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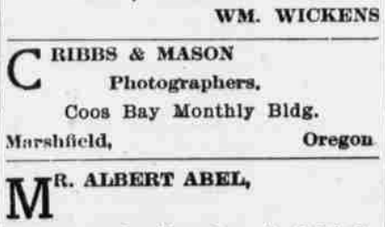

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GARDEN, LAWN AND LANDSCAPE
BY J. A. EDGERTON
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CORRESPONDENCE SOLICITED

Nature is your true exclusive. She only showers her best blessings on him who knows her best.

The builders are the benefactors of the race. Hearken to those who plant, who foster, who construct.

A strong odor will frequently keep away insects. Turpentine, kerosene or carbolic acid mixed with some powdery substance and scattered over the garden is often sufficient.

The greatest need in gardening is "the man who knows." The second greatest need is "the man who does." A combination of these two should make a great gardener.

It seems a paradox that the more weakly a rosebush the more it should be pruned, but such is the best method to give it vigor. The same is true of many other shrubs, vines and trees.

Gardening cannot be learned from books. The experience of others may be a help, of course, but only one's own experience goes home and stays. The saw to the effect that the way to be a lawyer is to practice law applies here.

If the newspapers of America would render a real service to mankind they would take up a universal crusade against dirt and noise. It is time that we Americans as a people were learning all the joys of life, and we cannot do it so long as we permit the civic nuisances that exist in our midst.

What soap is to a man and paint is to a house so grass is to a lawn. What most landscapes need is simply to have their faces washed. This is also true of most villages. Of all the frowzy, dirty looking things permitted on the earth the average city and village are the worst, and all because people will not take the time or trouble to beautify their surroundings.

It is to be presumed that all amateur gardeners as well as all experienced ones are aware of the value of the agricultural department's reports and bulletins. If not they should write to the department and avail themselves of its information at once. Too much praise cannot be given the work of the various bureau chiefs, from Government Chemist Wiley and "the poison squad" down—or up, according to the point of view.

Few fruits pay better than strawberries, and scarcely any are less understood. The first requisite is to get good plants. Here is where most amateur growers fail. Plants should not be taken from an old bed. They should be young and vigorous. The best way is to buy them from some local dealer whom you know, and then be sure that they are from fresh beds and from good bearers. They should be set out immediately in rich and well prepared soil. If the soil is sandy it should be well rolled so that it is compact. Once in the ground the right kind of strawberry plants will bear for years. There is always a market for as great an overplus as can be raised. Plants set out in the spring will start bearing the second year.

As dirt is misplaced matter, so discord is misplaced harmony, evil is misplaced good and ugliness is misplaced beauty. What is needed in each case is a rearrangement and readjustment. This is effected in one instance by soap and water, in another by the musical faculty, in still another by morals and in the last by good taste. The thing that belongs is the thing that harmonizes with its surroundings. It fits that with which it is brought into contact. Soil in the garden is a God given thing, but on one's hands is not so divine. Industry is most praiseworthy, except when applied to stealing. Grass is the poetry of the lawn, but the anathema of the garden. Art arranges things where they belong and in the right quantities. Gardening that is not an art is nothing.

That is true art which does not appear artificial. The highest and finest landscape effects are those which seem the work of nature and yet would not have been produced by nature without the assistance and direction of man. They are the effects which charm and exalt unconsciously. Like true hospitality, they are not obtrusive, but infold us without our knowing. Like great music, they stir in us the highest and sweetest thoughts without our realization of the origin of our thinking. What America most needs is to learn this sort of art in all its branches. We should exhibit it first in our treatment of nature. Landscapes and gardens can be made as truly the expressions and incarnations of great thoughts, of noble poems, of lofty music heard, though silent, and of high dreams as can a picture, a statue or an immortal composition.