

Landscape ornamentation of
Rural homes.

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The problem whether or not woman will ever be able to compete with man in the pursuit of science, remains yet to be solved. Her first and greatest duty is in the home, and whatever pertains to the home she considers of the utmost importance. Of the fine arts, Landscape gardening is the one in which she might show herself to be as proficient as man.

In building a house, the site is the first thing to be considered. In a country house the site should be located near the public road. The ideal site is one which rises gently from the road to the rear of the house. The surface should not be perfectly level, as it would detract much from the general appearance. Many people think that the first thing to be done on the building spot, is to level the surface. This spoils the whole effect. In a very hilly country a level surface is agreeable, by way of contrast, when it would not appear beautiful in a flat country. It is well to remember that the surface of the ground is seldom unattractive in nature. By grading and filling in man often forms very ugly, expressionless surfaces of ground.

About ten acres should be given to the average home lot. This would give three acres for the lawn, three acres for the orchard, two for the garden, and two acres for the barn-yard. Of course very convenient, beautiful houses can be found that cover less space, for more depends upon the arrangement of the ground than upon the space.

The walks should always be located where they are most needed. They should not be perfectly straight, but should curve gently and gracefully. However one should not go to the other extreme and construct serpentine walks without any objective points. The curves should be natural. The walks should connect the principal places of interest, so as to protect the lawn. If one or two large walks are built so that the others seem to be branches, they will present a more pleasing appearance. The walks may be of cinder, brick or gravel. The best walks are made by removing about eight inches of the soil and filling this space up with gravel or cinders, and levelled off. The grass should be allowed to grow over the

edge of the walks. Board walks are the least desirable of all, but they are better than none. There should be one driveway, and it should never be directly in front of the house, but to one side, and it should connect the house with the barn and the public road.

The lawn and the trees are the two essential elements of landscape gardening. The lawn should be made to appear as large as possible. It should not be cut up by unnecessary roads, walks and flower beds. Many persons make the great mistake of trying to put too much in their front yard. The space should be kept open so as to keep the house in view. The English landscape gardeners say that from the time the house is first seen on an approach, it should not be lost sight of. The shrubs should be so distributed as to secure broad open spaces of turf. There is nothing about the house that adds more to its beauty than a well kept lawn. It possesses an air of refinement. It requires constant care, but all effort should

be made to produce the most perfect lawn possible. It is said that the reason why a lawn turns brown in summer is because the ground is poor and shallow. The ground should be ploughed, subsoiled and harrowed. If the ground is not rich enough, fertilizers may be applied while subsoiling. The soil should not be made too rich, for then the grass would be of coarse growth, while a short fine growth is desired. Let the soil lay all winter in this condition, and early in the spring, plough, harrow and sow the seed. Kentucky blue grass makes a very beautiful lawn, but it is said that a mixture of red top and white clover makes a better lawn for this country. It must be rolled and mowed frequently to keep it fine.

There is no country on the globe that produces a greater or finer variety of forest trees than our own America. In selecting the proper varieties of trees for planting, regard must be paid to the peculiar character of the situations to which they are to be removed. Trees should not be planted in

straight lines. Care should be taken that no desirable views are hidden from the house by them. They may be planted where the views are least important, or where there are certain objects that need concealment. They may be so arranged as to serve as a shelter from the cold in the winter months. They should be planted in various forms of irregular groups, and a few may stand alone. The groups should be selected with reference to their autumnal colors, and as to the time of the appearance of the leaves in the spring, also in regard to the color of the leaves. The ash, maple, dogwood and larch may be grouped so as to give a very beautiful and pleasing effect. The most beautiful and rare specimens of trees should be planted nearest the house, and the rough, rugged ones farther away. A dense belt of high growing trees may be planted to the rear of the house, and in the form of a curve. The trunks should be trimmed up to a height of eight or ten feet. The position of every tree should be

carefully decided before it is planted, care being taken that enough space is left for the tree when full grown. The variety of trees depends upon the character of the situations to which they are to be removed. The oak is perhaps the most beautiful shade tree, its immense size giving it an air of dignity. The red and white elms also make excellent shade trees. The box elder, hackberry, maple, Kentucky coffee bean, honey locust and ash trees make very desirable ornamental trees. Many foreign trees may be used, but they possess no more beauty than our native ones, and they are not as well adapted to our changeable climate.

The question is often asked why we have so few evergreens on our lawns. They are very beautiful all winter, and in the spring before the other trees are leaved out, they give a verdant character to the landscape.

There are many desirable evergreen trees that might be used on the lawn. The red cedar, a native of Kansas, if kept low and given plenty of room for development.

makes a very handsome tree for the lawn, though if it is neglected it grows into one of the ugliest trees that can be imagined.

The blue Colorado spruce, and the Scotch and Austrian pines also thrive very well here. If too many evergreens are used, it gives the place a gloomy, sombre appearance.

A few low growing shrubs such as the Rhododendrons, ^{and} hardy azaleas may be planted to screen the foundation of the house. They are also used to advantage on the outskirts of the lawn, and at the junction of the paths. The Spireas, roses, Japonicas, Lilacs, privets, snowballs, and smokebushes may be used to beautify the lawn if care is taken in trimming them. When they begin to look old and ragged, they should be cut back to the ground. Honeysuckles, Trumpetvines, Wiggellias, Clematises and climbing roses look fresh and picturesque. Care should be taken that no pleasing views or vistas are hidden from the front windows of the house.

Whether flowers should, or should not be used around a house is a question of

considerable moment. In cases where there are some distant objects which are disagreeable, and it is desirable to retain the view within the lawn, it is well to have gaudy, attractive beds to retain the eye of the spectator.

But usually this plan is not necessary. A few rosebushes and a bed of flowering-plants in the near vicinity of the house are very enjoyable. A flower garden if placed in a remote part of the grounds affords a pleasant place to visit. The story of the whole grounds should not be told from the house.

The fences should be as inconspicuous as possible. Wire, iron, stone, brick, board and hedges may be used. The light wire or iron ones are best because they are almost invisible at a little distance.

Then they are not much more expensive in the end, because nothing has to be paid out on them for repairs. The brick and stone walls if covered with ivy or climbing vines are very picturesque. The white washed board fences are the most objectionable. It spoils the effect of the

whole landscape. The Osage orange and privet hedges may be used, and they make such a dense growth that they serve as a protection against man and beast. The Osage if kept trimmed low makes a very good looking fence, but the privet makes a much more beautiful hedge, for it possesses a handsome foliage, as well as bears pretty black berries.

Comparatively few people have the opportunity to plan their own houses, but have to live on old homesteads. Of course if all the old homesteads could be built over again more care would be taken.

Many houses lack yard space directly in front of the house. It is an impossibility to move the house, so the lawn may be added to one side of the house, the old front door may be closed, and a side door used instead. On the opposite side of the house a grove of trees may be planted. This will produce the desired effect.

The next thing to do is to give all the buildings a coat of paint, if they need it. Don't paint anything white, because white

never harmonizes with the landscape.

Dordsworth says it destroys the gradation of distances, haunts the eye, and disturbs the repose of nature. Mr. Reynolds said, "The way to determine the proper color for buildings is to pull up a handful of grass by the roots, and see what color the earth is where the buildings are to stand and let that be your choice." All the neutral tints may be used, such as gray, brown, fawn color and drab. Avoid any of the striking colors. If the buildings are trimmed with a darker shade, it will improve their appearance.

cut down all the unnecessary trees and shrubs, and plant others where they are needed. Trim all the shrubs and trees as much as is necessary, being careful not to prune too closely. Evergreens should never be trimmed into unnatural shapes. Do away with all unnatural ornamentation, as rockeries, shells and statuary. Let everything be just as nature formed it. Above all things else, keep the place neat and clean. Keep all the old dilapidated machinery

out of sight. Burn up all boards, dead limbs, and rubbish. Dispose of all rocks, tin cans, and bits of iron. The principal thing is to have the home look neat. Whatever improvement you may make, have a certain definite purpose in view, and above all things, do not lose your good common sense.

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