

1933

House Plants Will Grow...

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House Plants Will Grow . . .

By Ruth Cook

Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?

THAT'S the way the old nursery rhyme had it. For the 1934 college girl's version, scratch out the "quite contrary" and "garden" and substitute "clever very" and "house-plant"—

Mary, Mary, clever very,
How does your house-plant grow?

If Mary really is "clever very" about her plants they will be doing very nicely, thank you! Most of us aren't gifted that way though, and we do well with our cleverness to have plants at all.

Plants are nice, any coed will tell you, but they freeze up on us, or they get brown and shrivel away, or they go to stalk and never bloom. Poor little plants! The minute they get inside a dormitory their death rate seems to go up about 100 percent.

E. C. Volz, professor of horticulture, suggests that plants don't grow in dormitories because they don't get the proper temperature and moisture conditions.

Girls on the campus who have had failures lay their bad luck in the majority of cases to lack of sunlight. The exception to this rule is the still greater number of plants which freeze to death. Many a plant has lost its tender life when it was left to itself in a vacant room by its mistress during vacation. Opening the window too far at night without in some way protecting the plant has the same disastrous results.

Not all of them die, however. Some of the hardier plants have lived through to downright senility. The favorites seem to be ivy, wandering jew, geranium and a large percentage of bulbous plants. Two roommates had between them this long list—begonias, ice-plants, foliage, geraniums, wandering jew and moss. Perhaps the most ingenious plant was one that twins had in their room—a sweet potato which took root and its vines clambered up even to the ceiling.

THESE successes are encouraging. At least keeping plants in college rooms can be done. Perhaps you watered the geranium too often, or you kept your room too warm or too dry for it, or your soil mixture was not good. None of these mistakes are hard to remedy.

For your next adventure into the plant growing world, Professor Volz makes these suggestions in his book, "Home Flower Growing."

The first requisite is good soil. The next time you have the opportunity supply yourself with some rich black Iowa dirt. To three parts of the loam add one part of well-rotted manure and one part of clean sand. A little bone-meal in addition will give plant food in the form

of phosphorus and nitrogen. There is no need for extra fertilizer.

Mr. Volz does not recommend the use of fertilizer during the sluggish autumn and early winter; those are the plants' rest days. There will be time enough when the buds begin to appear. The little boost that fertilizer can give, may give increased foliage and stem development then. As a safe fertilizer, Mr. Volz recommends two teaspoons of nitrate of soda or ammonium sulphate dissolved in three gallons of water.

Unglazed, unpainted flower pots are best. Be sure that there is a hole in the bottom for drainage. The pot should be just large enough to contain the root system without crowding. Too large a pot means danger of overwatering and does not allow the roots to get a foothold along the sides of the pot.

THE temperature should average 65 or 70 degrees during the day and about 10 degrees colder at night.

The relative humidity is generally far too low. It is usually 20 or 30 percent in houses, while the green-house has a 75 to 80 percent humidity. A little more moisture in the air would be healthier for humans as well as plants. Mr. Volz suggests that this difficulty may be overcome by water pans which hook over the wall side of the radiator. But if this is impracticable, water may be vaporized from a pan under the radiator, or by wringing turkish towels out of water and placing them over the radiator.

Plants usually get too much rather than not enough water. When the surface soil becomes dry, it is usually necessary to water them.

Do Formals Bore?

(Continued from page 6)

A corn-fed lass asked if we didn't think it would be interesting to have exchange formals?

Unanimous in their approval, the dormitory girls are anxiously awaiting the answer to the new question, "When is the next formal going to be?"

Indian Girls

(Continued from page 11)

lated to make advancements. Miss Dekker tries never to have every detail complete but always leaves some problem for the girls to solve. Only when they can be made to feel a desire for self-improvement will they learn to enjoy better living conditions. Toward this end Miss Dekker is working with the future homemakers of the Apache Indians.