

**THE HOME FLORIST: A TREATISE ON THE  
CULTIVATION, MANAGEMENT AND  
ADAPTABILITY OF  
FLOWERING AND ORNAMENTAL  
PLANTS, DESIGNED FOR THE USE OF  
AMATEUR FLORISTS, PP. 3-86**

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**ELIAS A. LONG**

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UNIV. OF  
THE CALIFORNIA

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BY ELIAS A. LONG.

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*ILLUSTRATED.*

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BUFFALO, N. Y.  
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1874.

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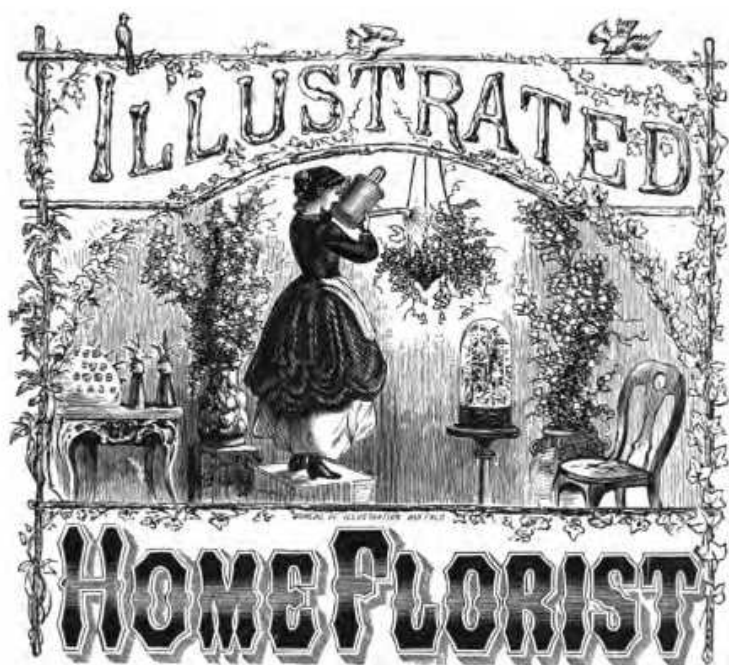
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*E. W. Peterson.*

# THE HOME FLORIST.

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## INTRODUCTION.

THE cultivation of plants for the sake of their beautiful or fragrant flowers, and for other pleasing attractions, has from the earliest ages received attention wherever civilization has made considerable progress. Floriculture, however, is an art which is strikingly susceptible to influences of climate, soil, heat, cold and other conditions, and notwithstanding its antiquity, uniform and universal progression has been impeded by reason of this fact. Any experience and knowledge derived from the attainment of a certain degree of perfection in the art, during one age or in one country, when applied to another, is practically useful only to the extent in which it finds a state of adaptability in the other. In our own country the cultivation of plants and flowers has only of late years received much attention, while from the first it has been realized that a course of floriculture distinct from any practiced in foreign countries, would be a necessity, and after years of practical schooling, we may claim to have adopted a system which in the fullest sense is American. It has been within the last dozen years, that a general manifestation of interest in floriculture, by the masses of people has been apparent, and from a perceptible awakening early in this time, there has been a continual and rapid increase, until the present time, which finds nearly everybody devoting more or less attention to their culture.

What is felt to be the greatest need of the day is, the more general dissemination of practical, useful knowledge, for acquainting people with the kinds of plants and flowers most suitable for the American cultivator, and also their culture, all adapted to the wants of inexperienced amateurs. It is with a realization of this need, that the author and publishers of the present little work, take pleasure in presenting it to the public, as a book of instructions, relative to the proper means of managing plants for the adornment of American homes. It is designed to aid all classes of cultivators, but especially those who aspire to the rearing of a higher and choicer order of plants and flowers than are common in perhaps the majority of homes where floriculture has been receiving attention, aiming to carry those who adopt its teachings, over obstacles which tend to cause failure and discouragement, and to promote an interest in every plant, bulb, seed or tuber whose culture is attempted.

A good indication of progression in American amateur floriculture is evinced in the fact that people of floricultural taste are learning to act upon the knowledge that more than seeds alone, or bulbs, or plants, are required for beautifying gardens and homes with flowers; that in the best kept gardens, are used judicious selections of some of each, with most gratifying results. No matter, scarcely, to how limited an extent the culture of plants and flowers is engaged in, it can be more advantageously done, and becomes more interesting, by including in the stock cultivated, perennial greenhouse and hardy plants, bulbs, and tubers, annual and bi-

ennial seed-grown plants—than by limiting the stock to varieties of any one class. Where the stock must be purchased from the florist and seedsmen, this rule will hold good, with most any amount to be invested, no matter how small. I have seen gardens where none but annuals and other seed-grown plants were employed, which were beautiful and pleasing during the entire summer season; and I always advise persons who expend but little for floral decorations to depend largely on these for their flowers. But where richness of color, exquisite fragrance, and strong contrasts in foliage, are sought, some plants that are propagated and sold from greenhouses, and also bulbs, etc., are unapproachably effective. Planting even a very few Scarlet Geraniums, Lantanas, Gladiolus, Heliotropes, Hyacinths and other hardy bulbs, monthly Roses, and others, add to the grounds a brilliancy of color, and afford abundant daily bloom, from early in the spring, until October, and with many, even in November, which find no equal in seed-grown things. It is also next to impossible to nicely stock a hanging basket, vase or window box without the use of greenhouse plants.

New beginners at flower growing are apt, sometimes, to have over-ambitious ideas in regard to selecting stock for their first attempts; they invest largely in all kinds of stock found in the catalogues of their suppliers, only to regret the injudicious step when the time of planting and cultivation comes. I advise those making first selections to begin by selecting varieties that are easily grown, gain all the information possible relative to the treatment they require, not overlooking the important matters of soil, time of sowing, planting, etc., and then give them the very best attention. A dozen choice plants, besides the production from half a dozen packets of flower seeds, well cared for will give more real enjoyment to the cultivator than a hundred plants and other stock left in a neglected condition to take care of themselves. The most careful new beginner is likely to meet with little difficulties and drawbacks, which, by unpropitious weather, or other causes, are to be expected will attend floricultural operations. In these the young florist who has a love for the work and its fruits should find no cause for being discouraged. The most skilled florist has always something to learn; and no mistake will be made but you will be wiser for it, and the better prepared for future emergencies. Success, gained at the expense of slight failures and inconveniences, will be enjoyed the more for them afterwards. After each succeeding season's experience you will see the safety of striking out more boldly in purchases and plans, and each year will place you higher up that scale to perfection which every cultivator of flowers aspires to.

E. A. L.

BUFFALO, N. Y., October, 1874.

**DO PLANTS POISON THE AIR WE BREATHE.**—There is a notion prevalent that the presence of growing plants in the sleeping or living room is detrimental to a healthy atmosphere by their giving out poisonous carbonic acid gas in the night time. The investigations of chemists demonstrate that growing plants do exhale an almost imperceptible quantity of carbonic acid gas, which, in very small proportions, is necessary in the air we breathe. They also show that the quantity exhaled at night is but the one-sixteenth part of what the same plants absorb from the atmosphere during the day, and convert into nearly its own weight of oxygen, thus rendering a poisonous gas, that derives its origin from various sources, into one of the principal elements of pure air.

If carbonic acid gas is emitted from plants in dangerous quantities, it certainly would exist largely in the night atmosphere of a close greenhouse heated to a tropical temperature, and crowded from floor to rafter with rank vegetation. Yet, in my experience, I have never known the slightest ill effects to be realized from night work in greenhouses, neither in cases that have frequently occurred of workmen making the warm greenhouses their sleeping quarters of a night, and even for an entire winter, which, to my satisfaction, affords practical proof that the notion is a fallacy; and the fact that perhaps no healthier class of men can be found than greenhouse operators, who work constantly in an atmosphere where plants are growing, would prove, instead, that living plants exert a beneficial influence upon the air we breathe.

## NOTES ON LANDSCAPE GARDENING ADAPTED TO COMMON PRACTICE.

As being somewhat distinct from laying out ornamental grounds, parks, etc., of large extent, the present article is devoted to that more limited branch of rural adornment, in which the majority of people outside of crowded districts in large cities are interested, namely: the beautifying and improving of grounds of moderate extent, which lay adjacent to dwellings—the planning of which usually devolves upon the owner or occupants of the place. That a marked degree of incongruity and dullness is observable in the surroundings of the majority of American homes, cannot be denied, but this arises far oftener from lack of sound and useful information, ignorance of correct principles, and through not fully realizing the importance of thoroughly executing work of this nature, than from want of appreciation of what is tasteful and elegant in ornamental gardening, in the minds of the people.

**What is Desirable in a Place.**—To be most delightful, a place of residence should be surrounded with ground of sufficient area to devote to ornamental purposes of lawn, flower beds, walks and drives, and for admitting the planting of shrubbery, trees, etc., in groups or singly. The area need not be very extensive to allow of this, and be rendered very attractive and pleasant, provided the various parts are arranged in good taste, and all operations which contribute to their improvement and after care are thoroughly performed. In all cases of improving grounds the house should be considered as the chief feature with which we have to deal, and the chief point of vision in a place. When the house is already standing, and the grounds have been improved in a measure, perhaps, it may be desirable to introduce some new improvements or to remove or alter any features which it is shown are objectionable; while with homes still in contemplation, we have the advantage of being able to arrange the various features at will, giving to each ample study and forethought, and finally deciding upon such a plan as combines the greatest number of excellencies.

Largeness of extent is desirable in ornamental grounds, but the fact that everything connected with constructing and maintaining them requires considerable labor and expense, should never be lost sight of. In every instance it would be better to decide upon a retraction of area, than to attempt work on a large scale with too small an outlay. Surroundings consisting of a fourth of an acre of land, improved in the most perfect manner, will be infinitely more satisfactory and enjoyable to the owner than a half or whole acre, with the same amount of labor and expense bestowed upon their improvement. There is such a thing, too, as augmenting the appearance of extent, in a place, be it large or small, and it would be well for all to study the subject who are interested in this matter. A garden—no matter what its size may be—will always look meagre in breadth without a good open lawn, and one broad glade of grass at least should, therefore, stretch from the best windows of the house to within a short distance of the boundary, at the farthest point, if the place be small, with as little interruption from walks, trees or other objects as possible. Harmony of parts and simplicity of arrangement also maintain the idea of size, for where everything is linked together to form a united whole, there will be none of that division of interest which tends to make a place appear still smaller. A place that is laid out in a formal manner—in the geometrical style—where all walks, flower beds and plantings are arranged with a degree of regularity, in which the various lines and parts bear a geometric relation to each other, will, unless very extensive, always look smaller than it really is, and very much less than one treated in a more irregular and natural way. Where the space will at all justify it, the walks, shrubs, flower beds, etc., should be so disposed of as to afford as many different views as possible. Walks, in which graceful and easy curves are introduced, are more pleasing than if made entirely straight, especially in small places, as straight walks or any straight lines require length to show them to advantage.

Trees and shrubs should be located mostly in groups at various points about the grounds—making the plantings heavier next the boundary fences—in preference to the style of planting in straight lines, parallel with the walks. The projections, made by curves in the walks and the points formed by angles, are suitable for accommodating groups, and these may extend back from the walk somewhat, but the inner points should be limited to such a distance as will keep the center of the grass plat open. It will be allowable, however, even in a small place, to plant here and there a small irregular group, or a single tree or shrub, which is notable for its fine form and appearance, while in large plans, with extended areas in lawn, large groups may be set with a view to breaking the distance and opening new scenes or parts in the grounds.

Flower beds are most effective if located in outward bends, formed by walks, or in chaste, well-balanced designs across the walk and opposite a bay or other window of the dwelling, or arranged, either as borders or else as numerous small beds, of round or other forms, on each side of walks, or at distant points across the lawn, to be viewed from the dwelling or street, and in other similar places. Sometimes an excellent effect is created by making them in the line of the walk, with the walk passing on each side, as shown in Fig. 14.

Where there is an opportunity of connecting a lawn with a closely fed meadow or pasture lot, which is almost on the same level, separating the two by means of a wire fence or a sunk