

Along Azalea Row

By RUTH B. SMITH

And the Spring arose on the garden fair
Like the spirit of love everywhere,
And each flower and herb on earth's dark breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest. Shelley.

So spring came to Brookings during this past week of sunshine for every stem and branch seemed ready to burst with the news that spring-time is here. No winter was ever known to extend too far into March, except in momentary gusts of temper.

Some weeks ago this column mentioned the annual Audubon bird count in the Smoky mountains of Tennessee and then, more recently, came a report of a similar count right in Portland, Oregon, together with some national information. National bird counting started back in 1899 as a "substitute for looking at birds over the sights of a shotgun".

Through the years it has become a more, scientific procedure and is now considered a definite contribution to the cause of ornithology. More than 3000 bird observers in the United States and Canada took part in the official Audubon counts this winter.

In Portland, the total count of individual birds came to 39,047, the second highest count in 15 years. The Portland area was divided into 16 sections which covered an area about 15 miles in diameter, with contrasting terrain of marshy or water lands, timber, residential and farm lands. Robins and red shafted flickers were the only birds found in every district. The robins annually outnumber other species with the Oregon Juncos (or snowbirds) coming second. About half the birds counted were water birds, ducks and gulls primarily, and house finches were also numerous. The starlings are recent newcomers while a whistling swan and a Holbell's grebe were spotted and created special excitement because of their rareness. It is also interesting to learn that what were once native game birds, such as Bob Whites, California and mountain quail or the short-eared owls have entirely

disappeared. Civilization and the swift-winged metallic birds—the air liners and jets—have driven them away.

I do think a count here, whether official or otherwise, would reveal some rarities of our own. In Portland, seventy-two observers plodded up hills and through the cold fogs. Think how much more pleasurable the experience would be in our balmy "Home of winter Flowers"!

Do you know how to prune? If not, for quick, easy ways, see the chart and articles in the February issue of the Sunset magazine (p48). Not only is it a primer for the beginner, but it also presents some new ideas for the more experienced. Two new concepts are, to quote,

1. "Leaves manufacture plant growth. The more leaves you allow to remain on the plant, the faster and stronger will be the plant's growth. Instead of pruning a plant right down to the basic form you want in a single operation, gradually remove growth that you don't want.

2. "A basic process that makes branches extend themselves in length is the production of hormones or auxins in certain terminal buds. These substances dictate flow of growth. By pinching and nipping, you can encourage a flow of growth in any direction and so reduce much of the usual winter pruning".

The article approaches each plant as an individual and if followed, one need not prune by rule but take advantage of the processes of natural growth and prune in the direction one desires. Almost any plant will respond to training, and the chart gives everything from basic pruning and pinching to the removal of spent blooms to encourage growth.

In San Rafael, a landscape architect, having been asked to make a wall quickly without disturbing existing lawn or shrubbery used cement bags both for the wall and steps. First a 6 inch trench was dug. Then 2 bags of cement were placed on edge with a steel reinforcing rod run through to the ground with enough rod still protruding above to hold a third bag. Then all bags were slit open down the middle to admit moisture and fuse the cement. The whole wall was then sprayed with hose and lawn sprinkler and thereafter began to set, the paper bags disintegrating slowly. The 250 foot wall was completed in three days. One might not always need 750 bags of material as in this case but it's a quick short cut to beauty. The steps for the wall were made laying the cement bags flat. Now Babys' Tears carpet the space between the steps and succulents fill the crannies in the wall with their colors. Try it and let me know the outcome.

Next week you will really have a guest columnist who knows her subject, not a second-handed material writer such as I on most

WORK BEGINS ON LIBRARY SOON

Workers will soon be called upon to build the new library. Roy Weideman, who is supervising the job, has given Jack McCarton the list of materials needed, and Jack is already rounding it up so it can be delivered on the site. Possibly some will be there before this gets into circulation.

Last week, Bud Rausch completed the concrete work, long delayed by weather conditions and getting the plumbing roughed in. Charlie Stanhurst finally got the latter in place so everything is now ready for the structure.

Two problems have not yet been solved and must be before the building can be utilized-water and sanitary facilities. Both of these are in the works and call for coordination with neighbors. Use of a bulldozer, for a short time, will be welcomed, and much fill materials will be needed.

During the past week, two

occasions. Watch for the next issue's treat on the subject of "Dahlias" by Helen Dempsey.

large consignments of books arrived, loaned from the State library. Several of these volumes have been asked for by the patrons and many of them are in the ever popular juvenile department. Mrs. Robert Smith contributed a carton of mystery stories and Mrs. Sam Gott a few years of National Geographics. These latter have been placed on the "help yourself" table for magazine exchange.

GO TO MEDFORD

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Baker and daughter Karen, spent Saturday in Medford.

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