

The Ornamentation of Rural Grounds.

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The art of ornamenting.

Talent employed.

Popular education.

Materials used.

The laying out of grounds.

Planting for season effect.

Object in view.

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The art of ornamenting home grounds has now reached a stage of perfection not attained by any of the ancients - It is a modern exercise of taste and result of civilization. Though it has been growing in America ever since the country was taken possession of by the English, it was not until recent years that it has made any marked progress.

The American people inherited an ardent love for rural life and its pursuits from their English ancestors: but being placed in a new country little time, until lately, was found to cultivate a taste for rural embellishments: However we are a home loving people and he who loves his home will assemble about it the comforts and elegancies of life which not only increase his own enjoyments, but strengthens his patriotism and makes him a better citizen.

Professional talent is seldom employed in this art because almost everyone fancies himself able to plan and arrange his own residence, and certainly he is capable of so doing if he has a practical knowledge of the

few principles and suggestions that can be given together with good judgment and common sense. Then let each do this ornamenting for himself; and he will find that no recreation can afford the mind more permanent satisfaction than that of cultivating the earth and adorning one's own property. "God Almighty first planted a garden; and indeed it is the purest of human pleasures." Says Lord Bacon. And ever since Adam was shut out from the garden the desire to return to it seems to be implanted in every man's heart.

What is needed above all else, in regard to landscape gardening, is popular education. Every citizen that owns an acre of land must practice the art to make it a success. Thus in beautifying his own home he increases the happiness of his family, and improves taste, and adds loveliness to the whole country. For this art, unlike so many others, has no barrier narrower than the blue heavens.

One of the most common errors, in this art, is to attempt to put too much in a small space; owing to the fact that most people have too great a desire for

display and too little for purity, simplicity, and general effect. To create a beautiful scene one must have a clearly foreseen end and result in view. And the material, to a certain extent, must be from all climates. This will give to the scene a richness and variety never found in any one portion of nature. But you will say that the farmer with a small income and little spare time cannot afford such expensive decorations? This is certainly true when you remember that but few people, of any class, can buy expensive house plants and fewer yet can afford to pay for costly yard plants. Such people as these must learn that there is a way of beautifying their grounds without going beyond their means. And this may be done by exercising taste and judgment in planting it; and by attempting only the simple and natural. Let him first find what is at hand that is attractive or can be made so and what is disagreeable or out of place. Add to this more if necessary and seek to embody in it all his ideal

of a rural home by removing everything discordant, by utilizing forms pleasing in their expression, in their outline, and fit for the abode of man. If the man who cannot afford any more expensive decorations is wise and wishes to be happy, he will not be long in learning that "there is beauty to the mind as well as to the eye" and he will not envy his more fortunate neighbor for embellishments which though they are the most costly are commonly the least enjoyed. The spectator will often turn from a scene, of pride and extravagance, displeased and unsatisfied, to view, with unspeakable joy, the humble dwelling of a laborer surrounded by tokens of lowly industry and thrift.

The laying out, in the most attractive way, of the grounds surrounding a dwelling is a problem of importance. This may seem strange to many who are in the habit of ornamenting in a haphazard way but indeed it is quite as necessary to have a definite plan for this purpose as for the construction of a house. The plan must

first be adopted to the size and character of the grounds: Then of materials essential to obtain results desired are the grasses, herbaceous plants, shrubs, climbers, and trees. Of these the first is one of the most important. No dooryard is considered begun without grass, and what is more beautiful and refreshing than soft green turf?

The herbaceous plants may be used for both foliage and flower effect and planted in formal beds, in borders, or scattered over the lawn and in nooks and corners as if placed there by nature.

The shrubs are always valued for foliage effect and many, during certain seasons, for flower effect. They are used in masses for back grounds or screens, and in small groups or single specimens in the front yard. In selecting these, as well as all other plants, the person must study the character and habit of the plant: he must know whether or not it will produce certain effects during certain seasons; and whether it will serve in all ways

the purpose for which he wants it?
 Too great a variety of any class of plants
 is not desirable. Each member of the
 family need not have two or three favor-
 ites. Of course each of these may be beau-
 tiful in itself but the whole reminds
 one of crazy patchwork.

Climbers
 may be either herbaceous or woody
 and are used to cover the walls of
 buildings, to train over porches, sum-
 mer-houses, and unsightly objects.

Trees should be both evergreen and decidu-
 ous and agreeably grouped about the walks
 and drives so as to conceal all undesirable
 views and throw others into stronger
 light, also to protect the house against
 summer sun and winter winds. Those
 points of view that are of special interest,
 from a certain window or veranda, may
 easily be preserved by letting the trees
 and shrubs radiate from these points.
 Perhaps there are beautiful hills, a
 valley, a cool refreshing stream, or other
 objects beyond, that might just as well
 as not be kept in sight. As far

as screening unsightly views is concerned let the farmer simply see that he cannot view all his neighbor's backbuildings, barnyards, etc from his parlor window or veranda. Even such buildings of his own may be screened from the house except, if he so desires, from the kitchen window or porch. All of this screening may easily be done by simply placing at certain points, groups of native trees, and yet not destroying but adding much to the beauty of the place. Besides all this trees are valued for their effect during different seasons: in Spring they indicate joy; in Summer shelter and music; in Autumn melancholy thoughtfulness; and in winter the deathlike sleep of all things. If a farmer needs other inducements than these to plant trees let him consider the value in dollars and cents they add to his place.

In grouping endeavor to produce beauty, fullness, and softness of outline both against the ground and sky. This outline, to be pleasing, must be very

irregular and not, as in ancient times, forming some geometrical figure. Then place the smaller and more formal specimens near the house and the large and more picturesque ones in the background where there may be pleasure-grounds and baskets and seats of rustic work.

The full effect of trees and shrubs is best brought out by leaving as much open lawn as is consistent with the size of the place. And if there is, in this, one or more long stretches, almost broken by the plants coming near together at one or two points, it will serve to make the lawn look larger and more interesting by arousing a curiosity to know what is beyond. Also let plants be so arranged about the foundation of the house that it will seem to rise naturally out of its surroundings.

Trees and shrubs of a striking habit, either in color or form, must be used sparingly if at all. The Catalpa and Lombardy poplar have these characters. But on a large place

one or two may be safely used. - more shows bad taste. The American elm is an example of those that may be freely used for it is the handsomest shade tree we have. Various kinds of trees give certain impressions. For instance the willow suggests water and the cypress lowland. They may also be grouped in such a manner as to bring out certain impressions.

Walks and drives are of course indispensable to a place, and without them the scene would have that expression of solitude which would otherwise be inseparable from it. They must be agreeably curved and inconspicuous.

Clearly preconceived effects are contrived for Spring, Summer, and Autumn, but little do people think of the effect during winter when a more distinct treatment is needed than in any other season. If the whole lawn cannot be treated for winter effect let a part of it, at least be so planted that the effect would be charming through the winter, when

one is kept, so much, in doors. Evergreens are the principal materials used for this purpose, and, if used aright they will make bleak spots cozy and also screen unsightly details. The background should be composed largely of evergreens, and a rich mass will furnish a beautiful foil for the delicate tints of smaller evergreens and deciduous plants. The plants nearest the background should also be evergreen interspersed with white birches which will brighten the whole scene. Farther yet to the front should be an admixture of evergreens of medium and dwarf size but always of an interesting character. For winter effect there is nothing more handsome than the weeping Hamlock spruce and the weeping Norway spruce. They form a striking contrast and should occupy a place near the middle of the grounds. In the foreground should be found choice plants.

When analyzing the constituents of winter effect on the lawn remember the many beautiful forms and colors of naked

stems and bare branches of deciduous trees. The white stemmed birch, as already mentioned, contrasts beautifully with the green background, in form as well as in color. Other deciduous plants give charming effects, and may stand in groups, by themselves, or in the neighborhood of evergreens. What can be richer in color than the numerous crimson shoots of the red dogwood, or this mixed with the golden willow, contrasting crimson shoots with yellow. The golden barked birchen also contrasts nicely with them. The forms of deciduous trees are also attractive in their winter guise. None of our oaks fail in this and the white elm must not be forgotten in planting for effect during any season of the year. It is certainly the queen of the forest and well characterized by Dr. Holmes as "a forest waving on a single stem."

Taste must be shown in selecting everything that goes to make up a lawn: and to intelligently select the various classes of plants, one must become a student of nature. He must

actually learn to love each plant from his heart. Otherwise it will not get the care needed to make a perfect growth.

Among the universal and inherent beauties to be sought after is unity, harmony, and variety. All the objects that go to make up the scene must be united into a single harmonious whole. And with nature we always find a variety afforded by meadow, light and shade in color, sunshine and shadow, foliage and flower, sparkling water, and many other forms that attract us. And without the proper distribution of these no satisfactory results can be obtained. Thus as Pope has said. -

"He gains all points, who pleasingly confounds,
Surprises, varies, and conceals the bounds.
Calls in the country, catches opening glades;
Joins willing woods, and varies shades from ^{shades} ~~from~~
Now breaks, or now directs the intending lines,
Paints as you plant, and, as you work designs."