

WORK AND PLAY SECTION

MAKING A TERRARIUM

WOULD YOU like to have a terrarium? Of course you would, if you saw one so that you could realize how attractive it is.

But, you are asking, what is a terrarium? Well, *terrarium* is the proper, dignified word for *glass garden*—even a miniature glass garden. You might call it a plant box, or anything else, but it is a tiny garden just the same. And you can have it anywhere—at your home, at your school, or where ever you want it.

There is hardly any expense in making one, and certainly no trouble.

It may be of any size—from a tiny gold-fish bowl to a large aquarium. It may be used on a desk at your home or on the library table, or as an attractive centerpiece on the dining room table. Or it may be on your teacher's desk at school, or in one of the school room windows.

It is simply a miniature garden, or a beautiful tiny woodland glen, with such things as mossy rocks, little ferns, and wee, brilliant flowers growing in a glass container.

It is built in an air-tight container, and depends upon the condensation of moisture for its development. Any type of container will do, just so it is of clear, uncolored glass and has a glass cover. Candy jars, fish aquariums, or even a large glass dish will serve.

A terrarium *must* have a glass cover so that moisture will accumulate properly. A piece of window glass will do.

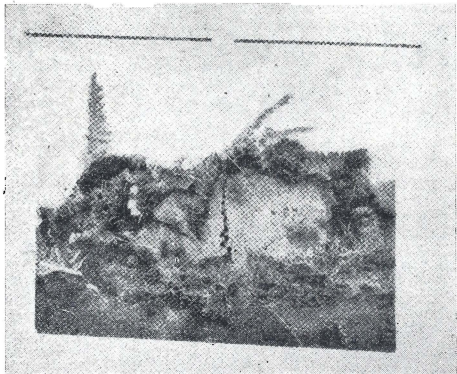
A shop-keeper who sells glass will cut it to the right shape and size for you.

In making your glass garden, you must first visualize the miniature picture you want. Then duplicate it as best you can with your moss, plants, and rocks.

Make it spotlessly clean inside. Then sprinkle a thin layer of powdered charcoal on the bottom to insure sweetness. Next put in a few pebbles. Then comes the soil.

If you care to do so, you may line the sides of your terrarium with flat moss, which can be gathered in the woods. Or you may use a layer of dry sand between the pebbles and charcoal and the top soil.

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Visualize the miniature picture you want; then duplicate it with moss, plants, and rocks.

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A leafy loam makes good soil. This you can find around almost any shrub. Dry out this soil by heating it in your oven for an hour at a temperature of about 250 degrees. This kills certain bacteria that might be present. Screen the soil next and sun it.

An inch or two of soil will do for your purpose. With the earth placed, add the rocks, being sure to have them of a size in proportion to your garden scheme.

Select thrifty plants. They must be dainty. It is not always necessary that they be rooted, for many plant slips thrive well under glass. But artistry and imagination must be used in the planting. Ferns are especially effective. Variegated *Wandering Jew* is good, and colorful coleus is attractive. Begonias are particularly suitable. Various species of both of these are found in all parts of the Philippines.

Your garden should be planted so that it is attractive from all sides, as you will want to turn it around to catch the light from time to time. Experiment with different types of plants, and, although it is more interesting to gather lovely things in the woods, any

garden will afford you many suitable subjects.

After the garden is planted, sprinkle it lightly with water. Remember that too much water is worse than not enough. These glass gardens literally take care of themselves, once they are properly planted. Moisture collecting on the sides of the container seeps into the soil, and it is seldom necessary to water more than once in six weeks or two months.

At first your garden may have a steamy effect. Remove the top cover for a little while and then replace it.

After the plants have been under the glass for some time, a few of them may look moldy. This indicates too much moisture, and they should be aired again. If they seem to wither, a bit more dampness may be necessary. If they mildew or show a very dejected droop, it is best to remove them.

Once the garden is well established, however, it will thrive with tropical luxuriance, and almost without attention, for months at a time.

A word of warning: Never leave your terrarium in strong sunlight. It needs air occasionally to keep it fresh, and once in a long time it

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inside.

We can store compressed air in tanks, and use it for many purposes. In the air-gun, the bullets are shot by compressed air instead of gun powder. In a suction-pump, the air is compressed. It exhausts the air pressure in the pipe above the water, and the pressure of the air on the water outside the pipe forces it up inside.

QUESTIONS

1. What is the commonest but at the same time the most valuable thing in the world?
2. To what extent is air used in the world's activities?
3. What must all plants and animals have?

requires the lightest kind of sprinkling, but not too much water, not too much air, and not too much sunlight.

The terrarium prefers to be let alone most of the time. And in this it has the advantage over other gardens. It thrives best where it is reached by filtered light.

If planted artistically, a terrarium will be an endless source of delight to everyone who sees it. And it will last for two or three years.