On a Curious Form of Kohl Rabi

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On a Curious Form of Kohl Rabi. By JOHN SADLER, Curator,
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(Read Nov. 11, 1880.)

In the beginning of October 1880 I received from Mr George Pollock, nurseryman and seed merchant, Stirling, a peculiar specimen of the common purple *Kohl Rabi* which he had met with in a garden in the neighbourhood.

At first I had the plant placed in a shallow basin of water—the water just covering the roots. In this position the plant continued to increase in size, so that many of the swollen lateral branches, of which there were eighteen, were by 11th November 1880 about the size of turkeys' eggs. At that date I had it photographed, and then planted in a flower-pot amongst good soil and placed in a cool frame, in the hope that it would flower and produce perfect seed next summer.

In August 1881 I measured the plant, which was now growing in the open air. There were eighteen side tuberous branches, ten of which had leafy shoots varying from $2\frac{1}{2}$ to 3 feet in length, and bearing abundance of flowers and fruit. The largest tuberous branch was $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches in circumference. I had some of the ripe seed sown and placed in the greenhouse, where they soon germinated. I had also cuttings from the leafy shoots put in at the same time, which struck freely. The seedlings and cuttings which were planted out under "hand-lights" are now (3d February 1882) very healthy, but whether they will perpetuate the peculiarity of the parent it is very doubtful. If this, however, could be accomplished it would be a decided addition to the kitchen garden, representing, as it does, exactly what the Brussels sprout is to the common cabbage. The *Kohl Rabi* of Ger.; *Brassica Caulo-rapa communis* of D.C.; *Chau-rave* of Fr.; turnip-cabbage and turnip-borecole of British authors, is a hardy biennial, and can withstand the severest frost and drought. It is a plant which is seldom met with under cultivation in British gardens, although it is extensively grown in some parts of Germany, and is also

frequently "forced." In these times of agricultural depression it is worthy of a trial on light soil, where in some seasons it is difficult to rear turnip, although I doubt if ever *Kohl Rabi* will supersede turnip for nourishing qualities. The best sorts of *Kohl Rabi* are the early white and early purple Vienna.

Note.—The Society is indebted to the proprietors of the *Gardeners' Chronicle* for the plate, and to Prof. Dickson for the photograph from which it is taken.

I. *Report on Temperatures and Open-Air Vegetation at the Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh, from August 1880 till July 1881.* II. *Record of some of the Plants Killed or Injured by Frost during the Winter of 1880–81, at the Royal Botanic Garden.* III. *Table of Register of Spring Plants showing dates of Flowering in 1880–81, at the Royal Botanic Garden.* IV. *Extracts from Correspondents as to the Effects of the Winter of 1880–81 in different parts of Scotland.* By JOHN SADLER, F.R.Ph.S., Curator of the Royal Botanic Garden.

In my reports for 1878–79 and 1879–80, I stated that these winters were the most protracted and severe that we had experienced for many years. That of 1880–81, however, has proved to be the longest and severest winter that we have experienced since that of 1860–61. The autumn of 1880 was very favourable for the maturing of the year's growth of trees, shrubs, and plants generally, which enabled them to withstand the rigours of the season. The winter set in about the middle of October, and lasted almost without a break until the middle of March 1881. The lowest temperature at the Garden occurred in the middle of January, when the thermometer fell to 0° on the 17th. Much lower temperatures, however, were registered in several parts of Scotland, especially in the south. At Blackadder, in Berwickshire, the thermometer fell on the 17th January to 22° below zero, and on the 23rd to 24°. (See correspondence.)

I.—TEMPERATURES.

August 1880.—During the month the lowest temperatures were on the 2nd, 45°; 3rd, 47°; 7th, 45°; 21st, 43°; 22nd 47°. The highest day temperatures in the shade were on the 8th, 74°; 10th, 73°; 11th, 88°; 13th, 76°. The weather during the month was remarkably dry, calm, and bright, and accordingly was most favourable for the maturing and ripening of fruits and seeds, as well as of the young wood of the past summer's growth. The winds were mostly from an easterly direction, but their force was so light

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