic pipe used for plumbing and readily available clear plastic. It is relatively inexpensive and if built with the idea in mind, can easily be increased in size. To start with for a climate such as ours, where you need to take advantage of whatever is available, place your greenhouse in a location of full sun, well sheltered from the wind by trees or a building. Using Ts and elbows and flanges, you can make your greenhouse whatever configuration suits your purpose, from a lean-to on a building side, to a free standing gable roofed structure. Remember to put your frame sections no more than four feet apart, and to tie them together with the appropriate pipe fittings. The other important factor is to see that the structure is well attached to its foundation, else the first wind will take it sailing off.

While you are planning your greenhouse, think of what you are going to do in it. Are you going to start some plants for this fall? - then best you get it built. Allow enough room so that you can move easily between the shelves where your plants are growing. Do you need an area where you can re-pot, store the sterilized soil for potting, and your tools etc.? - then plan this space before you start. A well planned greenhouse can offer years of productive hobby use at little cost. Remember too, that there must be ventilation, or else the greenhouse will become too warm and your plants will not survive. Either leave sections of plastic that can be rolled up to allow for ventilation as needed or if you want to be fancy, place louvered vents strategically in the gables or the roof, that can be opened or closed for the required flow of air. Whatever you do, start small. You may find that the end result is not worth the investment of your time and energy, and you don't want to find yourself the proud owner of a large, but to you, useless structure for a hobby in which you are no longer interested.

The catalogues are coming in for the fall planting trade. Don't those pictures of the perennial beds that can be

created if you buy the special package of 12 of this and three of that and four of something else with a couple of additional things thrown in for good measure, look just beautiful? Don't be fooled. The misses and I bought one of those once, she being particularly taken by the lilies in the package. When they bloomed the next year, you have never seen such a washed out bunch of excuses for lilies in all your life. They are still in the garden, a washed out faded salmon coloured clump and a nondescript off-white, the colour of day old blancmange. I leave them there as a reminder.

If you want to order bulbs and perennial for fall planting, select the colours and types that you want, in the quantity you can afford, and buy a few each year. Don't be taken in by these package offers. They are generally stuff that wouldn't sell any other way and not worth the work of getting the ground ready for them. Better still, call around to your friends and trade your extra perennial that you are going to move in the fall, for theirs of a different variety. You not only get a bargain, but you have a reminder of your friend as well. The way my memory is going, I need as many reminders as I can get.

Now the lady-editor has suggested that maybe some of you have questions that you would like to ask about gardening. If you would like to write to me, Uncle Thomas, in care of this paper, I will be happy to answer you, either in the column or by mail. I don't know all the answers, but when I'm stumped with my own gardening, there are folks that I talk to who are glad to help, and I am sure they would help you as well. I would enjoy getting something in the mail other than bills, so please write.

