

Horticulture.

FLOWERING TREES OF BRISBANE BOTANIC GARDENS.

LAGUNARIA PATERSONII.

NATURAL ORDER MALVACEÆ (Mallow and Hibiscus Family).

By E. W. BICK, Curator, Brisbane Botanic Gardens.

Derivation.—*Lagunaria*, a name given on account of its similarity to *Lagunæa*, a genus now included under Hibiscus, so called in honour of Andres de Laguna, a Spanish botanist, 1499-1560. *Lagunaria Patersonii* is described in the "Botanical Magazine" T. 764 (1804), under the name of *Lagunæa Patersonii*. The specific name is in honour of Colonel Paterson, a former Lieutenant-Governor of New South Wales, who collected seed at Norfolk Island and took it to England in 1792 (according to Endlicher, Prod. Norf., p. 75), where it first flowered in 1801.

Description.—(Bentham's "Flora Austr.," I., 218) "A tree, the young parts and inflorescence more or less covered with minute scurfy scales, but otherwise glabrous. Leaves petiolate, oblong or broadly lanceolate, rarely ovate oblong, 3 to 4 in. long, entire, somewhat coriaceous, white underneath when young, glabrous and pale green on both sides when full grown, the scales of the under-surface almost disappearing. Pedicels very short and angular, bracteoles three to five, very obtuse, united in a broad, shortly-lobed cup, usually persistent at the time of flowering, but sometimes these fall off early. Calyx four to five lines long. Petals narrow, above 1½ in. long, slightly tomentose outside."

Flowers.—These are large, about 2 in. across, of a delicate lavender-pink, fading to almost white; the tree is very floriferous, producing numerous flowers for several weeks; they are borne at the axils of the leaves, and quite a long succession of bloom is provided; the flowers are very attractive to bees, and when in flower a large tree will provide at early morning a humming noise similar to the swarming of bees.

Seeds.—The seeds are borne in a capsule similar to that of the rosella; attached to the inner portion of them are numerous short barbed hairs, that will attach themselves to the skin, and are very irritating, being not unlike those of the velvet bean (*Mucuna pruriens*), commonly called "Cowitch." The seeds are also similar to those of rosella.

Timber.—"Wood firm, close in grain and nearly white, easy to work, would be useful." (Bailey's "Queensland Woods," No. 20.)

Bark.—Like a number of the plants of this Order, a very fine fibre can be obtained by maceration.

Habitat.—Queensland, in the neighbourhood of Bowen, and at Norfolk Island. Bentham, in "Flora Austr.," remarks on several small differences between the Norfolk Island form and the Queensland one. Backhouse, in his "Narrative of the Australian Colonies," 258 (1835), writing of Norfolk Island, says: "Scattered on the grassy hills is hibiscus, or *Lagunæa Patersoni*, which forms a spreading tree of 40 ft. in height. It is called "White Oak," its leaves are of a whitish green, and its flowers pink, fading to white, the size of a wineglass; it is, perhaps, the largest plant known to exist, belonging to the Mallow tribe. In a thick wood, I met with it 80 ft. high, and with a trunk 16½ ft. round."

In the Brisbane Botanic Gardens there is a fine specimen between the centre island pond and the river; it is from 45 to 50 ft. high, with a spread of about 40 ft. It flowers during October and November, and although not such a striking feature as some more vivid flowering trees, is decidedly a very beautiful sight when in flower, with its dense masses of lovely soft lavender-pink blooms, that are, however, much smaller in size than that given of the Norfolk Island form.

Propagation.—From seed or by cuttings, the tree is very suitable for street or general planting, being of compact growth, attractive appearance, and particularly free from insect pests. Mr. J. H. Maiden, in the "Forest Flora of New South Wales," Vol. I., 113, strongly advocates its planting for these purposes, saying: "The tree is very shapely, and ornamental in appearance, and is worthy of being planted

far more extensively than it is.' When in Adelaide in December, 1919, Mr. J. F. Bailey drew my attention to a number of very fine specimens that are planted along North Terrace alternate with *Sterculia diversifolia* (Kurrajong), two Queensland trees that I am afraid have been rather neglected in their homeland.

GARDEN NOTES.

FLOWER GARDEN.—Although not a busy time for seed sowing, a few things can still be planted, such as balsams, cosmos, marigold, zinnias, celosia, and portulacca. This latter can be obtained in many rich colours, and pleasing effects may be made by grouping them in separate colours. To do this it is necessary to transplant soon after the plants commence to flower; they can be used with good results grown on newly planted rose beds in exposed situations, as the succulent green plants afford considerable shade to the surface and protect the ground from hot summer sun, without unduly robbing the roses.

Take advantage of a showery day to plant out flowering annuals available. If necessary, the plants can be sheltered by a small piece of leafy bush. Chrysanthemum planting should be finished; have stakes ready for staking when necessary. Liquid manure, occasionally applied, will put good growth into chrysanthemums, and amply repay the trouble with better flowers. Keep asters and dabbias moving, and give plenty of water in the evening. Remember, a good soaking every other day is far preferable to a light sprinkle daily. Dahlias must have a well-drained situation, and if planted in exposed situations, mulch the surface around the plants to keep the bulbs cool. Coleus and croton cuttings may be put in. Both these plants are worthy of more consideration than they seem to get; the former revel in a sheltered situation, while the latter like plenty of sun, but protection from strong winds. A suitable place should be: Morning sun up to about 2 p.m.

Lift gladioli bulbs as they ripen after flowering, and store in a dry place. Interesting work can be accomplished by the raising of seedling gladiolis, and many good kinds can be looked for if the seed is from a decent strain. In our climate the seedlings come to maturity and flower much sooner than in colder localities. Hippeastrums also provide a good field for experiment, and many beautiful kinds may be raised from selected seed.

In the bushhouse, caladiums should now be making good growth. Keep well supplied with water, give liquid manure about once a week, and cut off all flower stems as they form, unless they are wanted for seed. The growing of caladiums from seed is fascinating work, and fine results are obtained by cross-fertilisation. In selecting for this purpose, have one variety of good strong growth, without reference to any great beauty, and then cross with pollen from one of the delicate rich-coloured leaf kinds; cross both ways. Better results will follow from this system than by having two rich, delicate kinds. When potting caladiums use a rich, good leaf or turf compost, plenty of fibre through it; also small charcoal. Do not use a dense, close-setting soil; have it free and porous.

TOMATO SOUP.

An excellent product of the Returned Soldiers and Sailors' Co-operative Cannery at Stanthorpe is tomato soup, samples of which have been received at this office.

This high-quality product, well canned and attractively labelled, is rapidly establishing itself on the market as a culinary necessity, and is being favoured with a strong home demand.

WEED IDENTIFIED.

The Government Botanist, Mr. C. T. White, F.L.S., advises as follows on a weed send by Stock Inspector F. H. Singh for identification:—

“The plant sent by Inspector Singh is the fumitory (*Fumaria parviflora*), a weed fairly common in the cooler parts of the State. It is a native of Europe, and is not known to possess any harmful properties. In England it was at one time largely used as a herbal medicine for various complaints.”