

Some Ornamental Shrubs
Adapted to the Climate of
Kansas.

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Some Ornamental Shrubs, Adapted to the Climate of Kansas.

When an eastern man passes through this state he is surprised at the rapid strides the country has made. He expected to see a broad trackless prairie dotted here and there with a sod-house or a hay-stack, but he finds instead a well cultivated prosperous farming community with good substantial farm-houses and out-buildings. These he notices as he passes along on the train, but when he stops to make closer observations he finds that many of the homes are unadorned by trees, shrubs, or Climbing-vines.

I need not dwell upon the necessity of making home attractive, - you will all admit that to be one of the first things to be sought for when a person "settles down for life". Among other effects it tends to make us more patriotic. The love of country is inseparably connected with the love of home; the more we embellish our yards and grounds the dearer home life becomes to us. Who can blame the farmer-boy who is compelled to spend the most of his time on a bleak hill with but a few cotton-woods to give a shade - not even an apple tree under which to spread himself out on a warm summer day, nor a rose with which to bedeck himself - who, I say,

can blame him for wanting to leave the place where he was born and bred? There is no employment that affords more pleasure than that of adorning our own grounds. He is at once educating and increasing the patriotism of himself and neighbors and adding value to his homestead. The one thing that deters many thrifty farmers from decorating their grounds with trees and shrubs is the expense incurred with the uncertainty of getting any thing that will live and thrive in this climate. Many men have been induced by fruit-tree peddlers to purchase a number of ornamental shrubs, paying extravagant prices for them, with no thought as to the adaptability to the soil or climate. There is an endless list of beautiful shrubs but when one comes to test them he finds comparatively few worthy of attention in our locality. It is no proof that because a plant is hardy in some of the eastern states it will be so here. The magnolia flourishes as far north as New York, where the winters are colder than here, but it cannot stand the sudden changes of our climate.

Again, among those that prove hardy here there are a great many that do not have enough good qualities to make them desirable for the farmer to grow. Someone has said that the shrubs which are the most commonly known and cheapest are generally the finest or at least have the greatest number

of desirable qualities. It is not easy to say what is the most essential qualities of ornamental shrubs until we know what kind of a place we have to embellish, whether the plant is to be isolated or connected with others, whether large or small, whether to be used singly or in masses - these and many more questions must be answered. Size and form are the first to be considered. A shrub with an ill shape has to have a great many other qualities to make up for this defect. Again, the foliage should be such as to entirely cover the stems from early spring until frost. Another desirable quality is a compact body of stems and to be free from suckers. If a shrub has all these and in addition gives us a goodly number of beautiful fragrant flowers, we may put it down as an exceptionally good one. One who has given the subject a careful study says that if we bear in mind these essential qualities, and look over any good list of shrubs, to select a half dozen of the best, it will be found that our most common materials, such as the lilacs, honeysuckles, syringas, snowballs, spireas, and weigelas are the ones which approximate most nearly to the perfect shrubs; and we shall find it difficult no matter what expense we are willing to incur, that equal the six genera in beauty of form, foliage or bloom, though single shrubs may be named that will excel some

of them in many qualities. Professional gardeners as well as amateurs are ever on the look-out for new forms and variations but it is best for the man with small grounds and limited capital to let these men do the experimenting and profit by their experience.

In beginning a list of desirable shrubs we know of none that deserves to be placed before the lilac. Many homes are made beautiful by being surrounded by this one shrub - the home of our beloved poet Longfellow being the most noted. Its home was originally the valley of the Danube in Persia. Some of the varieties grow to a height of fifteen feet but in most cases it is desirable to keep them in the shrub form. There is almost an endless number of varieties but some of the most common are probably the best.

Syringa Vulgaris - common lilac.

This is perhaps the best known of any of the ornamental shrubs. Its blossoms are the standard lilac color with which all others are compared. It often grows ten feet high and as many feet broad. It blooms in April.

S. vulgaris, var. *alba*.

One of the best white lilacs, with compact flowers

and beautiful foliage. It is best to grow it in the tree form.

S. josikaea.

This is a native of Transylvania. It is a fine species, of tree like growth with beautiful dark shining leaves. It blooms in May after the others are gone.

S. gigantea.

The largest of the lilacs. Flowers a dark reddish purple, nine to twelve inches long and eight inches broad. The leaves keep their color well in autumn.

The Honeysuckle - *Lonicera*.

There are two classes of honeysuckle, the climbers and those of upright growth; in this we shall speak only of the latter. The finest of these is undoubtedly

Lonicera tartarica, var. *grandiflora*.

It is one of the very earliest plants to leaf out in the spring; its graceful form and luxuriant growth of leaves would make it one of the most desirable shrubs without the flowers and fruit. It may be forced to grow as a tree in rich loam.

L. tartarica - rose flowered.

This is very much like the preceding except in size and color of flowers. The berries on these are almost as beautiful as the flowers.

L. fragrantissima.

This honeysuckle is desirable on account of its early fragrant blossoms and the retaining of its leaves very late in the fall.

Philadelphus, syringa or mock orange.

This is one of our most valued shrubs on account of its vigorous growth, hardiness, and its beautiful white flowers which are produced in the greatest profusion. Most of the varieties, except those of the dwarf habit, form large sized shrubs twelve to fifteen feet high. The dwarf sorts do not yield many flowers but are such pretty compact plants that they are very useful where small shrubs are desired.

Philadelphus coronarius.

This is probably the best of the group. It forms a fine shrub from six to eight feet high, spreading like an elm. Its foliage is luxuriant and breaks into fine masses. The flowers are white, single, very fragrant, and a little larger than apple blossoms. The var. *flor. plenus* has very fragrant, partially double flowers.

P. geyleri

This forms a large spreading bush. The late flowers are large and odorless.

P. gordonianus.

This is a vigorous grower and a profuse bloomer. It is valuable on account of its late blooming.

P. columbianus and *P. tomentosus* are similar in blossom but differ slightly in the leaves.

Viburnum.

This family, though represented by some evergreens, is best known through its representative, the snowball. The foliage varies greatly in the different species.

Viburnum opulus, snowball.

This common shrub produces magnificent balls of white flowers from two to four inches in diameter.

They appear shortly after the lilac is gone and may be grown in symmetrical tree form, branching and bending on all sides to the ground. When covered with snow-balls they are very showy.

V. lantanoides.

A large robust shrub with soft heavy leaves and large clusters of white flowers in May, succeeded by red fruit. Retains leaves very late.

V. prunifolium has smooth glossy foliage and white flowers. Blooms in May.

Spiraea.

The spiraeas are fast becoming one of our favorite shrubs. It is a native of this country but was neglected for many years. With a proper selection of varieties we may have them in bloom almost the entire spring and summer. Nothing in the list of shrubs is more beautiful than a large bush of *Spiraea Van Houtii* in full bloom, the long slender twigs reaching to the ground on every side.

Spiraea prunifolia. - bridal wreath.

One of the first to bloom. It is a dwarf shrub with small glabrous leaves and white blossoms produced in fascicles the whole length of the branches.

S. thumbergia.

This is a variety of the willow leaved spiraeas with very small willowy leaves and white blossoms, which appear early in April. The ends of the twigs are apt to be winter-killed but by the free use of the pruning shears it may be made a beautiful shrub.

S. Vanhoutii

One of the finest varieties yet tried for this state. It is one of the first shrubs to become green in the spring but does not bloom until the two preceding are gone when it suddenly becomes covered with beautiful white flowers. The bush grows to a height of eight or ten feet forming a large hemispherical.

S. Billardii

This shrub is of an upright growth becoming bare at the base. The flowers are white or purple, in long terminal spikes. Foliage light green, height six to eight feet. It begins to bloom in June and continues for some time.

S. Reersii.

A very graceful shrub of spreading growth. The branches assume a curved form as the bush grows older and finally touch the ground. In May it is covered with very white double flowers which intermingled with the handsome foliage produce a pleasing effect.

S. opulifolia, var aurea.

A great round bush ten or twelve feet in diameter is formed by this variety. Blooms shortly after the Van Houttei. The foliage is a yellowish green, abundant and massy.

S. callosa alba.

This is a low, broad, compact bush two or three feet high. Said to stay in bloom all summer.

These are only a few of the many desirable varieties. They all appear to be hardy and require very little attention.

Japanese Quince - *Pyrus japonica*.

This beautiful shrub would deserve a place in our grounds if it never bloomed. There are several varieties which vary in color of blossom from nearly white to the deepest scarlet. When in full bloom there is no plant that exceeds it in splendor. The flowers come forth in April in aggregated clusters along the branches interspersed with the young leaves. Some years it produces fruit which may be made into preserves.

Double Flowering Plum - *Prunus trilobica*.

This small tree has blossoms very similar to the flowering almond. In early spring the branches are covered with double flowers resembling roses. The shrub itself is not very ornamental but few can compare favorably with it in beauty of flowers.

Berberis.

A spreading many stemmed deciduous shrub from four to ten feet high. The leaves are small, very glossy ovate, with hairy edges. The berries are red when ripe and hang on all winter. The purple leaved variety is very ornamental interspersed with other shrubs.

Dierilla - Weigelia

This valuable genus was introduced from Japan in 1843. The shrubs are erect while young, but gradually spread and droop as they grow older. They produce an abundance of trumpet shaped flowers of all shades and colors from pure white to red.

Dierilla rosa.

Rose colored weigelia - an elegant shrub with fine rose colored flowers. The bush is peculiar in the different arrangement of leaves on the upper and lower branches.

D. rosa, var. Desbrii.

A beautiful variety with flowers much larger than the above. One of the most showy of shrubs.

Calycanthus - Sweet Scented Shrub.

Calycanthus floridus.

A spreading shrub, native of the southern states. The flowers, produced in May, are small and rather inconspicuous but of peculiar and delicious perfume. Color chocolate. Not very hardy but a few of the flowers will repay a long waiting.

Hydrangea.

Hydrangea quercifolia.

This is a low, large leaved shrub of bush habit. The white flowers are produced in clusters from four to six inches in length. It blooms in September when few other shrubs are in blossom and so should have find a place in every garden.

Tamarix.

These are upright, sub-evergreen shrubs resembling asparagus in foliage. The delicacy of their foliage attracts attention among large leaved plants. The flowers are in large loose spikes of a delicate pink color and very showy. They thrive best in damp soil.

Strawberry tree, Wahoo, Euonymus atropurpureus.

Growing in nearly every wooded valley in eastern Kansas is an ornamental shrub which is hard to surpass in beauty and yet few are found in cultivated grounds. It has an upright growth and rather inconspicuous flowers but the seed pods are the prettiest we have seen on any shrub and they stay on nearly all winter.

The Rose.

In closing this short list of desirable shrubs we shall speak briefly of one which perhaps should have been placed at the head of the list. The rose is one of the oldest of cultivated flowers - the poets wrote of its beauty thousands of years ago. It has been said that the "rose is preeminently the flower of love and poetry. Imagination may have flattered herself that her power could form a more perfect beauty, but it is said she never yet discovered such to mortal eyes."

"I saw the sweetest flower nature yields,
A fresh blown musk rose."

There is so much confusion in the classification of roses that it is difficult for even a specialist to describe them. One authority gives a "select list" of two hundred varieties but we shall say "Get Roses, and while you are getting get a plenty'."

"And first of all the rose because its breath
Is sweet beyond the rest; and when it dies
It doth bequeath a charm to sweeten death."

C. D. A.