



Late Violets

THE long, mild autumn which we have enjoyed over practically the whole of the country will without much question make it possible for November wood rovers to find May flowers in bloom. And unless winter sleet and snow fall too heavily it may be possible to turn out violets from under the shelter of dry leaves every month until spring comes again.

Winter violets seem more or less miraculous, but as a matter of fact they are quite natural, and really only to be expected when we have spring weather in the fall. Flower buds of perennial plants, whether they are woody trees and shrubs or whether they store their reserve food under ground as violets do, are almost always made up in advance. As soon as the season's leaves are unfolded in the spring, buds providing leaves and flowers for the subsequent season begin to develop at the bases of their stems, and by the time autumn comes these buds are finished and sealed up inside their protective covering of scales. Everything the plant will wear next spring is already there in miniature. All that is needed to start the unfolding process is proper warmth and proper moisture. If this happens to come in the fall rather than at its proper time six months later, it makes no difference to the plant. Violets do not run by calendar. They respond automatically when the proper stimuli reach them.

It is not remarkable, either, that they should bloom in the dead of winter, when the ground may be frozen under their roots. The warmth need not be general; so long as it reaches the buds and the little nub of stored food at the "crown" of the plant, that is enough to set things going. And the slightest surface thaw may easily suffice for that.

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