

University of Nebraska - Lincoln

DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln

Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-
Lincoln Extension

Extension

February 2014

EC1240 Planting the Home Grounds

G. W. Wood

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist>

Wood, G. W., "EC1240 Planting the Home Grounds" (2014). *Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension*. 2443.
<http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/extensionhist/2443>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Extension at DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln. It has been accepted for inclusion in Historical Materials from University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@University of Nebraska - Lincoln.

CYT
Vert.
File
S
85
E7
no. 1240

Nebraska
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
U. of N. Agr. College & U. S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating
W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln

Extension
Circular
1240

PLANNING THE HOME GROUNDS
G. W. Hood, Horticulture Department

It is very seldom that the home owner gives much attention to the development of the ground surrounding the house. Few people realize either the economic or the aesthetic value of a well planned and planted ground. Well planted grounds will not only increase the value of the property from a financial standpoint but will add materially to the enjoyment and the pleasure of the family. It makes little difference as to the size of the grounds, it is possible to beautify them.

Economy of Execution

From a practical as well as a financial standpoint it is highly important to have the grounds carefully planned. The landscape work attempted without arranging the details is not satisfactory and usually entails additional expense. In planning the grounds, the floral adornment is only one of many features which should be considered; and to make the most out of our opportunities we must solve our questions of proper grading, draining, locating the house, arranging the walks and drives and locating the outbuildings. It is only when we have a preconceived and specific plan of combining all of these elements that we can proceed in an economic manner. The plan should represent the conception of the owner or designer and this should be reduced to a definite scale in a specific and comprehensive manner, and any development worth while should be studied thoroly before any attempt is made to execute it on the grounds.

Arrangement of Walks and Drives

After the house has been located, the next proposition is to consider the best arrangements of the walks and drives. Where there is a wide latitude, one definite principle is fixed, namely, the walks and drives must be direct to the objective point without being forced or twisted and it should be approached by either means of straight lines or easy graceful curves. The house being the objective point, the trend should always be in that direction. When a residence is located on a highway where all or nearly all of the traffic comes from one direction the entrance gate should be on the side where the greatest portion of the traffic is expected. It is a decided mistake to place the entrance at a point where it will necessitate the crossing of the breadth of the lot and then have to return to the house after entering the property.

Construction of Walks and Drives

Walks and drives are constructed with a view to permanency. The costs of a properly constructed good walk or road should not be considered prohibitive and should be viewed from the standpoint of lasting qualities. Main walks should not be less than 4 feet and when traffic is heavy 5 feet is not too wide. While the minimum width of a road should not be less than 7 feet 6 inches, 8 feet to 10 feet is preferable. A very important point in the construction of either a walk or a driveway is to have the foundation of the walk well drained. Poorly drained walks or driveways are usually short lived and do not give satisfaction.

Lawns - Construction and Upkeep

There is no greater feature connected with the improvement of grounds than the development of a good uniform turf or lawn, the base we must work on to make a pleasing picture. It is the central feature and requires strict attention to all details. It is the element in landscape gardening that continually lends and takes. If gentle slopes and depressions are permitted, it gives a feeling of expanse. Good lawns are not often seen and the majority of failures may be traced to the lack of forethought in making. Too often the gardener thinks only of the soil or the seed, with no thought of the range or upkeep. Such lawns are never a success and can never be improved unless spaded up and started over.

In order then to succeed in developing a good lawn, you must first familiarize yourself thoroly with all existing physical conditions before the work is started. Before the excavation of the cellar is made, when building a residence, all of the top soil which extends from 6 to 12 inches should be removed and piled in a convenient place. This surface soil should be used later as a surface covering for the lawn. When the grading is being done it is well to take account of the nature of the soil and to ascertain what treatment is necessary. If the soil is sandy or if it lacks humus, barnyard manure should be thoroly incorporated with the top soil. Should the soil be stiff and clayey in nature about equal parts of the sand and manure should be incorporated on the top six inches. This will make the soil more coarse and will allow the rain and the air to reach the roots of the grass. Another point to consider at this time is to locate and to make all holes for any trees or special plants in the ground because such work can be done to much better advantage now than if left until after rolling and seeding of the grass.

The proper selection of grass seed is very important and as a rule a combination of several grasses is better than the selection of one kind. The value of a combination is principally due to the fact that any slight variation in the soil or any difference in shade or sun on the grounds will influence the growth of one particular grass and by having a combination the different grasses fit into the varying conditions; and, as a rule make a more uniform turf than when one grass is forced to grow under so many conditions. A good combination of grasses which is usually recommended, is as follows:

Kentucky Blue Grass	- - - - -	4	parts	by	weight
Canada Blue	- - - - -	2	"	"	"
Fancy Red Top	- - - - -	1	"	"	"
Meadow Fescue	- - - - -	1.5	"	"	"
English rye	- - - - -	0.5	"	"	"
Rhode Island bent	- - - - -	1	"	"	"

White clover can be added if desired about 1 part by weight. The seed should be thoroly mixed and used at the rate of about 1 pound to 300 square feet or approximately 5 bushel to the acre. After the seed has been sown the ground should be raked over in order that the seed will be lightly covered and then the soil rolled with a lawn roller.

Plant Materials

When the lawn has been prepared the other plant materials are ready for consideration. These materials can be divided into four distinct classes; first, annual plants; second, herbaceous perennials; third, woody plants; fourth, evergreens. Annual Plants are those flowers which are usually grown from seed each year. The annual plants, however, will die when frosted and consequently must be replaced each year. The herbaceous perennials consist of a number of excellent flowering plants which live many years when once they are established. The tops of herbaceous perennials die on the approach of winter while the roots remain dormant and grow the following

spring. Herbaceous perennials have a great range in blooming period, height, color of flowers and are very desirable plants for home use. The woody plants are divided into two groups, namely, ornamental shrubs and deciduous trees. This group is indispensable because the shrubs and trees are necessary for use as backgrounds for herbaceous perennials and annual plants are valuable to form screens and shut out objectionable views. These trees are also valuable as windbreaks and hedges. Deciduous trees are valuable for shade and a great help in making the home pleasant. The trees are planted in combination with shrubs as a single specimen or grouped. The evergreens are very valuable to give a contrast and to relieve the somber color in winter. They are best planted among shrubs. The conifers are valuable for windbreaks and good tall and dense screens.

Where to Set Plants

There are several well defined positions where plants may be set to produce the best effects.-

1. Grouped along borders.
2. Planted in the intersection of walks and drives.
3. Planted along the foundations of buildings.
4. Separating the lawns from the gardens.

As a rule border plants should be shrubs, varying in height as well as density of the leaf surface. The shrubs should be arranged so that there will be open vistas between the clumps; and while the tall shrubs should be near the back, this should not be followed out all together but rather group the shrubs so that low and high places exist along the shrub border. The shrubs should not be placed in straight rows but in irregular clumps so that the border will vary from two or three feet to eight or ten feet, depending upon the size of the property. The foreground should be dotted with herbaceous perennials and annuals in order to give color and produce flowers over a longer period. When planting evergreens it is well to distribute them in clumps of four or five, usually situated in some corner or just in front of the shrub border at some central point. Try to balance the planting so there will be a finished and symmetrical look. The following list includes a few of the more common in several groups which seem to be satisfactory for home planting.

DECIDUOUS TREES

Botanical Name	Common Name	Height	Remarks
<i>Acer plantanoides</i>	Norway Maple	50-60	Good for undergrowth
<i>Acer dasycarpum</i>	Silver Maple	40-50	Good shade, fall color.
<i>Betula alba pendula</i>	Cut leaved weeping birch	30-40	Transplant only in spring
<i>Quercus palustris</i>	Pin oak	40-60	Excellent for avenues.
<i>Plantanus occidentalis</i>	Sycamore	50-60	Picturesque
<i>Quercus rubra</i>	Red oak	50-75	Park and street planting
<i>Ulmus campestris</i>	English elm	60-80	Good avenue trees
<i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	Hackberry	30-40	Similar to elm
<i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	Honey Locust	30-40	Good lawn or street tree
<i>Tilia americana</i>	Linden	50-60	Good lawn or park tree
<i>Ulmus americana</i>	White elm	50-60	Favorite avenue tree

ORNAMENTAL EVERGREEN TREES

Botanical Name	Common Name	Height	Remarks
<i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	Red Cedar	20-30	Beautiful conical evergreen
<i>Picea alba</i>	White spruce	50-75	Ornamental, hardy tree, specimens and windbreak.
<i>Picea excelsa</i>	Norway spruce	50-75	Screen and windbreaks
<i>Picea pungens</i>	Colorado blue spruce	60-70	Attractive, ornamental tree, foliage bluish green specimen.
<i>Picea pungens</i> var <i>Kosteriana</i>	Kosters blue spruce	60-70	The bluest strain of the Colorado Blue spruce
<i>Pinus laricio</i> va. <i>austriaca</i>	Austrian pine	40-50	Popular for grouping or as specimen, windbreak.
<i>Pinus ponderosa</i>	Bull pine	40-50	Spreading branches, hardy in severe climates.
<i>Pinus sylvestris</i>	Scotch Pine	30-50	Spreading, good for windbreaks, adapted to poor soils
<i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	Arbon vitae	15-20	Dense hedges and screens Narrow pyramidal tree. Not very hardy except in S. E. Nebraska.

HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS

Botanical Name	Common Name	Ht. Ft.	Color	Remarks
<i>Iris crestate</i>	Crested iris	8 in.	lilac	May-June
<i>Iris germanica</i>	German iris	1-1½	various	" " edge of shrubs
<i>Althea rosea</i>	Hollyhock	5-7	various	June-July
<i>Stokesia cyanea</i>	Stokes aster	1-1½	blue	June-Oct.
<i>Aster amellus</i>	Aster	2	purple	August. Showy
<i>Funkia subcordata</i> var. <i>grandiflora</i>	White day lily	2	white	Aug.Sept.best of funkia
<i>Aster ericoides</i>	Fall aster	3	white yellow	Oct. one of best
<i>Paeonia officianales</i>	Peony	3	various	Excellent
<i>Phlox paniculata</i>	Hardy phlox	2-3	"	Good fall bloomer

A LIST OF ORNAMENTAL SHRUBS

Botanical Name	Common Name	Height	Color of bloom	Time of bloom
<i>Berberis thunbergii</i>	Barberry	3-4 ft.	yellow	June
<i>Ligustrum amurense</i>	Amoor River Privet	10	----	June
<i>Norus alba</i>	Russian Mulberry	10-20	----	----
<i>Spirea thunbergii</i>	Thunbergs Spirea	4	white	April
<i>Spirea van Houtii</i>	Bridal Wreath	6	white	May-June
<i>Syringia persica</i>	Lilac	6-8	lilac	May-June
<i>Cornus stolonifera</i>	Red dogwood	6	white	June
<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	Red osier	6	white	June
<i>Sanbuscus nigra</i>	Golden elder	6-8	white	July
<i>Sanbuscus racemosa</i>	Red berried elder	5-7	white	May

ORNAMENTAL SHRUBS - Cont.

Botanical Name	Common Name	Height	Color of Bloom	Time of Bloom
Lonicera morrow	Morrow honey-	5-6	white	May
Lonicera tataroca	suckle			
Lonicera tataroca	Tartian honey-	6-8	pink-white	May
	suckle			
Symphoricarpos racemosus	Snowberry	3-5	pink	July
Symphoricarpos vulgaris	Coralberry	3-5	Pink	July
Caragana arborescence	Siberian Pea Tree	8-10	yellowish	mass screen border
Cydonia japonica	Japan quince	4-6	red	May
Philadelphus lemeinel	Mock orange	4-5	white	May, June
Prunus Japonica(albe plana)	White almond	5	white	May
Tamarix odessa	Russian tamarick	8-12	pink	July, Sept.
Syringa persica	Persian lilac	6-8	lilac	May, June
Syringa Persica alba	Persian lilac	6-8	white	May, June
Syringa vulgaris	Common lilac	8-10	purple	May
Syringa vulgaris alba	Common lilac	6-8	white	May
Prunus triloba	Flowering plum	5-6	rose	May

Summary

Value of Planting

Skillful planting enhances the beauty of a home-gives it an air of dignity, repose and permanence. Sensible planting increases the selling value of a property. Eccentric planting does not.

Aims in Planting

1. To hide objectionable buildings or portions of the place, or of neighboring places.
2. To maintain an uninterrupted line of vision, where the outlook is pleasing.
3. To give protection from winds.
4. To afford shade.
5. As a ground cover. To protect the soil-as in planting along the bank of a stream.
6. To make buildings seem a part of the landscape.

Suggestions for Planting Home Grounds

Make the walls and drives on a small lot direct, in most cases. Curved walls should be rarely used, even on steep grades.

Arrange the planting to bring out the good features and to conceal the bad features of the grounds.

Leave an open view of church, water, hills or prairie.

Leave the center of the lawn open and group trees and shrubs at the sides, so as to make the planting a setting or frame for the house.

Do not scatter flower beds over the lawn. They are ugly in winter, take much work, and make the lawn seem smaller.

Plant permanent trees--perennials rather than annuals. Plan for a permanent lawn. Use native plants and shrubs for the greater part. Plant shrubs and perennial vines around the foundation. Select shrubs that will not grow over the windows nor look ragged or straggling.

Plan to have a succession of bloom thruout the growing season. If plants blooming at the same time are planted near one another, select those with flowers that harmonize in color.

Do not plant trees in a position to shut off the air from upstairs rooms. Do not allow vines to cover a building or wall completely. They will be more effective if openings are left which reveal the wall beneath.

Do not plant the vines to cover the windmill as the growth serves to catch the force of the wind, thus causing the framework to loosen sooner than otherwise.

Use a framework for vines that are trained to grow over a frame wall, so as to keep the wood from rotting.

Avoid the use of foreign material, such as borders of stones or shells.

Avoid planting anything near walks which will litter them with blossoms, seeds or fruits.

Attract the birds by planting shrubs which bear berries, and those which furnish nesting places.

Plants for Nebraska, and Their Uses

1. Windbreaks

Red Cedars (If no orchard is near)	
Osage orange	Austrian pine
Jack pine	Scotch pine

2. Trees which frame the house gracefully.-

Elm	Hard maple
Honey Locust	Pin oaks
Hackberry	Linden

3. Screens.-

Buckthorn	Tamarix
Mock orange	Tartatian Honeysuckle
Lilacs	Red Dogwood

4. Shrubs for shady places.-

Ninebark	Hydrangea
Golden currant	Viburnums

5. Shrubs which bear berries.-

Waxberry	Highbush cranberry
Indian currant	Japanese Barberry

6. Shrubs for foundation planting.-

Spirea species	Waxberry
Japanese barberry	

7. Permanent vines.-

Woodbine	Prairie Queen rose
Englemann's Ivy	Rambler roses (if protected during winter)
Clematis	Wisteria

8. Flowers

Asters, Bleeding Heart, Hollyhocks, Iris, Golden Glow,
Larkspur, Phlox

9. Border flowers

Sweet Alyssum	Dusty Miller
---------------	--------------