

## Planning for the Home Garden

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THE nature of our home surroundings plays a vastly greater part in our daily welfare than most of us realize or appreciate. The immediate home surroundings are unconsciously considered as part and parcel of the home, and the nature and character of the people living there will often be judged by what is seen outside of the house.

This beautifying of the home surroundings is also worth considering from the standpoint of keeping up the interest of the boys and girls in the home. Neat and attractive home surroundings of which a boy or girl may be justly proud will be a powerful factor in the development of a contented and happy life. The question, why the boy leaves the farm, might often be answered by pointing to the slovenly and untidy home surroundings.

From the mere standpoint of dollars and cents the home surroundings become important. Nothing will add more to the value of the entire property than neat, well-planted and well-cared-for home grounds. Every one would rather live in a home of this kind and in a community of such homes.

One of the first requisites in beautifying home surroundings is neatness. Rubbish should be removed; half-dead and dying shrubs and trees should be pruned or removed entirely. Fences and outbuildings should be straightened up, repaired and painted; gates hung and swung properly. In other words, a prevailing appearance of "a place for everything and everything in its place" should be established and maintained. It will take a lot of planting to hide a lack of this essential feature.

Another factor to be constantly kept in mind is the extent of the grounds. In the city and suburban place this is largely determined by factors beyond our control, but in the country the question must be determined for every home.

### Not Too Large.

It is to be remembered that some time is necessary properly to care for grounds and with this in mind the busy farmer should not make the home grounds so large that they cannot be properly cared for. On the other hand, the grounds should not be so small as to be out of all proportion to their surroundings. The wide spaces and distances in the country should be maintained to a reasonable extent in the home grounds. A certain sense of proportion, together with good judgment, should solve this problem.

The farmhouse should be comparatively remote from the road, so that the noise and dust of passing traffic will be avoided, and a desired privacy secured. This distance should be at least three times the height of the house and usually more.

The width of the grounds will depend much upon the character of the house. Usually the space in front of the house should be nearly, if not quite, as wide as it is deep. In the building of new houses these requirements may be met, and the established homes not so ideally located may be greatly improved by a little well-directed thought and labor.

### "Natural" Style.

The "natural" style of landscape gardening is unquestionably the favorite one in this country. Any other would be entirely out of place under ordinary country and suburban conditions, especially where the cost of construction and maintenance must be considered. This means that the necessary walks, drives, fences, etc., should be laid out in as natural a way as their usefulness will permit. The planting should then be grouped in masses along the borders and in the angles in such a way as to give a natural appearance to the grounds as a whole.

As a matter of fact, when a house is built, a walk or drive laid out, or a fence built, naturalness is lost to a certain extent, but by thoughtful planning, artificiality of construction may be greatly lessened and to this extent naturalness be maintained.

Natural lines are always curved lines. Straight lines are unnatural. Nevertheless, home grounds exist for some utilitarian purpose and many unnatural features must be introduced and in many cases the naturalness of the curved lines must be abandoned for the usefulness of the straight. Walks and drives should lead somewhere and should be gently curved when possible, but there

should always be some real or apparent reason for the curves.

### Lawns.

Open lawns are always the foundation of any natural landscape scene, large or small. The lawn should comprise three-fourths or more of all the available space and always the interior or central portions. The planting of trees and shrubs should in a general way be confined to the boundaries. The buildings, walks, drives and all necessary features more or less artificial in their nature should if possible be to one side of the grounds.

### Fences.

Fences are necessary evils. The straight line effects should be broken up and the fence itself planted out as quickly as possible. No ornamental fence, however expensive, ever added anything to the beauty of a natural landscape. Hedges of hardy plants, both clipped and natural, are always good and may be made to cover and hide the real barriers behind, where such is necessary to protect from intrusion either by man or livestock.

A strong and well-built iron or wire fence or one made of stone or brick can also be made effective if immediately covered with some of the hardy climbing plants. In any case, the straight line effect of the fence should be broken by groups and clumps of shrubbery along its course. It should be remembered that in the country at least it is not always necessary to make the fence straight.

### Trees.

Under country conditions trees deserve especial consideration and should be freely used not only in the immediate home surroundings, but also in the outlying portions of the farm. A farmyard without some large trees is very unsatisfactory.

Trees should nearly always be grouped together because they grow that way in nature. At any rate, they never grow in rows. Single specimens will give splendid results in some exceptional cases where shade is especially desired. Trees should never be planted so densely and so close to the house as to prevent a free circulation of the air and the ingress of sunlight to practically all portions of the house for short periods during the day.

### Shrubs.

Shrubs will form the principal part of most landscape planting. They are seldom used too much and are very frequently neglected. These plants are necessary to the development of the natural effects so much desired.

Nature always fills in the borders with shrubs and low-growing trees. A judicious arrangement of shrubbery will do more to obliterate unpleasant and unnatural features than any amount of other material or other work. They may be used in comparative profusion and variety because they require so much less room than trees.

A building with its rectangular lines rising abruptly out of the lawn gives a distinct note of unnaturalness, better remedied by a liberal use of shrubs than any other way. Shrubs irregularly grouped along the walls and at the angles will bring in close harmony the building and grounds.

In securing these results the climbers, clinging to the walls or twining about the pillars of the porches, becoming almost a part of the house, become most effective aids to the shrubs. In this connection it should be said that the hardy climbers will frequently be of great usefulness in the outlying borders as well as upon the house.

### Flowers.

Flowers of some kind are desired by every one and a great variety can be effectively used in any planting. Too many and too varied colors should be avoided, however, as effects will be "loud" and "gaudy." A beautiful gown is rarely ever made more beautiful by the addition of many colored bows and ribbons.

The annual flowering plants are rarely useful or desirable in the ordinary front yard. In the first place, they rarely receive the care necessary for the best results, and nearly always become incongruous in the general scheme. If especially desired, they should be confined to the sides or borders.

Such plants are usually grown for the blossoms rather than for anything they contribute to the general effect, and this end is generally better served if they are confined to the kitchen garden or some area by them-

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