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Flowering Trees & Shrubs In India

By

D. V. COWEN

Over 40 Black & White Sketches, 44 Pages of Colour Plates.

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This is a charming book destined to be a source of pleasure and enlightenment to plant lovers in the plains of India. The authoress has become an expert in the pictorial representation of plants and this she could not have done without studying them. Without deep and loving study she could have made neither the coloured plates representing flowering sprays nor the magic pencil sketches of the habit of the plants. In these sketches, she has exceeded the generality of those who describe and figure trees, who too often give us little or no importance about their general appearance. The text accompanying the figures is full of interesting information and the colour key will enable those using the book to identify without difficulty the plants dealt with.—H. GILBERT CARTER in Journal Of The Royal Horticultural Society.

The book is packed with just the sort of information that the layman wants to obtain...the feature that makes this book of special value to the layman is the number of beautiful coloured illustrations it contains. Mrs. Cowen's consummate skill as an artist is too well-known to comment on...I have still to meet somebody who has been able to resist buying it for himself after having seen it.—The Journal of The Bombay Natural History Society.

...a beautiful production, a pleasure to handle and a pride to possess...the essential thing is the plates and the black and white drawings...presenting a considerable amount of information in simple, non-technical language for the layman.—Thought.

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I

TIPS FOR THE NOVICE

All that the average city dweller can do in the way of gardening is keep a few potted plants on the verandah. Simple enough perhaps, but even to keep a Money-Plant alive one needs a little elementary knowledge and if one aspires to ferns, variegated leaves or flowering shrubs then there are some rules which must be observed or one’s ‘garden’ is doomed to disaster.

Firstly consider how plants live in their natural homes—is it fair to dig up a delicate fern from some shady wood where its diet is rotted leaves, decayed over the years to a crumbly blackness and expect it to thrive in a tin of gritty earth put out in the blazing sun? Or to feed a cactus from hot dry desert places on rich horse-manure and gallons of water? Be reasonable and give the poor things a chance.

Now the main things the average plant wants are suitable soil, good drainage, sufficient water, light and fresh air. Many also insist on dew, which means they must have the sky overhead now and then.

**Suitable Soil.** Buy some basketsful from a horticulturist if you can. If not get a friend with a garden to give you a mixture of red earth, manure (old and rotted) and leafmould. Add a little sand (well washed if from a beach) to prevent the mixture caking and a few bits of charcoal to keep it all sweet. Ferns like much less manure and more leafmould and also have a fancy for the lime found in pieces of old mortar.

**Good Drainage.** Water must never be allowed to stagnate in a container. Pots are always made with drainage holes at the bottom, so if you want to use tins, tubs or packing-cases see that they have several holes the size of your thumb-
VERANDAH GARDENING

nail punched in the case. And that isn't enough because
the earth would soon, clog them up. Over your holes place
little bridges of broken up plant pots and over these more
bits of pot (these are called crocks). Then add a layer of
coconut fibre or dead leaves to stop the earth running
straight through and your container is ready to be filled
up with the mixture. Another thing to remember about
drainage is that it is no use having holes in the bottom if
you place the pots flat on the floor. How can the water
run out? Raise them up on a few bits of broken tile or
use metal plant stands.

Light and Fresh Air. Our good old stand-by the Money
Plant doesn't seem to mind whether it lives in sun or
shade, earth or plain water, garden or sitting room
but other plants aren't so obliging. So if you want to
keep them right indoors put them outside for two nights
a week and let them have some dew and possibly a
little early morning sun. They like plenty of air too,
but that doesn't mean a constant draught or occasional
gales or standing under a fan. Too much electric light is
not good either, as that lengthens the daily growing time
and weakens the plant.

POTTING. You have eadged some young plants from a
friend and your pots, tins and tubs are all ready. What
next? First water the earth a little and stir it up so that it
is damp right through. Now remove a few inches of soil
(according to the size of the container and the plant) and
stand the plant up in the pot, gently spreading the roots in
all directions. Fill up with the spare earth, pressing but not
ramming it down firmly. Be sure the earth reaches the
same level on the stem as it did previously. Now water
freely and put in a sheltered place for a few days.

1. Morning Glory  
2. Butterfly Pea
3. Potato Creeper  
4. Jacquinia
5. Tristellatia  
6. Plumbago
REPOTTING. This is done when the plant has outgrown its pot and is desperately pushing roots out of the bottom in search of new earth; or when the earth has become stale and sour and the wretched plant can produce only half-sized leaves. When you have learnt to know your plants you will not wait until these distressing signals are apparent.

Prepare a new pot, tin or tub as explained and see that the earth in the old pot is damp but not newly watered. Now with a weapon such as a paper-knife loosen the earth from the side of the pot. Turn the pot on its side and push a stick through the drainage hole until the whole ball of earth is ready to come out. Next, with one hand covering as much as possible of the surface of the earth, invert the pot, shake or tap and lift off the empty pot. Remember now to fish out the bits of crock from the ball of earth—the roots are probably clasping them firmly. Remove some of the old earth and trim off the superfluous roots and your plant is ready for its new pot. If, by the way, in spite of determined efforts with the paper-knife and stick the pot cannot be freed from the ball of earth then you must smash it. The pieces can be used for crocks in your next potting job so it isn’t really a crime.

CARE OF PLANTS. Water is of course essential—not too little and not too much. Never let the soil get quite dry but never water so much that a puddle sits on top.

Servants, when given the job of watering pot plants, usually dash a jugful into the middle of the pot. A small crater soon forms round the base of the plant and a great deal of the earth is washed over the rim. The soil must be kept level and the water sprinkled evenly over the surface.

Keep the pots free of ants and earthworms and the plants of caterpillars and other crawly things. A good tip is to paint the rim and base with oil paint. Don’t paint the whole pot as this prevents it from being porous. The red colouring on new pots may be bought in powder form and applied with water.

Every few weeks scratch the top half inch of soil to stop it forming a crust and plunge the paper-knife down once or twice to ensure good drainage.

Cut off old leaves and dead branches.

Large leaved plants should be wiped with a wet cloth occasionally to remove dust. It is unnecessary to use oil to give them a gloss. This tends to choke the breathing pores.

All verandah plants respond to a little stimulant now and then. Buy a pound of all-purpose fertilizer and give each plant about a teaspoonful once a month. Just sprinkle it on the soil, round the outer edge so that it will wash down to the root tips. Once a year take out the top inch of earth and replace with new soil.

When pruning a plant cut just above a leaf joint as it is from this point that new branches will sprout. When taking cuttings cut just below a leaf joint as the roots will grow from there. Take off these lower leaves and push the cutting into the soil for about a third of its length, preferably at an angle. The total length of the cutting varies considerably with different plants. Some, also, must be of woody growth and some of soft, green growth. Consider the nature of the plant when at its best. Coleus and perennial Balsam are soft stemmed until they get old, so take green cuttings. Acalypha and Lantana are woody when well established, so take your cuttings from hard stems. But the green cuttings should never be from very recent and tender growths nor the woody ones from old and inactive stems.

PESTS AND DISEASES. This is a vast topic and if I were to mention all the creatures which might attack your plants you would give up the idea of verandah gardening
altogether. However, some of the less alarming can be mentioned.

**Mould in the soil.** Small white nuggets appear sometimes. These don’t seem to do the plant much harm in the early stages, but pick them out and throw away (not into the landlord’s garden down below!)

**White furry blobs on stems and the under side of leaves.** Wipe them off with soapy water.

**Black spots and flies all over the plant.** Wipe off and spray with tobacco water and soap. (Collect the contents of your ash-trays for a few days. Steep them in water, add some chopped-up household soap, strain and put in a Flit gun).

**Caterpillars.** Pick off by hand.

**Birds.** Sparrows sometimes peck young leaves and buds. Black thread stretched across and around the plant discourages them.

**Earthworms.** Good in the garden but not in pots. Pick them out, repotting if necessary.

Possible reasons for the sudden and unaccountable drooping of a plant.

1. Is the situation right? Check up on sun and wind.
2. Do you get a salt breeze? Many plants just won’t live in salty air.
3. Is the pot big enough?
4. Have ants got in the base of the pot?
5. Is the soil mixture right—no big lumps of manure?
6. Are you watering correctly and is the drainage adequate?
7. Are there any garden pests on your verandah?

**Hanging Baskets.** Suitable plants, well grown in strong baskets make a useful adjunct to a verandah. Baskets of wire can be bought ready made; those of wood can be made at home. For each basket prepare 32 strips of wood 1 ft. or more long and about ½ inch thick. One inch from each end pierce a hole. Thread these strips together with four pieces of strong wire so that 6 strips rise alternately up each side and 8 strips form the base. The wires should continue some 2 ft. above the basket and be twisted into a hook at the end, from which it is suspended. The baskets should first be lined with moss, gunny bag or coconut fibre and then filled with soil. Trailing plants are most suitable to grow in them, but sometimes an upright, central plant surrounded by trailers is attractive. Here is a list of plants you could try: Ferns (most kinds), Dracaena, ‘Bedding’ and ‘Rex’ Begonias, Coleus, Balsam, Achimines, Young Palms, Verbena, Tradescantia, Money Vine and if they get some sun, Nasturtium, Petunia, Torenia, annual Verbena and Zinnia Linnearis.

**GROWING ANNUALS FROM SEED.** It is very satisfying to grow one’s own plants right from the beginning. Those who own a sunny terrace can, if they wish, grow quite a large variety of annuals in baskets or boxes with an outlay of only a few rupees for seeds. The end of October and the beginning of November are the times to plant the seeds and those which are hardy and will give a good display of colour are Phlox, Petunia (single and double,) Antirrhinum, Pinks (Dianthus), Carnation, Ageratum, Nasturtium, Salvia, Zinnia Linnearis, Aster, annual Verbena and Portulaca.

The seeds should be sown in shallow boxes, pots or baskets. Put crocks for drainage as you would for pot plants then fill up with finely sifted soil and leafmould finishing with half an inch of leafmould only. Be sure the earth does not reach the top of the basket or the seeds may get washed over the edge. Sow in the early evening, having previously watered the earth to a uniform dampness and levelled the surface. Sprinkle the seeds evenly over the soil—very tiny seeds like Petunia are easier to manage if
VERANDAH GARDENING

mixed with sand first—and cover thinly with some dry sifted leafmould. The depth to which the seeds should be covered is usually considered to be about twice their thickness. Now water carefully with a fine ‘rose.’ The baskets can be kept in a sunny situation but for the first few days cover them over with chettai matting (leaving room for a current of air underneath) from 9 a.m. until sunset. Three days after germination the covering can be put on later and taken off earlier. Alternatively, the baskets can be put where they get a little morning sun only, moving them out to a sunny situation later. The general rule is don’t expose the delicate seedlings to much sun until they are strong enough. Watering must be done carefully—morning and evening and always with a fine ‘rose.’ When the seedlings have 4 or 6 leaflets they are ready to plant out. Prepare the boxes and baskets with crocks, leaves and soil and water freely. Wait until the sun has lost much of its heat and lightly water the seedling baskets. A little later, with a small stick or paper-knife lift out a bundle of seedlings and all the soil which surrounds their roots. Very gently separate the individual plants, prod a small hole in the prepared earth and insert the cluster of rootlets, taking care that they are not bent up. Now press the earth down firmly and when all are in water freely. Again, for 3 days, protect from the heat of the sun and water in the evenings only unless the soil seems to get very dry.

In boxes and baskets seedlings are usually planted much closer together than they are in beds, because one wishes the full grown plant to extend well beyond the edges. Portulaca should be about 2 ins. apart, Phlox 4 ins. and Petunias 6 ins. etc.

Small seedlings are prone to a fatal disease called ‘damping off.’ This is usually caused by over-watering or over-crowding. Remove the dead clumps of seedlings immediately and thin out the remainder as carefully as possible.

VERANDAH GARDENING

One can usually buy from Horticulturists and Clubs baskets of germinated seedlings ready for planting out. They are even obtainable sometimes in quite small quantities—ample for the requirements of a terrace gardener. This certainly eliminates the risk of wasted time due to the non-germination of seeds—but it is not nearly so satisfying!

Two species which need slightly different treatment are Nasturtium and Carnation. The former likes a poor soil with hardly any manure. The seeds sometimes remain in the soil so long before germination that they rot first. Tryimmersing them in hot water for a few seconds before planting. Carnations like sandy soil to which charcoal chips have been added. The plants should be tied to stakes to keep them upright, and when they are 6 ins. high pinch off the tops to promote side growths. Retain only 3 or 4 side shoots and pinch these when they are 6 ins. long. When the buds start forming remove at least a third of them to get large, healthy flowers.

All annuals, just before coming into bloom, respond to a feed of liquid manure. This cannot be prepared on your terrace, but a friend with a garden might be persuaded to give you a little. Pay attentions to his instructions.
PLANTS FOR A VERANDAH WITH NO SUN

AGAVE. Grey-green, stiff, stemless leaves growing in a rosette. The edges are armed with teeth and a sharp spine guards the tip. The parent plant, in a garden, produces numerous small rosettes around it, which may be dug up and potted.

AGLAONEMA. A smallish plant which can be grown successfully indoors. There are several varieties, the commonest being only about 1 ft. high and having dull green, oval leaves splotted with grey green. Raised by terminal cuttings or division of shoots.

ALOCASIA. 2 to 3 ft. Rather similar to Phyllocladus but some species have a metallic hue and the under side is often of a different colour to the upper. Propagate by cutting off side shoots or slicing a tuber into bits and planting them.

ANTHERICUM. Long narrow leaves, gracefully recurved. Some are striped white and green, some have loose clusters of flowers rising from the clumps of leaves. They like a rather sandy soil.

ANTHURIUM. Two kinds—flowering and ornamental foliage. The latter is the easier to grow in Bombay. It is a spreading plant, about 3 ft. in height with large heart-shaped leaves, sometimes velvety and pale-veined, sometimes metallic. Remove the flower stalks as they come up. Old plants produce thick side stems which may be cut off and

1. Monstera
2. Anthurium
3. Alocasia
4. Phyllocladus
5. Aesca
6. Dumb Cane
7. Sansevieria
8. Begonia
9. Caladium
potted. The flowering kind has less attractive leaves but charming flowers in crimson, rose or cream which appear to consist of a single folded petal.

**ASPARAGUS FERN.** A delicate climber with needle-like foliage. Grow it up a trellis or over a wire ‘balloon.’

**BEGONIA.** Several kinds, but they all have lopsided leaves. They do well in shade and better with a little morning sun. The “Bedding Begonia” is only about a foot high, compact and free-flowering, with white or red flowers and polished, pale green foliage. The latter are not so hardy in the plains. Easily grown from cuttings or by dividing an old plant. After cuttings have struck snap off the top to force the plant to spread. Some “Shrub Begonias” grow to 6 ft. and many flower throughout the year. The foliage is either dull or bright green and the flowers hang in clusters. Cuttings strike fairly easily but a grown plant is rather delicate and should not be lifted and divided like other Begonias. “Rhizomatous Begonias” have creeping underground stems and in a garden a plant multiplies itself fairly rapidly. The leaves are a dark, dull green, low-growing and the pink flowers which appear in the cold season rise above them on straight pink stems. Propagation is done by cutting the underground stems into small pieces—this should be done in October. The “Rex” or “Ornamental-leaved Begonia” is rather difficult to grow in the plains but some types thrive. They are all dwarf and the leaves are beautifully striped or splashed with different colours. These plants also have underground stems which may be cut and divided to make more plants, a job you can do at any time of the year. They like good drainage so add some pieces of brick and charcoal to the soil.

**CALADIUM.** An attractive plant about 2 ft. high. There is a wonderful variation of colour in the broadly arrow-shaped leaves, some being almost pure white. Others are deep crimson, pink or green, conspicuously blotched and splashed. The stem does not spring from the edge of the leaf, but from about 1 in. towards the centre. They grow from bulbs which should be planted with the tip just showing. Take out over-grown plants and pull the bulbs apart to make new plants. They sometimes like being dried off, which means gradually reducing the supply of water until the leaves die back. Turn the pot on its side and when the soil is quite dry take out the bulbs and store them for a couple of months. When re-planted give them water in small doses until the leaves start growing up strongly.

**COLEUS.** Highly decorative, soft stemmed plants 1 to 2 ft. high. There are many varieties, the leaves patterned with lime-green, rust, crimson or cream and the edges plain or frilled. Grow them from 6 ins. cuttings either in soil or in water and when well established in the pot pinch off the newest pair of leaves to make it branch and grow bushy. After about 9 months the plant gets woody and straggly. Throw it out and start a new one.

**DRACAENA.** An erect shrub reaching 4 ft. Numerous varieties. The leaves are pointed ovals, some very narrow, on long stalks growing symmetrically round and up a central stem. Colours may be pale or dark green, bronze, crimson, deep purple or silver, margined, marbled, striped or blotched. Propagate like Dumb Cane.

**DUMB CANE.** (Dieffenbachia). Grows to 4 ft. The long-stemmed leaves are large, broad ovals, variegated with cream blotches, growing from an erect cane-like main stem. The juice of the roots is poisonous. Propagate by cutting off a young side shoot or the top of an old plant. Or chop the whole stem into pieces a few inches long and plant each bit. No trouble at all.

**FERNS.** An extensive family with thousands of species varying greatly in appearance. Many do well in pots and thrive if given a porous soil containing plenty of leafmold,
sand, charcoal and cement pieces. When the pot gets crowded remove the fern and divide it into two or three sections by gently tearing apart.

**ORNAMENTAL GRASSES.** Useful as a contrast to the large-leaved plants. They are all hardy and many do well in pots. Divide the clumps to make more plants. Cut down to 1 ft. in August.

**MARANTA AND CALATHEA.** (As far as we are concerned, the same thing). The varieties grow to 1½, 2 and 3 ft. All have oblong, upright leaves on stems sprouting from the soil in groups. Some are velvety, others shiny; many are striped or pencilled on the lines of the veins. Divide the clumps to increase.

**PALMS.** Palms are of slow growth so can be kept in pots many years. They like being pot-bound so keep them in undersized pots. Change the top soil occasionally and give fertilizer regularly.

**PEPEROMIA.** About 1 ft. high. Leaves small and heart-shaped, dark green prettily marked with silver and produced in a thick cluster. A variety has larger and broader metallic leaves, bronzy purple underneath. Grown from cuttings.

**PHILODENDRON.** Dwarf or climbing, leaves heart, egg or arrow-shaped and satiny. Treat like Anthurium.

**PHYLLOTAENIUM.** A handsome plant with large, downpointing, arrow-shaped leaves on longish stems, attractively marked with cream along the veins and mid-rib. Propagate like Alocasia.

**TRADESCANTIA.** Several varieties, two being very common. The Wandering Jew (or Sailor) is a trailing plant with small, oblong leaves, striped dark and light green on top and purplish underneath. Good for hanging baskets—just break bits off and stick them in the soil—they grow like mad. The other kind is upright with the same colour-

scheme. The leaves are stemless, long and narrow and grow in clusters. In a garden an old plant is surrounded by infant clusters which may be cut off and planted.

**SANSEVIERIA.** Long, twisted, strap-shaped leaves growing in clumps, without stems. They are grey-green, spotted with dark green and often edged with cream. Divide the clumps to get new plants.

**SELAGINELLA.** A group of shade loving plants with divided, fern-like foliage. Some are very low-growing, others climbers. A very common one is no more than 6 ins. high with clear green stems and leaves divided into numerous spoon-shaped leaflets. The stems are soft but brittle and any bits broken off and stuck in the soil take root. They are at their best in the monsoon.
III

PLANTS FOR A TERRACE WITH SUN

A MUCH greater variety of plants can be grown on a terrace than on a verandah. Being right out-of-doors with the sky overhead and dew at night makes a great difference. And if you get a few hours sunshine, preferably in the morning, then you can go in for flowering shrubs, climbers and annuals, too.

Here are a few plants you can try.

ACALYPHA. Two kinds—one is grown for its foliage only, the best being rust red splashed with pink. The other has green leaves and long, drooping, red tassels which are most decorative. Grown from cuttings but this takes a long time so get a readymade plant if you can. They can both be trimmed as often as you like. Use large pots or tubs—they can grow to five or six feet.

ACHIMINES. Really lovely plants which flower during the rains. The hardy trailing kind which can be grown in the plains is ideally suited for hanging baskets. They are propagated mainly by tubers, which are small and brittle. During April or May put about a dozen in a 10 ins. pot or basket filled with good soil. It is better if a layer of sand can surround the tubers to prevent any chance of them rotting. Water very lightly until the leaves appear and shelter from strong sun and wind and from heavy rain. The beautiful purple flowers appear after about 3 months, set off by the very dark green leaves, which, rather surprisingly, are wine red underneath.

ALLAMANDA. Lovely, large, yellow trumpet flowers set off by polished green foliage. This is a climber and can be

1. Crossandra
2. Asystasia
3. Peruvian Balsam
4. Penta
5. Periwinkle
6. Debperone
trained along a verandah rail or twined round the wire of a “balloon” when it will soon look like a bush. Trim it when the woody stems get a bit lanky—usually in November after the profuse flowering of the monsoon. Must have some sun and needs a large tub.

**ASYSTASIA.** A small shrub about 2½ ft. high, bearing throughout the year numerous thimble shaped flowers. There are several colours but the commonest is a dull purple. The leaves are small, dark green, pointed ovals. It is a hardy plant, thrives well in sun or shade and stands being cut back occasionally.

**PERENNIAL BALSAM.** A perpetually blooming, compact shrub which bears a profusion of attractive star-like flowers in several shades of pink and white, each with a ‘tail’ underneath. The leaves are pale green and serrate-edged, the plant is soft stemmed and easily propagated from cuttings. In gardens it seeds itself freely—small plants a few inches high can be dug up and potted. Keep it from going straggly by clipping now and then and when, after some months, it gets untidy or starts to wilt take a few cuttings and throw out the old plant. Needs light but not necessarily sun.

**BELLEPERONE.** A 3 ft. shrub which is nearly always in bloom. The flowers (actually the calices) are like prawn-pink hops, about 3 ins. long, soft and drooping. The real flower is a little white tube, but there are rarely many to be seen. Raised from cuttings, but takes time. Trim when you like and cut for vases. Needs shade and a mediumsized pot.

**BOUGAINVILLEA.** Pages could be written about this well-known climbing shrub which repays any attention given to it a hundredfold. It must have plenty of sunshine and loves heat. If it is a standard you want, select a young plant with a good straight stem. Supposing this is soon after the monsoon and the plant has no flowers but a few long leafy branches. These will be soft at the end but more woody near their base. Cut them off just above the fourth pair of leaves and reduce the watering to a mere sprinkle a day. The leaves will droop and even fall, but don’t panic. Soon you will see new shoots appearing where you pruned. Now water freely each day and in less than two weeks your little standard will be covered in bloom. After some weeks the flowers will be over and more long branches ready to be cut back. Reduce watering and repeat the performance. You see, during a flowering period water encourages the blooms but between the periods it only encourages branches and leaves which you don’t want on a standard.

If you want your Bougainvillea to climb up a trellis then of course long branches with flowers at the ends are what you need. So water constantly but not profusely enough to make too much leaf.

At the beginning of the monsoon cut back all Bougainvilleas—the standards to a small round shape and the climbers to a few feet. In the middle of the rains trim again—but wait until the stems are going woody at their bases. A green stem will not branch after pruning. Finally prune at the end of the monsoon and start regulating the watering.

Two species which need rather different treatment are B. formosa with magenta-mauve blossoms massed along the branches for several feet and the new white variety. The Formosa is not recommended for tubs as it likes plenty of room for its roots and flowers best in the monsoon, but the white Bougainvillea does well. It should not be pruned at all after the flowers first appear towards the end of the rains. Water regularly and cut back in the middle of June.

**BUTTERFLY PEA.** (*Clitoria*). A light climber with deep blue flowers and pods like a Pea. The leaves are divided into 5 small leaflets. There are also purple and white types and they come single and double. Grow from seed and
train over something. Take off the pods as they form to keep the strength in the flowers. Needs sun.

**CANARY BUSH. (Galphimia glauca).** A neat 3 to 4 ft. upright shrub with small leaves and erect sprays of tiny yellow flowers. These sprays are very like those of the climber Tristellatea. It is a slow grower but flowers young and throughout the year. Prune to keep in shape.

**CLERODENDRON.** Two of the many species do well in pots or tubs. One is a bit of a climber with flowers like little white balls from many of which protrude a scarlet star. Some have dull pink and purple balls. It can be trained round a balcony or along a rail. Cut well back before the monsoon. The other is an upright plant with large rough leaves topped by clusters of orange-red flowers which last for weeks. The flowers grow only on new shoots so cut back the old ones after blooming. They like some sun but can do without it.

**CROSSANDRA.** A 2 to 3 ft. shrub needing a medium-sized pot. It has plenty of foliage and clusters of \( \frac{3}{4} \) in. flowers with unevenly lobed petals in either salmon-rust or golden-yellow. Flowers regularly and is no trouble.

**CROTON.** Evergreen shrubs with gorgeous variegated foliage. There are dozens of varieties. The leaves, which are hard and leathery, may be long and narrow or oval and are streaked, spotted, splashed and veined in shades of yellow, green, cerise, crimson and bronze. They need morning sun to produce really brilliant colouring but do quite well in the shade. Pinch the top off a young plant to make it branch and again later so that a compact shrub is formed. Grow from cuttings and plant out into a large pot.

**ERANTHEMUM.** Small shrubs 2 to 4 ft. high with coloured foliage. One popular variety has plum, green, bronze and silver painted leaves—another green and lime yellow. They also have quite attractive sprays of small flowers above the foliage. Best in sun but thrives in the shade. Grow in a large pot from a cutting and keep pruning to make a compact bush.

**FOUR O'CLOCK FLOWER or MARVEL OF PERU. (Mirabilis).** A small spreading shrub about 2½ ft. high bearing in profusion pretty funnel-shaped flowers of magenta, pink, white or yellow. These open in the afternoon and their delicate perfume becomes apparent as the sun goes down. They are grown from the hard black seeds which are produced in plenty.

**GERANIUM. (Pelargonium).** Some lovely colours have been developed among Geraniums, from pure white to brilliant scarlet. They are a bit fussy about treatment and the paler colours do not thrive on the plains. The pale, soft, almost circular leaves have scalloped edges and are margined by blunt teeth. The lovely heads of flowers, with their distinctive perfume, are familiar to most people. The plants need protection from severe sun, wind and rain and should be under watered rather than over. Three cuttings in a 10 ins. pot filled with ordinary soil, make a fine show.

**HIBISCUS.** There are lots of colours to choose from if you are going to grow this well-known shrub. The single and double varieties are equally lovely and will give you little trouble if you see that they have large pots and a few hours sunshine a day. The leaves are always serrated but vary in size, shape and colour according to the colour of the flowers. With a little study the different types can be recognised. Prune often to get a nice bushy formation.

**HONEYSUCKLE. (Lonicera).** A popular sweet-smelling climber which does well in a tub trained over a 'balloon.' The tubular flowers are white when they come out but turn creamy-yellow as they get older. Grown from cuttings but this is a long job. Keep in a sunny spot.
HOYA. Also called Wax Flower. A light climber which does well over a trellis or balloon in a shady situation. The leaves are about 3 ins. long, thick, dark green, glossy, pointed ovals. The flesh pink, waxy flowers appear in small clusters during the hot weather and the monsoon. Cuttings strike easily and a plant can be produced from one leaf by inserting it in sandy soil with the stem down. An attractive climber but fussy about its position.

IXORA. The cultivated varieties are neat shrubs needing large pots. The tiny flowers, packed in large terminal trusses appear throughout the year. An orange variety produces really huge trusses which remain a long time on the bush. They do well in water, too. You can see the wild one—a poor little effort—growing in hedgerows. Prune enough to keep trim.

JACQUEMONTIA. A neat climber which is always profusely covered with small deep blue flowers. They close each evening and new ones open the next morning. Cuttings and layers take rather a long time so buy an established plant or get a friend with a garden to cut from an old plant a piece which has lain on the ground and formed its own roots. Cut it right down before each monsoon.

JATROPHA. The one called Podagrica achieves a height of about 2 ft. in a pot. The stem thickens goutily at the base, making the plant distinctive. The leaves are rather large and lobed, the flowers in stiff scarlet clusters. Best propagated by seed.

LANTANA. The wild Lantana is a great scourge in India because it seeds itself so freely, but the cultivated varieties have no seeds and must be grown from cuttings. They are rather like the Currant, the leaves and their smell being very
similar. For your terrace there are three colours and three sizes to choose from. All have small rough leaves and numerous 1 in. heads of tiny flowers. The tallest is the white one which will reach 10 or 12 ft. if you let it and can be persuaded to climb up a trellis, but it can be kept to any height by clipping. Next is the yellow one which doesn’t exceed much more than 2 ft. This also should be trimmed occasionally. The lowest is the mauve one which trails along the ground or over the pot. You can, if you wish, give it an appearance of height by tying all the stems to a central stick. The flowers will then cascade prettily from the top.

MICHAELMAS DAISY. Low growing plants which form clumps by throwing out suckers from the base. The flowers grow in sprays erect above the narrow leaves and have numerous narrow petals, the whole about 1 inch across. Mauve is the commonest colour but there are white and pink ones as well. They flower best during and after the monsoon. Propagate by dividing the clumps.

MORNING GLORY. (Ipomoea). A very lovely climber—the best known one has large deep blue flowers which open each morning and fade by mid-day. There are also white, scarlet and paler blue varieties which, unlike the common one, are grown from seed. The mauve Railway Creeper is related to them but is a bit too rampant for a terrace. They can be trained over a wire ‘balloon’ or up a trellis or along a rail. Morning sun is essential. Cut right down before the monsoon—they flower only in the dry season. Propagate like Jacqueantia.

OLEANDER. Few gardens are without this handsome shrub and, fortunately for terrace gardeners, it will thrive just as well in a tub. In good conditions, an Oleander will reach 10 ft. but if pruned well down once or twice a year it can be made shorter and bushier. Numerous strong stems spring from the base, ultimately dividing into three. These again branch thrice and the grey-green, lance-shaped leaves spring from the branches in whorls of three. The flowers appear in profusion throughout the year growing in loose, terminal clusters. They are white, pink or crimson, both single and double, and have a distinctive perfume. The plant likes plenty of sun and a sandy—even stony—soil. Generous watering ensures regular blooming and a little manure dug in twice a year keeps the plant strong and healthy. Cuttings up to 18 ins. long strike fairly easily.

PANAX. Attractive shrubs with finely divided leaves and no flowers, some varieties looking not unlike coarse parsley. Grows easily from cuttings and should be trimmed now and then. Likes sun or shade.

PENTAS. This is a small, dark-leaved, hairy shrub which flowers all through the year. It has pretty trusses some 3 ins. across in white, mauve, pink or orange-red. Trim to keep neat and place in a light but not sunny situation. It grows easily from cuttings.

PERIWINKLE. (Vinca). A hardy 2 ft. plant with magenta or white flat flowers rather like Balsam. But the leaves are dark and shiny and the stems woody. Cut back every few months to keep bushy. Propagate from seeds or (less easily) from cuttings. It does equally well in shade or sun.

PLUMBAGO. One of our few pure blue plants—loose clusters of azure flowers contrast well with the small dark leaves. Parts of the plant are sticky and after handling bits adhere to one’s fingers. It grows to 3 or 4 ft. but in a tub keep it down to 18 ins. by trimming. New plants are obtained from the side-shoots (suckers) of old ones.

POTATO CREEPER. (Solanum). A slender climber with much divided leaves and loose clusters of blue-mauve flowers. Grown like the other climbers but it doesn’t need full sun.

TRISTELLATELIA. A handsome light climber bearing sprays of tiny yellow flowers throughout the year. Propa-
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gated by seeds or by layering, but try and start with an established plant. In a large pot or tub, trained round a ‘balloon’ it can look very effective. Needs sun.

VERBENA. The perennial type with finely divided leaves and 1 to 1½ ins. heads of flowers in mauves, pinks and white, does well in baskets or wide shallow pots. It is low-growing and trails attractively over the sides. Cuttings strike fairly easily and should be put in almost horizontally as roots form at every leaf joint. Don’t let the plants get too lanky.

WAX FLOWER. (Stephanotis). A charming climber, its dark, glossy leaves making an effective background for the white, waxy, tubular flowers, each of which looks rather like a Tuberose flower. Needs a large tub, a support, rich soil to which bits of brick and mortar have been added and morning sun.