

FLOWER SEEDS.

BRIEF PRACTICAL DIRECTIONS.



For the Culture and Treatment of Flower Seeds.

Flowers are the ornament of vegetable existence, and have in all ages been cultivated by persons of leisure and taste, for the pleasure which they yield to the eye and the fancy. While generally healthful and exhilarating from being pursued in the open air, flower culture is justly reckoned to be a pure and harmless recreation, which by leading to the tranquil contemplation of natural beauty, and diverting the mind from gross worldly occupation, has a positively moral and therefore highly beneficial tendency. It has also the advantage of being alike open to the pursuit of high and low—the peasant and the millionaire—the overtoiled man of business and the industrious artizan. It may be followed with equal enjoyment by individuals of both sexes, and as is well known, on every imaginable scale, from that of a single flower pot or ornamental border to the princely green-house and exquisitely varied parterre.

Flowering Plants are usually divided into the following kinds:—

ANNUALS, BIENNIALS, PERENNIALS.

Annuals.—Plants which require to be sown annually, as they live and bloom only one season.

Biennials.—Which do not bloom until the second season after sowing; remain a certain time in perfection and then die. They are produced by seed, but some of the finest double varieties are continued by cuttings.

Perennials.—Are plants which continue to grow and bloom annually.

Some annuals are called *hardy*, *half-hardy*, and *tender*. Hardy Annual (h.a.) will grow and blossom in the border without any artificial heat or protection, and may be sown during the months of May and June. The soil should be well prepared and neatly levelled, and the seeds sown either in small patches, each kind by itself, or in drills. In about a month, more or less, many of them will be fit to transplant, which should always be performed in cloudy or rainy weather. Move the plants carefully with a trowel, plant the dwarf growing kinds in front of the border, and the taller ones in the rear; as they increase in size tie them up to neat stakes to prevent the rain and wind from prostrating them.

Half Hardy Annuals, (h.h.a.) is applied to those Annuals, which though they will flower freely in the open ground, require artificial heat to assist germination, and protection from atmospheric changes during the earlier stages of their growth. Many of them are of great beauty and interest, and derive an additional value from flowering after most of the Hardy Annuals are out of bloom. The seed should be sown in April in shallow boxes or flower pots, and placed in an ordinary hot bed of stable manure. Towards the middle or end of May, many of the seedlings will be ready for transferring to the borders or beds they are intended to decorate; but previous to this exposure, it will be necessary to prepare them for the change by admitting air to the frame both day and night, or what is better, by placing them in a separate frame in which they may be gradually hardened off.

Tender annuals (t.a.) require the aid of a Green-house or conservatory to bring them to perfection. The seeds are generally sown in March, placing them in a warm part of the Green-house, or plunging them into a moderate hot bed, carefully protecting them from the cold, shading them from the sun, and watering them with a fine rose. The seeds of most Tender Annuals should be sown in very light sandy compost, and the pots well drained, by placing broken earthenware and rough sods in the bottom. The finer seeds must not be planted more than an eighth of an inch deep, and the soil must be