DELPHINIUM AND AQUILEGIA OR LARKSPUR AND COLUMBINE.

Alfred Meier, Madison.

These are two of our old fashioned and hardy perennials. They belong to the Crowfoot family. In the wild state, they are worthy of much praise, but under the influence of culture they have both developed until they rank high as standard hardy perennials for grooping or for the hardy border. Being very hardy they will withstand our severe climate well and when once well established will withstand weeds and grass which is especially true of delphinium, and so can be well recommended for the farmer’s garden or lawn.

Fine clumps of larkspur may often be seen growing in the lawn apparently in the sod but of course they cannot be expected to compete with those which have received the best of care and treatment. They appear best in groups or singly in the hardy border.

DELPHINIUM OR LARKSPUR.

Delphinium derives its name from the Greek, a Dolphin, as the flower resembles the fish of that name. There are about sixty species in the north temperate zone. We have three species native to this country:

D. exaltatum, or tall larkspur, two to five feet high, and is a purplish blue; it flowers in July and is found in the borders of woods.

D. tricorne, or dwarf larkspur six inches to three feet high, bright blue, sometimes white, and flowering in April and May; root a tuberous cluster; found in the northern states; much used and best for rock work; in midsummer it will die down and appear as though dead.

D. azureum, one to two feet high, sky blue or whitish, flowering in May and June; these are often used in cultivation, especially in the wild garden; it is found from Wisconsin to the Dakotas and south.

There are many other varieties in cultivation derived from various sources and ranging in color—from pure white and a
Perennial Larkspur. The specimens in the foreground are of a double flowered variety.

Herbaceous perennial borders.
beautiful lavender up through every shade of blue to deep indigo and purple, and several shades being blended in some varieties. There is also a variety Zazil, introduced from Persia, which has beautiful large yellow sulphur blossoms; it flowers in June and July.

The principal species in cultivation are:

*D. formosum*, derived from Asia Minor; flowers blue with indigo margins; flowers in June and July; very popular especially for groups; growing from two to five feet high. This species is the foundation for many of the beautiful varieties now in cultivation. It has been used for seed parent for cross fertilization with other species, producing some of the finest Hybrids.

*D. Hybridum*, also stands high on the list; flowers blue, white bearded; flowers in June and August; origin in mountains of Asia.

*D. grandiflorum*, two to three feet high; flowers large, blue varying to white with often blue and yellow on the same flower; flowers in July and August; origin Sibe-ia.

*D. Chinense*, is a variety of *D. grandiflorum*; originated in China; very popular garden form; both single and double flowers, the double known as Breekii.

There the many other species too numerous to mention in such a short paper. These species are again divided into many varieties of which our principal growers have their favorites and own introductions.

**PROPAGATION.**

They are propagated in three different ways by root division, by cutting and by seed.

First—By root division in fall or spring; cut down plant in July or August, then they break up freely from the roots. By careful division a number of off-sets can be obtained; potted in small pots in fine light soil, placed in a cold frame and by spring make good plants for planting out.

Second—By cuttings in early spring when growth is three or four inches high or from the second growth which comes after the flower stems are removed; root in a frame, shaded, no bottom heat being required; sprinkle often during dry, hot weather and when rooted treat like seedlings.
Third—By seed sown in greenhouse or hot-bed in March or earlier; the best time to sow the seed is as soon as ripe as it hardens its seed-coat and is then hard to germinate; transplant as soon as large enough and give plenty of room to grow; they can be set out in a permanent position if protected. Plants started in March will flower in the same season.

CULTIVATION.

It thrives in any good garden soil but is improved by a deep, rich, well manured, sandy loam exposed to the sun. Deep preparation of the soil is important. To get the best results they should be lifted every three or four years, the soil well manured and dug deeply, the plants divided and reset, but this is not necessary unless fine flowers are desired, as when once well developed they will withstand much neglect. They should have a dressing of manure every other year. Two good crops in one season may be obtained by cutting away the flower stems as soon as the flowers have faded but no seed will be produced this way as the second crop does not have time to mature. In the fall cover with a few inches of leaves or manure.

AQUILEGIA OR COLUMBINE.

Aquilegia is another well known and popular flower from the same order as Delphinium. There is one species of this found in Wisconsin, the common Columbine of America.

A. Canadensis, well known for its bright scarlet, yellow flowers from April to July. There are some beautiful hybrids from this and the blue species. There are also several other species native to this country:

A. Joesii, found in Wyoming and Montana.
A. formosa, a variety of Canadensis, with brick red and yellow flowers; found west of the Rockies.
A. longissima, a pale yellow flower found in the ravines of southwest Texas into Mexico.
A. chrysantha, a well known and popular variety which differs from the others in its yellow flowers standing erect instead of drooping; found in Mexico and Arizona; flowers from May to August; it is three to four feet high.

There are many other species from Siberia, Japan and Europe, the best known and most popular being the common columbine
German Iris. From a photograph after the specimens had been in transit for 48 hours, showing that Iris blooms may be shipped.
of Europe (Vulgaris); flowers violet. There have been many varieties derived from this both single and double, ranging from pure white to deep blue also variegated and yellow.

PROPAGATION.

Columbine can be propagated by division but best by seed. It is hard to get absolutely pure seed except from wild plants. The various species in cultivation mix or hybridize very easily and are often very inferior to their parent plants. The seed should be sown in pans or cold frames in March or in the open air in April or May. As most of the seed of the columbine are slow in germinating the soil must be kept moist on top until the young plants are started. If in a cold frame they should be shaded with cheese cloth to retain the moisture and yet admit a circulation of air, which will prevent the young seedlings from damping off. When seedlings are large enough pick them out into another frame or set them in their permanent places, but shade them for a few days.

CULTIVATION.

This hardy perennial prefers a light, sandy and moist soil, well drained and exposed to the sun; but many stronger species, when of good size, can be planted, and do well, in heavy garden soil.

THE IRIS FAMILY.

W. J. Moyle, Union Grove.

The iris has been a popular flower with people from the earliest history. It seems that the Greeks named it after the rainbow on account of its many brilliant hues and colors. And I've not a particle of doubt but what Moses as he lay in his ark of bulrushes on the Nile was surrounded with iris and calla lilies or he would never have been found by Pharaoh's daughters, they being led thither by the beauty of the flowers which ever since the dawn of creation have held such an important part