

1928

EC1250 Beautifying the Home Grounds

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Nebraska

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
 IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS

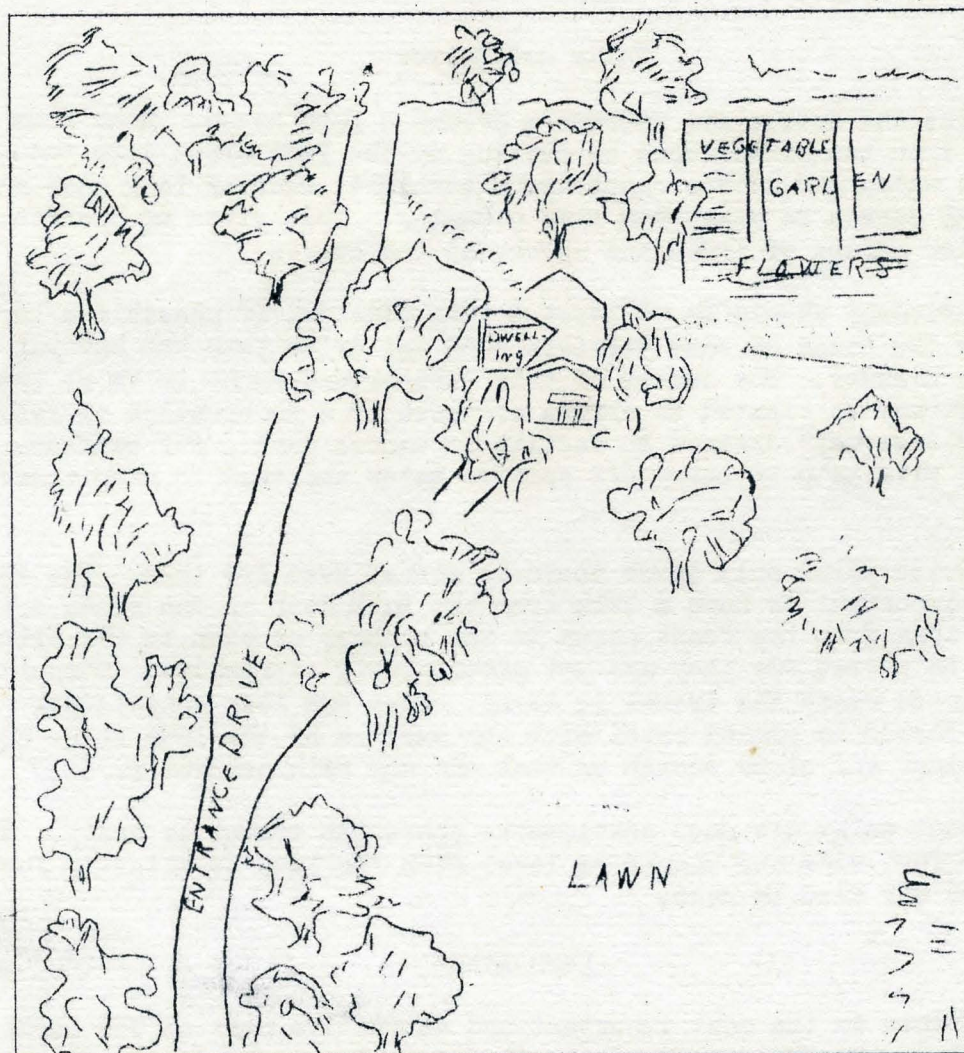
Extension
 Circular
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1928

U. of N. Agr. College & U. S. Dept. of Agr. Cooperating
 W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln

BEAUTIFYING THE HOME GROUNDS

Any farmhouses, be it a humble cottage or a luxurious mansion, can be made into an attractive home by the judicious use of trees, vines, shrubs, flowers, and lawns. Money and labor put into such improvements yields bountiful returns in satisfaction, pleasure, and comfort. They likewise add to the value of the farm. The trees serve to protect the farm buildings from winds; they provide shade for the



family; they attract useful birds. Every farmstead presents some sort of a picture to a passerby. It may be attractive, inviting, comfortable looking or it may be bare and uninviting or even ugly, depending upon the care or lack of care given to it.

A Plan of the Grounds is Helpful

A definite plan (Fig 1.) for the development of the farmstead is highly important if costly mistakes are to be avoided. Draw the plan to some definite scale; for example let 8 feet of ground equal one inch on paper. Show the house with relation to the plot of ground around it that is to be developed, the other buildings,

the permanent walks and drives. Before determining upon any plantings study the location of the walks and drives to see whether they are best located where they are or whether some other location would be better from the standpoint of utility and appearance.

THE HOUSE

Planting the Home Grounds-

In developing the farmstead keep in mind always that the house is the main feature, the center of interest, and that barns, trees, shrubs, flowers, etc. should be secondary; that is, they should not be so important in the picture as to detract from the house.

Walks and Drives

Walks and drives are necessary around a farm house. Make them direct but avoid making them too conspicuous or cutting up the lawn areas into too many small parts. Short walks and drives ought to be straight, whereas long ones may have easy, graceful curves to make them more pleasing. This gives an opportunity for using irregular groups of trees and shrubs at the curves.

A driveway should be at least 8 feet wide and if possible a turn-around provided near the house so that visitors need not drive into the barnyard to get back onto the highway. The center of this turn-around ought to be at least 40 feet wide. It may be planted to shrubs or trees or a combination of both. The driveway should be well drained to facilitate excess during wet weather. A furrow on both sides will help to carry off surface water and tend to keep travel on the road.

Provide walks only where there is actual need for them. For example it is much more important to have a walk from the back door or the grade entrance to the barnyard than from the front porch to the highway or even to the driveway. Walks should be narrow for they are not particularly attractive. Stepping stones serve the purpose where the travel is light. They are less conspicuous than solid walks. They should be placed level with the surface of the lawn so as not to interfere with mowing, and close enough so that one may walk naturally.

Cement walks are most serviceable where the travel is heavy. They should not be over 3 feet wide and should be level with the lawn or slightly lower. Gravel and boards may also be used.

Lawn Areas

The lawn is the most important and attractive part of the landscape of a farmstead. It is the foreground of the picture. It may be divided into distinct areas. The public area at the front, the private area at the side or rear, and the service area at the rear, to be used for clothes drying and children's playground. Sometimes the last two areas are combined for convenience.

The area at the front, the public area, should be left open so that an unobstructed view of the house may be had by passerby. Plantings in this area should be confined to the borders and around the foundation of the house. Gaudy flower beds and statuary should have no place here. They are distinctive features in themselves and detract from the house as the center of interest. Where the house is

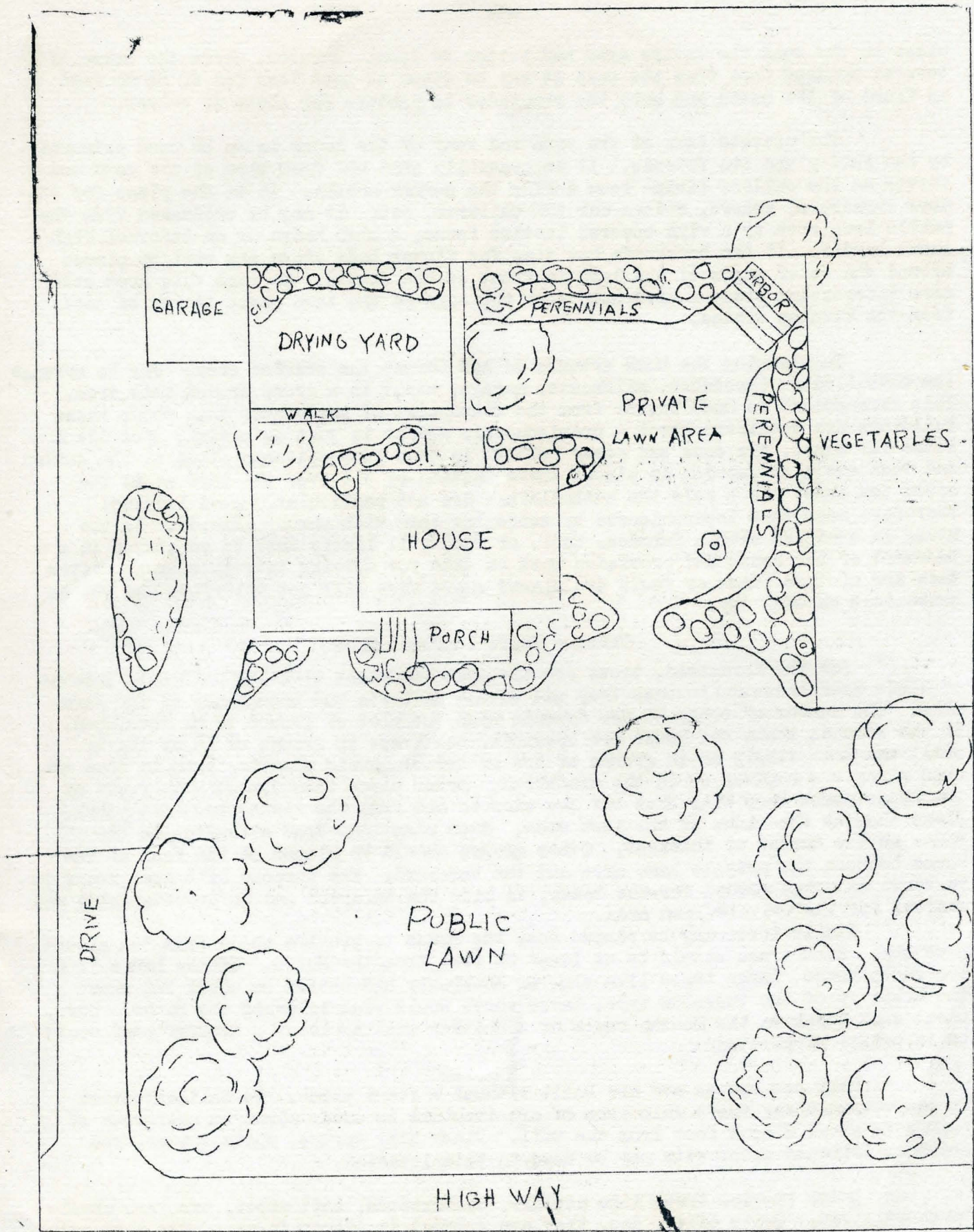


FIG. 1

close to the road the entire area had better be lawn. However, where the house is several hundred feet from the road it may be wiser to have lawn for 60 or 70 feet in front of the house and have the remainder in pasture for sheep or calves.

The private lawn at the side and rear of the house is to be used primarily by the family and its friends. It is generally shut off from view of the road and serves as the outdoor living room during the summer months. It is the place for outdoor furniture, arbors, swings for the children, etc. It may be separated from the public lawn area by a vine covered lattice fence, a high hedge or an informal high shrub border. If the housewife has time for flower beds these may well be placed around the outer edges of the lawn in front of the shrubs. To make this area still more interesting place a bird bath near the edge of the lawn where it can be seen from the kitchen window.

In planning the home grounds do not forget the service area. Try to arrange the outbuildings (woodshed, milkhouse, garage, etc.) in a group around this area. This arrangement is much better from the standpoint of appearance than where these buildings are scattered about - promiscuously and it is just as useful. Provide a place for ashes, tin cans and other rubbish in some inconspicuous place at the border and then see that rubbish is placed there instead of all over the yard as is too often the case. As a rule the outbuildings are not particularly good looking; therefore make them inconspicuous by screening them with shrubs (Fig.4). If the house is equipped with a furnace, coal, or wood will likely need to be stored in the basement of the house and provision must be made for driving into this area. After this the clothes lines or reels are placed where they will not interfere and yet be convenient on wash day.

Trees - Where to Plant Them

For the farmstead, trees are the most important planting materials because of their usefulness and because they add to the comforts and appearance of the farm home. The number of trees to use depends upon the plot of ground to be developed. If the grounds about the house are spacious, use trees in groups of 10 or 12; if small use them singly or in groups of two or three. Avoid planting them in rows except along the roadway or in the windbreak. Never place them directly in front of the house where they will shut off the view to and from the living room and porch. Place them at the sides of the lawn area. Such plantings draw attention to the house as the center of interest. Other groups should be placed at the rear of the house between the private lawn area and the barnyard. The purpose of these groups is to serve as a background for the house, to hide the barnyard and to provide shade and shelter for the private lawn area.

Single trees may be placed near the house to provide shade from the afternoon sun. Such trees should be at least 25 feet from the house. If the house is a two story house, large trees like elm, or hackberry had better be used; but where the house is of the bungalow type, large sorts would tend to dwarf the house. Here, then, such trees as the Norway maple or a Whitney crab apple or a Kieffer pear would be in better proportion.

Many new houses are now built without a front porch. To call attention to the entrance way where this type of architecture is used, plant an evergreen at each side about 3 or 4 feet from the wall. Black Hill spruce, white spruce, red cedar or Siberian arbor vita may be used in this location.

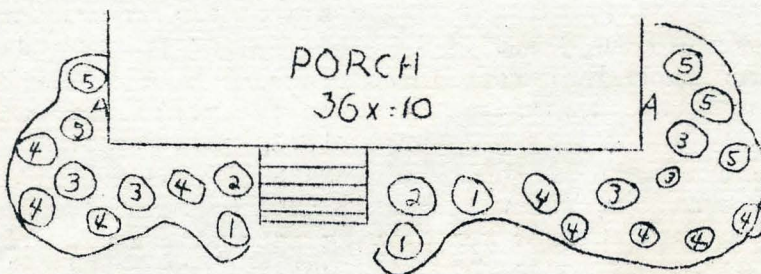
Quick growing trees like poplars, cottonwoods, soft maple, etc. are usually short lived. Quite often, too, they are subject to insect injury. Use them only

for temporary effect if at all. When trees are desired more permanently, plant elms, hackberry, honey locust, etc. If evergreens are desired use Scotch pine, Austrian pine, Black Hill spruce, etc.

Windbreaks are desirable on most Nebraska farms at the north and west of the farm buildings. Such plantings should be at least 75 feet from the drives and walks so that the snow will not drift on them. If the road way is a permanent one close to the windbreak, better plant a single row of trees 75 to 100 feet beyond to trap the snow before it gets to the driveway. Windbreaks, shelterbelts, and woodlots offer sufficient material for a separate circular and will not be discussed in detail here.

Shrubs: Where and How To Use Them

Shrubs play an important part in creating a pleasing picture of the farm home and its surroundings. Groups placed at the corners and angles of the house, make



1. Anthony Water Spirea
2. Spirea Van Hout
3. Lemoine's Mock Orange
4. Japanese Barberry
5. Thumberg's Spirea
- .A. Clematis P. G.

If native plants only are to be used 2 & 3 Red Dogwood
1 - 4 - 5 Coral Berry
A - Wild grape or Bittersweet

Fig. 2

Foundation Planting for a Large House

the house blend into the grounds and make the house appear a more permanent part of the surroundings. If the house is large and the grounds large the foundation groups should be large in proportion, especially at the corners. Tall growing shrubs like red dogwood, Armoor privet, bush honeysuckle, Van Houtens spirea may be used closest to the building and smaller ones like coral berry, Japanese barberry, snowberry, etc., in the foreground. See Fig. 2. For small houses a medium sized shrub like

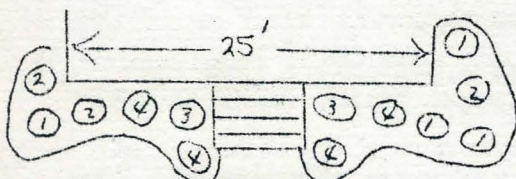


Fig. 3

Foundation Planting for Bungalow or small house

Native Plants

1-4 Coral Berry 2 & 3 Dogwood

1. Japanese Barberry
2. Spirea Van Hout
3. Spirea Thumberg
4. Spirea Anthony Water

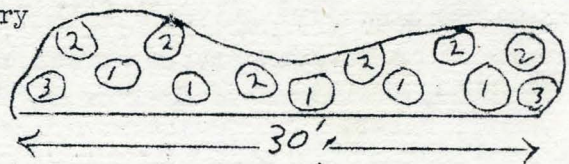


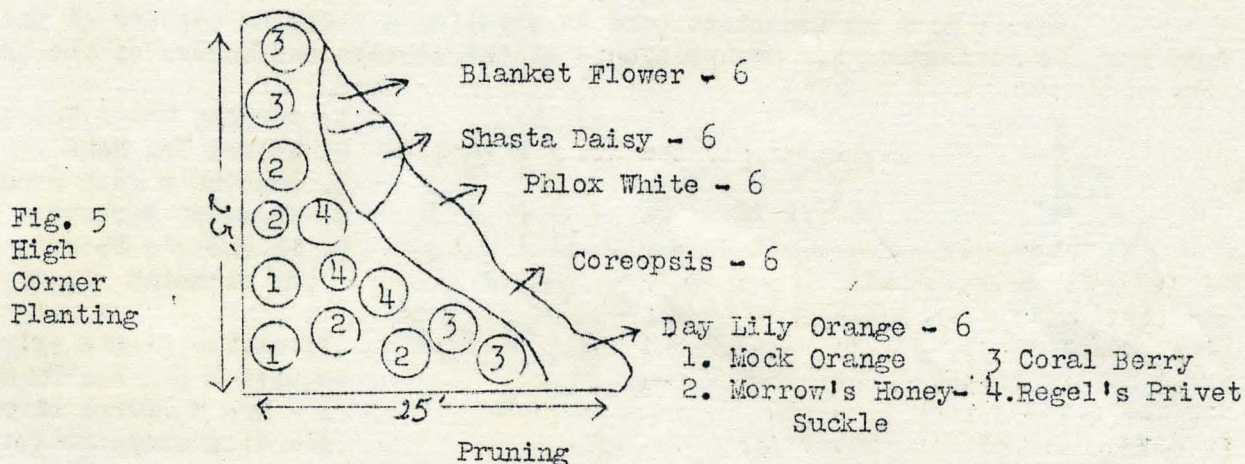
Fig. 4

Screen or Border Planting

1. Lilac Native
2. High Bush Cranberry Plants
3. Japanese Barberry 1. Elder
2. Dogwood
3. Coral berry

Japanese rose, Morrow's honeysuckle, summer snowball (*Hydrangea arborescens*) may be used as a background for such smaller shrubs as Anthony Water spirea, fragrant sumac, prairie rose, coral berry, etc. See Fig. 3. Coarser shrubs like sumac, elder mock orange, lilacs, etc. may be planted at the borders of the grounds or as a screen to hide the barnyard or poultry yard. On the side toward the house plant groups of smaller shrubs. Where a medium sized group is sufficient as a screen use medium sized shrubs. See Fig. 4.

In arranging the groups it is better to have several shrubs of a kind together, than to have a single variety or a single specimen of a great many varieties in the group. Avoid planting the shrubs in straight rows. Do not plant shrubs too close to the walls of the house; stay away at least 3 feet. Plant them far enough apart so as to give them opportunity to acquire their natural form. Very often shrubs are planted too close together to produce an immediate effect. Such plantings quickly become ragged in appearance because the lower shoots die off and the ones that are left grow unusually tall. Furthermore the cost of the plantings is much greater than it need be. Space the shrubs so that there will be a distance of at least one-half of their full height between them. If this rule is followed the shrubs will look well for a long time. The first year or two annual flowers may be used to fill in the gaps between shrubs if a denser mass is desired.



After shrubs have been out 3 or 4 years they will require some pruning annually if vigorous growth is to be maintained and luxurious blooms are to be produced. The dead and weak shoots should be removed and the crowding shoots thinned out. The oldest shoots are usually selected for removal since the younger ones produce the best foliage and flowers as a rule.

If the plants are becoming too tall, heading back is the remedy. There are two important rules to follow with this type of pruning.

1. - Prune those shrubs that bloom in the spring just after they have bloomed, for example, spirea, golden bell, flowering almond, lilac, highbush cranberry, elder.

2. - Prune those shrubs that bloom in the summer or fall during the dormant season, preferably just before growth starts in the spring. Shrubs belonging to this class are clematis, hydrangea, privet (where it is not used as a hedge), honeysuckle, mock orange, roses.

Hedges

Clipped hedges are as attractive on the farm as in the city but require considerable attention and may not be practical for the farm grounds for this reason. Where a hedge is desired use Armoor privet or Russian Mulberry. These two sorts are hardy in the eastern half of the state. Farther west Russian Olive had better be used. Where a low hedge is desired Japanese barberry is suitable. It may be sheared or left unsheared. Van Houten's Spirea is likewise used in either way where a 4 to 6 foot hedge is desirable, as for example to screen the back lawn

area from the front area. Where a dense hedge is desired it is necessary to clip the plants within 8 inches of the ground when they are first set out. This shearing makes them spread out close to the ground.

Vines

Vines are helpful in transforming bleak and bare porches into attractive, pleasing additions to the home. They are likewise useful where stone, stucco, or brick constitute the building material. Engleman's ivy and Boston ivy will climb stone walls without a trellis. Wild grape, bittersweet, Japanese clematis, Hall's honeysuckle, matrimony vine, Wisteria, climbing roses, are some of the principal sorts from which to select where trellises are not objectionable. Poultry netting may be used for a trellis. Lattice work also serves admirably for a support. Vines may be used as a border planting or screen where space is limited. In such cases they are trained on a woven wire fence or a lattice fence. In such locations tame grapes may also be used instead of the purely ornamental vines.

Where a quick temporary effect is desired one may choose from the following list of annual vines - Judzu vine, climbing morning glory, wild cucumber.

The vines should be planted about a foot from the house or porch.

Perennials

Perennials are those flowering plants which die to the ground each winter. Peonies and iris are examples of this very desirable type of ornamental. Perennials are particularly valuable as a source of cut flowers. They will thrive and produce flowers for years. Place them around the border of the private lawn area just in front of the shrubs or along the border fence. They may also serve as a foreground for the shrub border (See Fig. 5) or foundation plantings. Every farmstead ought to have a few of the better sorts to furnish cut flowers for the home throughout the summer and fall. Once they are started they will need but little attention. Keeping down the weeds and a heavy mulch of manure in late fall is about all they need. After 6 or 7 years it may be necessary to thin out the stand somewhat if the best blooms are wanted. A start may be gotten either from the roots or seeds. In the latter case the seed had better be planted in the vegetable garden or the annual flower garden. In the fall the roots from these seedlings may be transplanted in their permanent place.

Plants for Nebraska and Their Uses

Ornamental Trees

American Elm
Hackberry
*Black walnut
White Ash
Green Ash
*American linden
*Sycamore
White Birch
*Kentucky Coffee tree

Ulmus americana
Celtis occidentalis
Tuglans nigra
Fraxinus alba
Fraxinus laciniata
Tilia americana (moist location)
Platanua occidentalis
Betula alba
Gymmoladus canadensis

Evergreens

Black Hill spruce
Colorado blue spruce
Bull pine
Austrian pine

Picea alba
Picea pungens
Pinus ponderosa
Pinus laricio var. austriasa

Evergreens

Scotch pine
Concolor fir

Pinus sylvestris
Abies concolor

High growing shrubs for Borders and Screens

Ultimate height - 8 - 10 feet

Amoor privet
Bush honeysuckle
Mock orange
Nine bark
Smooth sumac
Lilac - purple
Lilac - white
Persian lilac
Highbush cranberry
Elder
Siberian pea tree

Plant 5 - 6 feet apart

- Ligustrum amarense
- Lonicera tartarica
- Philadelphus coronarius
- Physocarpus opulifolia
- Rhus glabra
- Syringa vulgaris
- Syringa vulgaris alba
- Syringa persica
- Viburnum americana
- Sambucus racemosa
- Caragana arborescens

Medium Growing Shrubs

Ultimate height 5 - 8 feet

Red dogwood
*Regels privet
White bush honeysuckle
Morrow's honeysuckle
Golden currant
Japanese Rose
Buffalo berry
Van houtii spirea

Plant 3 - 4 feet apart

- Cornus alba siberica
- Ligustrum regelianum
- Lonicera bella albida
- Lonicera Morrowi
- Ribes aureum
- Rosa rugosa
- Sherpherdia argentea
- Spirea Van Houttii

Low Growing Shrubs

Ultimate height 3 - 4 feet

*Japanese barberry
*Summer snowball
Fragrant sumac
Wild Rose
Prairie Rose
*Dwarf red spirea
*Dwarf white spirea
Anthony Water spirea
Snowberry
Indian currant

Plant 2 1/2 - 3 feet apart

- Berberis thunbergii
- Hydrangea arborescens
- Rhus aromatica
- Rosa lucida
- Rosa setigera
- Spirea callosa rubra
- Spirea callosa alba
- Spirea Anthony Waterer
- Symphocarpus racemosus
- Symphocarpus vulgaris

Vines

Virginia creeper
Engelman's ivy
*Boston ivy
*Bittersweet
American clematis
Trumpet honeysuckle

- Amelopsis quinquefolia
- Ampleopsis Englemannii
- Ampleopsis Vetchii
- Celestrus scandens
- Clematis paniculata
- Clematis virginiana

Vines - Continued

Matrimony vine	- Lycium chinensis
Wild grape	- Vitis riparia
*Chinese wisteria	- Wisteria chinensis

Tall Perennials

Along fence or wall or shrub planting.

<u>Height - 2½ - 6 feet</u>	<u>Plant 1½ - 2 feet apart</u>
Tiger lily	- Lilium tigrinum
Larkspur	- Delphinium formosum
Japanese iris	- Iris larvigata
Early phlox	- Phlox maculata
Garden phlox	- Phlox paniculata
Baby's breath	- Gypsophila paniculata
Yellow Day lily	- Hemerocallis flava
Oriental poppy	- Papaver orientale var
Hardy chrysanthemum	- Chrysanthemum var
Peony	- Paeonia officinalis
Snowy coneflower	- Rudbeckia speciosa var Newmanii

Medium Sized Perennials

<u>Height - 1 - 2 feet</u>	<u>Plant 1 foot apart</u>
Coreopsis	- Coreopsis lanceolata var grandiflora
Bleeding heart	- Dicentra spectabilis
Blanket flower	- Gaillardia grandiflora
Giant Daisy	- Chrysanthemum maximum
Rocky Mountain columbine	- Aquilegia caerulea

Low Perennials

Carpethian harebell	- Campanula carpatica var alba
Scotch pink	- Dianthus planarius
Lily of the Valley	- Convallaria majalis
Forget-me-not	Myosotis palustris var semper florens
Violet	- Viola pedata

*Not entirely hardy and therefore not recommended for planting in Northwestern Nebraska.