

cool, and afterwards put it away in glass jars or in ordinary earthenware jam pots. Tomatos thus preserved will be found extremely useful for flavouring soups and a variety of other dishes, since the aroma of the fruit will be much finer than in ordinary Tomato sauce. The preserve will also keep extremely well, and not become acid. *A. Dumas, Jardinier-chef à la ferme école du Gers.*

Home Correspondence.

Aphides and Honeydew.—I think it is not quite fair of Mr. Thompson to call the statements of a scientific observer like the Abbé Boissier "fanciful and devoid of proof." I have the greatest respect for the opinions of the late Mr. Spence, with whom I was personally acquainted, but I think he was mistaken in supposing that honeydew was always derived from aphides. No one has paid greater attention to these insects in this country than my friend, Francis Walker, and in the number of the *Entomologist* for the present month he states that the aphids of the Lime is always found singly; and Dr. Hooker makes the same observation. Mr. Walker endeavours to account for the large quantity of honeydew on the Limes by supposing that some of it might have dropped from the blossoms, but when Dr. Hooker commenced his observations the Limes were not in flower. The presence of aphides on Currant trees soon attracts attention from the blisters which they cause on the terminal leaves of the shoots, as these are always first attacked by these insects. Several Currant trees were trained against a wall in my garden, which faces the north-west. In 1868 they appeared to be perfectly healthy till the latter end of May, when the leaves were suddenly covered so thickly with honeydew that they appeared as if they had been varnished, and drops hung at the tips. I could not see an aphid or a blistered leaf upon them. In the course of a week or two the leaves began to change colour, and soon afterwards they all dropped off, and also the fruit. Most of the trees died the following winter, and the two or three which were alive in the spring only put forth a few weak shoots; no standard trees of any kind were growing near the wall. I cannot believe that this honeydew was caused by aphides, and they sometimes exist in large numbers on plants and trees without there being any trace of it. Grass is sometimes very thickly coated with honeydew, and I believe the fermentation of it is sometimes the cause of the heating and firing of stacks. *Henry Doubleday, Epping, Oct. 20.*

Yellow Bedding Plants.—In answer to "B. C.," I beg to say I would prefer the yellow Pansies for bedding, in preference to either *Tagetes signata flore-pleno* or *Tagetes signata pumila*, both of which are fine autumn plants, but they are too late in making a summer display. I have both the *Tagetes* in perfection at the present time. The Pansies have these advantages—they come early into flower, make a grand display of uniform growth, and have not that disagreeable smell which the *Tagetes* possess. Such varieties of Pansies as *Pride of Rufford*, *Cremorne*, &c., are most excellent for summer bedding. *E. Bennett, Hatfield Park.*

Lapageria rosea.—The lovely *Lapageria rosea* is seldom seen in good order. To be sure, it is rather a fickle customer to deal with at times; still, it is possible to make it an object of great beauty, either as a pot specimen or planted out. A very nice specimen of this plant is to be found in Messrs. Saltmarsh's nursery at Chelmsford, where it is planted out in an internal border, in the "French house," and is trained along the roof immediately over the path, and has traversed a distance of 36 feet. I have seen this plant frequently during the last six years, and, singularly enough, every time I have seen it it has been in flower; it is, in fact, almost a perpetual bloomer there. On October 17 I counted 103 blossoms, nearly all of them fully expanded, and several had been taken off the day previous. The secret of this plant's success is to be found in the fact that it enjoys a border formed of good lumpy peat and mortar rubbish, and that it is deluged with water from time to time. Please put the word deluged in italics that its meaning may not be mistaken. By the way, *Tacsonias* delight in a similarly made border, and the same application of water. *Thos. Simpson, Broomfield Lodge.*

Natal Fruits.—In the article on Natal fruits, reprinted in the *Gardeners' Chronicle* last week from the *Journal of the Society of Arts*, the Kei Apple is described as "the fruit of an indigenous ebenaceous plant." Perhaps it may be well to state that it is the fruit of *Aberia caffra*, Hf., a Bixineous plant belonging to the tribe Flacourtiæ. It is a thin-skinned golden, yellow fruit about the size of a Walnut or small Plum. Having tasted the preserve I can attest to its good quality. The St. Helena Peach is identical with the yellow Peach of the colonists, and is undoubtedly a variety of the true Peach (*Amygdalus persica*); the fruit is larger than the common Peach, and is of a bright golden colour when ripe. Uncooked the flesh is described as being firm or somewhat hard, but it makes a delicious preserve, and is also an excellent fruit for puddings and pies. Other varieties of the Peach are

known in Natal, as, for instance, the white and the pink Peach. Fruits of all these varieties, as well as of the Kei Apple, are in the Kew Museum. *John R. Jackson, Museum, Kew.*

The Tagetes insignis for Bedding-out.—A correspondent mentioned lately the *Tagetes insignis* as a good substitute for yellow *Calceolaria*. Allow me to endorse, from my own experience, those remarks in favour of the *Tagetes*. I have for many years preferred it to the *Calceolaria*, as more effective and durable. My garden is still very bright with *Pelargoniums*, &c., and among its best ornaments are the clumps of *Tagetes*, which have never failed nor looked shabby since they first came into blossom in July. They are still very gay and attractive, and will continue so till November frosts shall close the season. They are hardy in habit and never disappoint me. The *Calceolaria* is very beautiful for a few weeks—then it becomes shabby and quite quiescent till a second period of blooming begins. Not so the lively little *Tagetes*, which never ceases to bloom freely the whole season. *An Amateur.*

Calver's Patent Flower Pot.—We have received from Mr. F. Calver, Nurseryman, Ludlow, a specimen of his Patent Flower Pot, by the use of which he claims that "attendance on plants is reduced to a minimum." It consists of a pot within a pot, the space between the two being intended to hold water, and is consequently water-tight, the outside being also painted, to prevent exudation. There is nothing

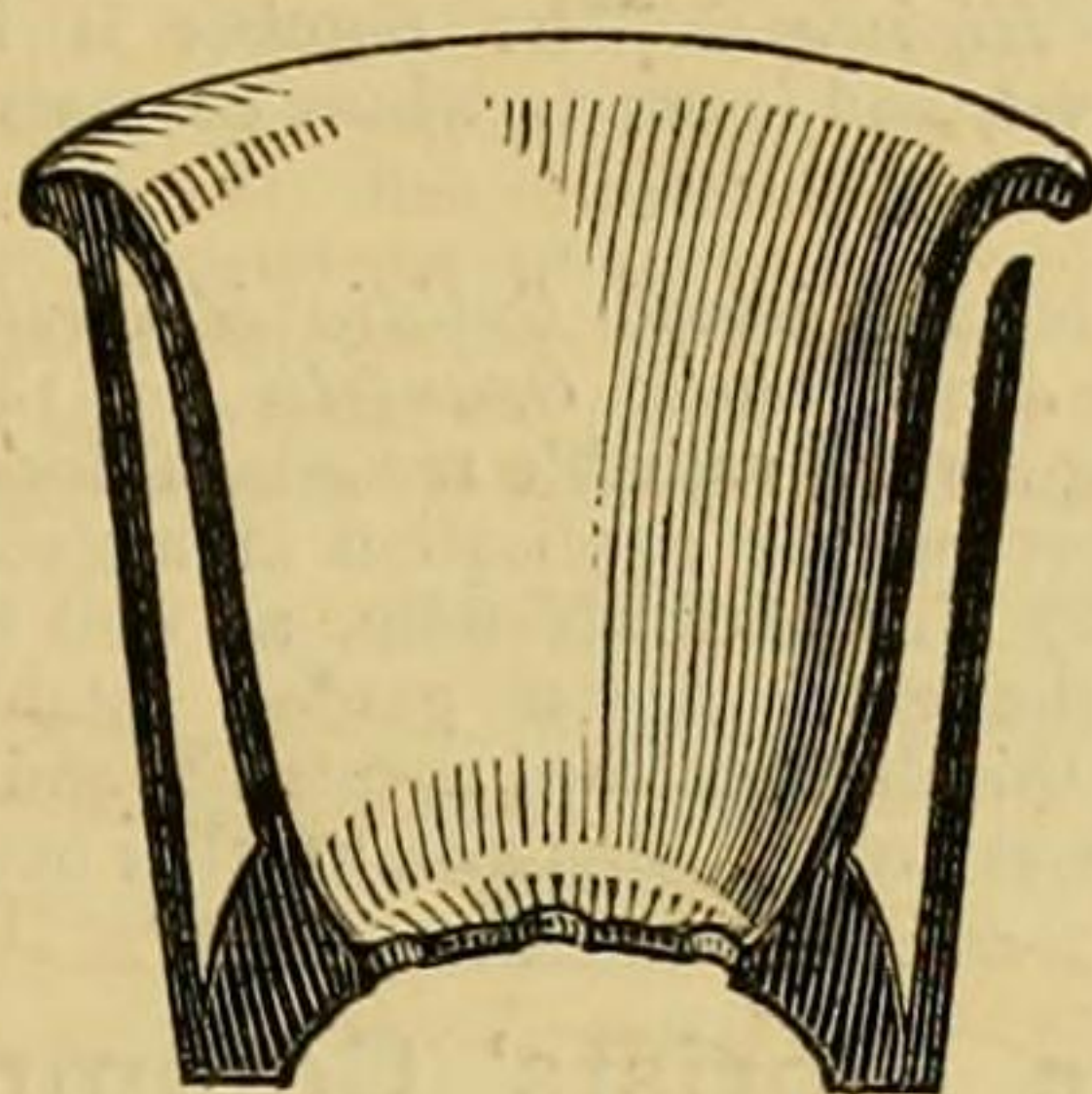


FIG. 290.—IMPROVED POT FOR SPECIMENS.

new in this idea, or indeed in this "Patent," a much neater pot having been constructed on similar principles over thirty years ago by a Mr. Robert Brown of Ewell. The invention of Mr. Brown was considered

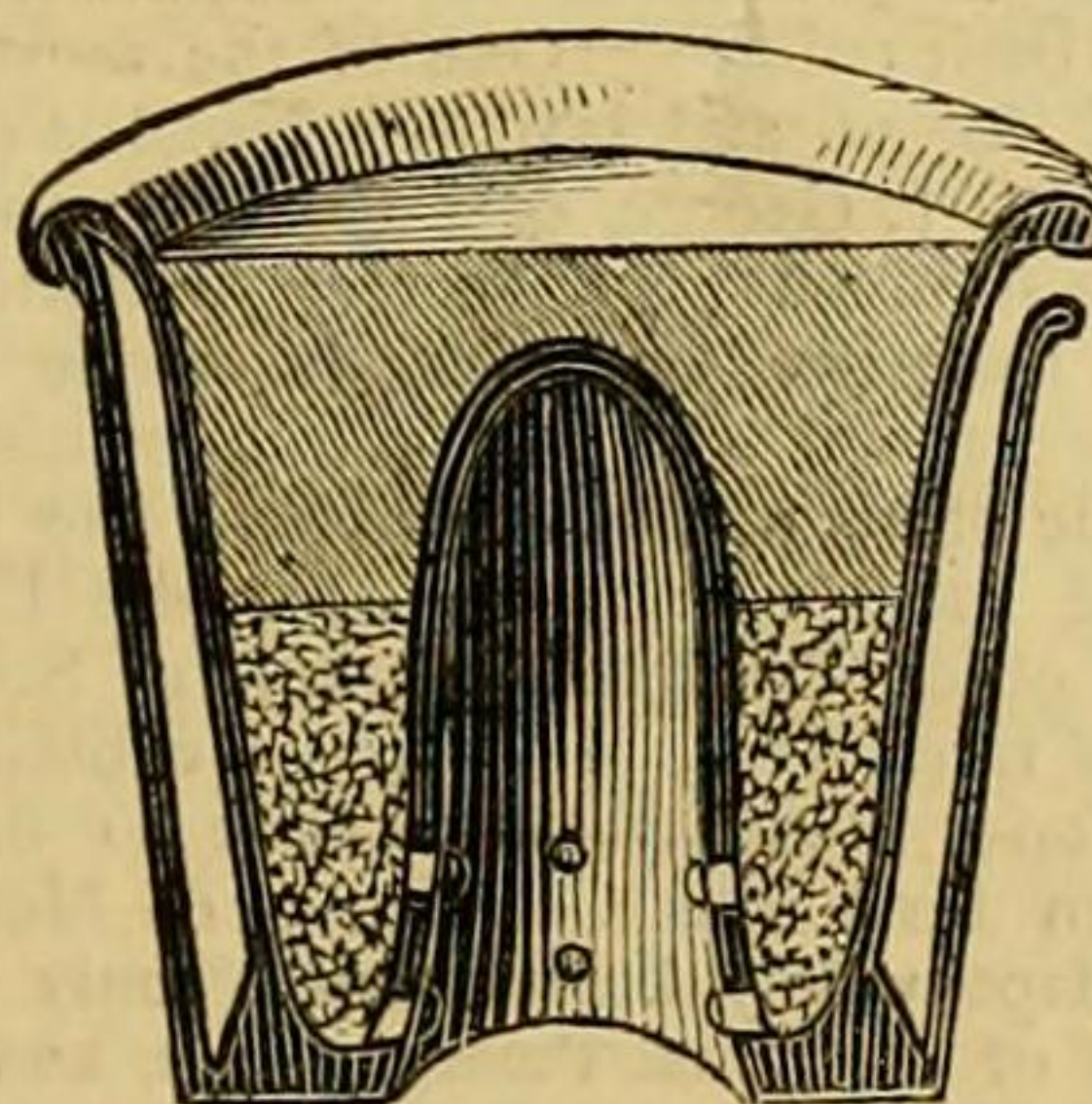


FIG. 291.—IMPROVED POT FOR CUTTINGS.

of very great value at the time it was sent out, but it is never seen in use now; neither is an improvement on it brought out in 1843 by Mr. Rendle. We reproduce the cuts of the latter, which explain themselves—fig. 290 being for growing specimens in, and fig. 291 for propagating.

Cotoneaster Simonsi.—It has occurred to me that this lovely berried plant might be well grown in pots, and be brought into service for conservatory and dinner-table decoration during the winter. Have any of your readers tried it thus, in which size pot, and with what result? *Thos. Simpson.*

Poisonous Fungi.—Your readers will remember that certain fungi caused the death of the Rev. F. Welsh at Stamford in November, 1871. At that time authentic specimens were forwarded to me for identification, which by their white gills, free from the stem, I was at once able to refer to the suspicious sub-genus of *Agaricus*, *Amanita*; but as the stems were imperfect, I could not name the species for certain. Last week, through Professor Oliver, of Kew, I received again another batch of the same species which caused the mischief, from Stamford, and they proved to be *Agaricus (Amanita) phalloides*, a well known poisonous *Agaric*. It differs materially from the Mushroom in its gills (which are always white), in its offensive odour, its place of growth, and other characters. It is difficult to conceive how it could be mistaken for *Agaricus campestris*, but I have several times known it mistaken for *A. procus*. Almost at the same time last week I received some other *Agarics*, which had poisoned a man at Hendon. These turned out to be *Agaricus stercorearius*, an ally of the Mushroom, but

considerably unlike it. The next species, *A. semiglobatus*, has long been known to be poisonous. *W. G. Smith.*

Petasites officinalis.—It may interest some of your readers to know that in April, 1871, I found in the grounds of Longueville House, Jersey, *Petasites officinalis*, Mönch. f. fem. (*Tussilago hybrida*, L.), a plant not included in the *Primitivæ Floræ Sarniæ*. *Eug. Fournier, Paris.*

Aeronaut Spiders.—If your correspondent "H. K." has an opportunity of perusing the volume of *Darwin's Naturalist's Voyage Round the World in H.M.S. Beagle*, he will find much there to amuse him in the way of aeronaut spiders. One or two quotations out of many from Mr. Darwin's book will be sufficient to substantiate the correctness of "H. K.'s" observations:—

"December, 1833: repeatedly observed the same kind of small spiders, either when placed or having crawled on some little eminence, elevate its abdomen, send forth a thread, and then sail away horizontally, but with a rapidity which was quite unaccountable. On several occasions when the *Beagle* has been within the mouth of the Plata the rigging has been coated with the web of the gossamer spider. The ship was distant 60 miles from land, in the direction of a steady though light breeze. Vast numbers of a small spider, about one-tenth of an inch in length, were attached to the webs. There must have been some thousands on the ship."

Mr. Darwin accounts for the rising of the spider by the effect of an ascending current of heated air. Such upward currents it has been remarked are also shown by the ascent of the flame of fires and also of soap bubbles, which will not rise in an indoors room. Hence, says Mr. Darwin, "there is not much difficulty in understanding the ascent of the fine lines projected from a spider's spinners, and afterwards of the spider itself." *W. M.*

Notable Gardens.

ASHTON COURT, NEAR BRISTOL.—The Courthouse, as those who have travelled by the Bristol and Exeter Railway may have observed, is of imposing appearance. It lays claim to no particular style of architecture. It takes the form of a parallelogram, and were it not for a few towers placed on different parts of the building, would have a plain exterior. The house is not all of the same age. The earliest part dates from the 13th century, and the last addition was designed by Inigo Jones. The Elm trees adjoining the Court are special objects of attraction; they are really majestic specimens, and growing with as much vigour as young saplings. The flower garden is of considerable extent, and occupies one side of the mansion, and has been of late years entirely remodelled. The beds, as formerly, have been allowed to occupy the grass, but their forms have been altered; and Mr. Dodds has, during the reconstruction, carefully avoided the introduction of hard lines, preferring a scroll pattern of graceful curves. I cannot omit one leading feature pervading the entire arrangement—namely, the proper amount of space left between the beds, although in many cases this important point is sadly neglected, and principally by amateurs, with the idea of increasing the display of flowers—a mistake which cannot be too severely ridiculed, as it to a large extent breeds confusion, and gives to the entire space a straggling appearance. A few years ago it was considered little short of heresy to underrate the massing system of flowering plants; but now, from some cause or other, it is gradually on the decline; and I find Mr. Dodds followed the same course. He used foliage plants freely, and said, with justice, that they keep up a display for a greater length of time than a mere assemblage of flowers.

Space does not permit me to give a list of the foliage plants introduced; they were, however, common enough, and within the reach of every one. The secret of Mr. Dodds' success consisted purely in the way in which he arranged the contrast. But it is only from the middle and upper storeys of the Court that this piece of artistic planting can be really seen to advantage, for here the eye catches the whole flower garden at once. What may properly be called the pleasure-ground is portioned off by a terrace wall at a much lower level, occupied principally with *Coniferæ*, some of considerable age; but there are a good many of recent introduction, and, like a wise man, Mr. Dodds selected young plants, which in the end are more satisfactory. Here I observed a plant in excellent health of *Aralia japonica variegata*, which had been, I was told, exposed for several winters past without injury. *Agapanthus umbellatus*, too, is equally hardy, growing and flowering in patches here and there upon the grass. A little in advance, and upon a higher level, stands a range of vinerias, a plant stove, greenhouse, and conservatory, 300 feet long. Some few years ago the Vines in this department, owing to a considerable amount of pressure, were severely cropped, but they are now returning to their former vigour. The conservatory contains a number of valuable Tree Ferns, such as *Dicksonia antarctica*, *Alsophila australis*, *Cyathea dealbata*, *Cyathea medullaris*, and several more of equal merit. Among an assortment of creepers covering the back wall was a fine plant of