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## EC79-1205 Landscaping Your Home

Clark Jenson

Donald Steinegger

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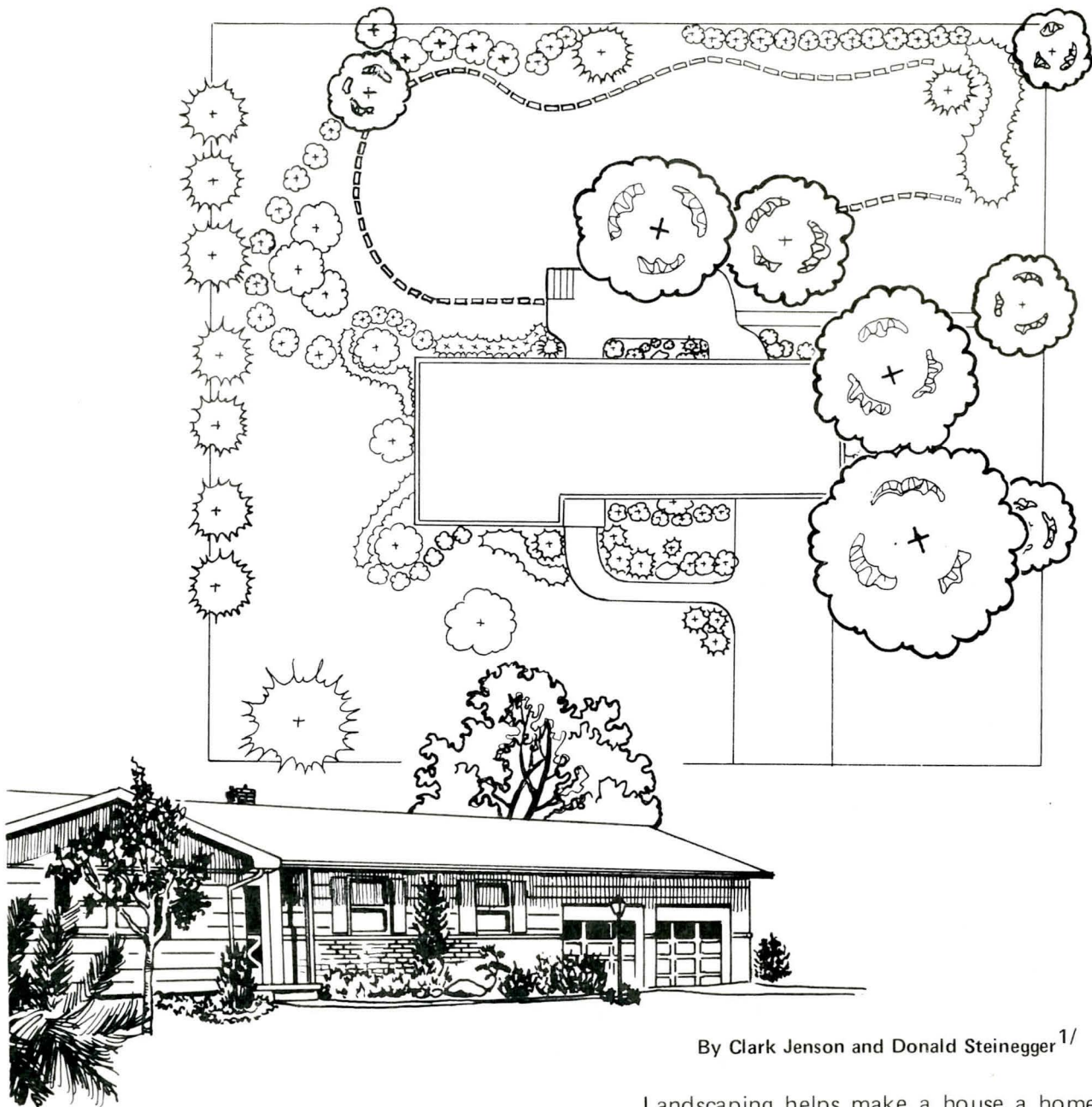
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# LANDSCAPING Your Home...



EXTENSION WORK IN "AGRICULTURE, HOME ECONOMICS AND SUBJECTS RELATING THERETO,"  
THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE, INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE AND NATURAL RESOURCES,  
UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN, COOPERATING WITH THE COUNTIES AND THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
LEO E. LUCAS, DIRECTOR



By Clark Jenson and Donald Steinegger<sup>1/</sup>

## LANDSCAPING YOUR HOME ....

Landscaping helps make a house a home. The placement of lawn, trees, shrubs, and flowers is important in beautifying your home. The same simple rules may be followed in developing new home grounds or in replanting established property.

Landscaping should be a family project. It provides the family opportunity for self expression. Parts of the job can be taken over by a younger member as a 4-H project. Your County Agent or nurseryman can help you select plant materials and can give you other information vital to your locality. This is your chance to develop your home into a picture of beauty.

Here are some things to consider:

<sup>1/</sup> Clark Jenson is County Extension Agent (Horticulture), Douglas County, Omaha. Donald Steinegger is Extension Horticulturist, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources.



## AREAS AROUND YOUR HOME

A yard is usually divided into three use areas: public, service, and private. These areas vary in size depending upon the family's needs and wants.

Around a farm home the service area may require 90 percent of the space because it includes the garden, outbuildings, and feed lots. In contrast, a home in the city might require less than five percent of the space, perhaps only enough space for the garbage can and storage for fireplace wood.

These three areas may be treated as individual units but need not be isolated from each other. Through proper placement of plant materials, you can provide easy access between areas and still maintain each as a unit. This can be done with screen plantings of trees and/or shrubs, fences or walls. These need not be continuous along the borders of the area, but may be arranged to restrict the view yet allow for circulation of air and easy access.

Landscaping develops a pleasing view from every direction. When landscaping your home dimensional depth, as well as the horizontal and vertical lines, must be considered.

Your house is the center of interest and the lawn is a canvas upon which you are going to paint a picture with plants. Trees, used for beauty as well as protection from sun and wind, may soften a particular view and act as a frame for your house. Shrubs unite the house with the ground, accent desirable openings, minimize defects, and add variety and color.

### Public Area

The public, or approach, area is usually near the road or street. It may face the lane where the visitor will receive his first impression of your home. Approach your home in your car as a visitor would. What are the first things you see?

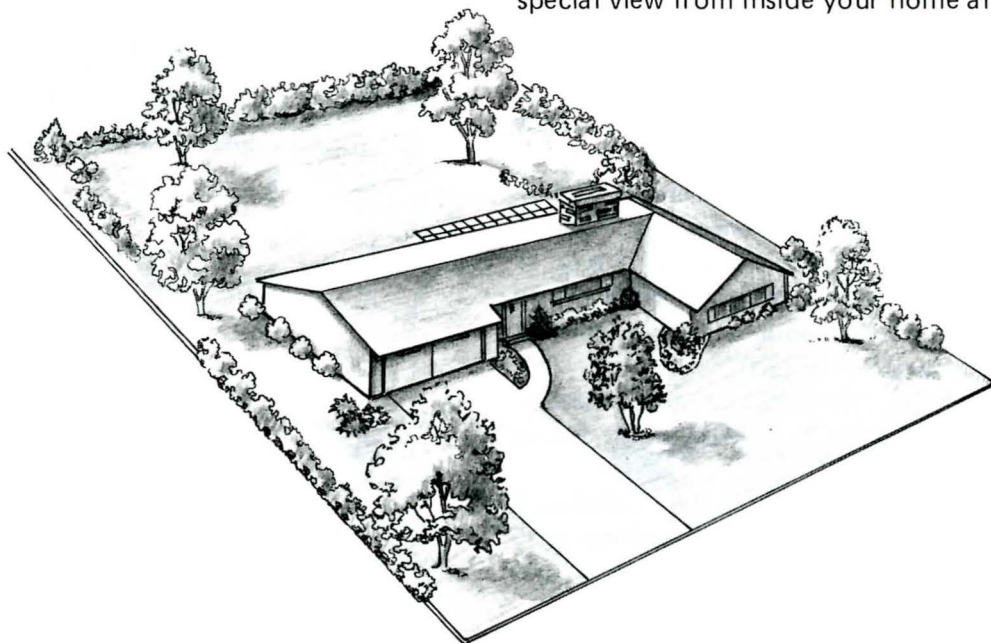
Next, view the front yard and the public access route from inside your home. It is important not to plant trees that will block the desired view from inside. In general, a shady lawn area will present a very pleasing appearance if it is open and uncluttered.

### Service Area

The service area includes everything pertaining to work; the vegetable garden, clotheslines, garbage disposal, storage for fireplace wood, and a pickup and delivery area. Special screen plantings may be required here to conceal or soften an undesirable view.

### Private Area

The private or living area in your backyard emphasizes outdoor relaxation, cooking, eating, and entertainment. A screen planting may be required to break unsightly views or establish privacy from a public road. It should provide a pleasing view from a window as well as a possible open view to a natural point of beauty or interest. Lighting may be used to accent a particular tree, shrub, or group plantings. Proper placement of lights may provide a special view from inside your home after dark.



Part of the private area should be level enough for the games your family enjoys. Another part may be developed for patio and picnic facilities. Flowers can be used here to provide a touch of beauty and interest. The lawn in this area should be an open expanse of grass, free from excessive tree plantings which restrict the view as well as reduce recreational value.

Careful thought should be given to the tree plantings in your backyard. A properly placed tree in your backyard will break the roof line as it grows to a height where it can be seen from the front of your home. It will complete the framing of your house and improve the appearance and balance of the entire landscape setting.

### MAKE A PLAN

The time you spend planning is the most profitable time you'll spend on the entire project. Remember, you can't do everything overnight. With a plan you can complete small projects as time and money permit.

Landscaping your home is similar to building your house. You don't buy the lumber before you look at the plan to see what is needed. Make a plan and determine what you need before you begin to plant.

It is easier to change the location of a tree or shrub on your plan than in your yard. A plan of your home grounds drawn on graph paper with a scale of one inch equaling eight feet or one inch equaling 16 feet may be used.

#### Steps in Making the Plan

A. Measure your property and draw an outline of it. (Make drawing as if viewed from the top.)

B. Draw in all permanent installations such as buildings, sidewalks, pools, fences and drives. Sketch in lightly the existing plantings, if any, to scale. Make sure that existing plantings are drawn to mature size (check with your county Extension agent or local nursery if in doubt).

C. Sketch in an outline of the public, service, and private areas which will meet your family needs.

D. Add specific use sections of the private area. These will include such things as the garden, play yard, patio, clotheslines, cut-flower beds and perennial borders.

E. If desired make a perspective sketch of the proposed planting as it will appear from important

viewpoints such as the entrance walk looking at the front door.

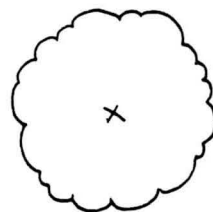
F. Determine the plant material cost and the budget of your landscaping so you can determine what you can do in any given year and budget your time and labor. This can be stretched over several years. However, keep in mind that there are certain plantings which will take priority, depending upon your situation. Usually you will plant the large trees and the slower growing trees first.

### BASIC PRINCIPLES

By following these five basic principles, you may achieve good landscape effects.

#### Simplicity

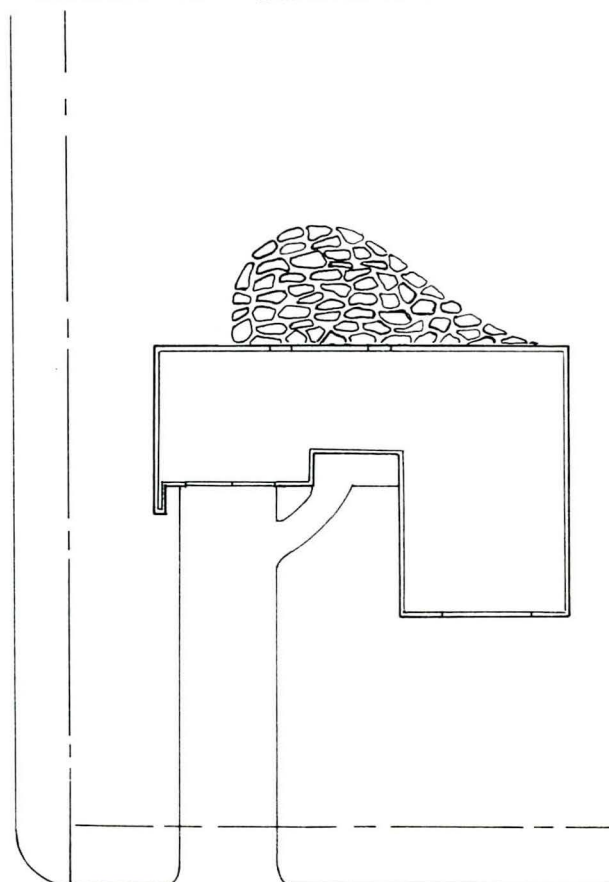
Planting is meant to compliment the home, not to compete with it. Keep your plantings simple.



Deciduous Trees



Deciduous Shrub



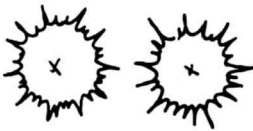




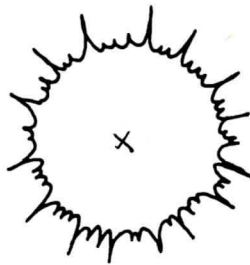
Clipped Hedge



Unclipped Hedge



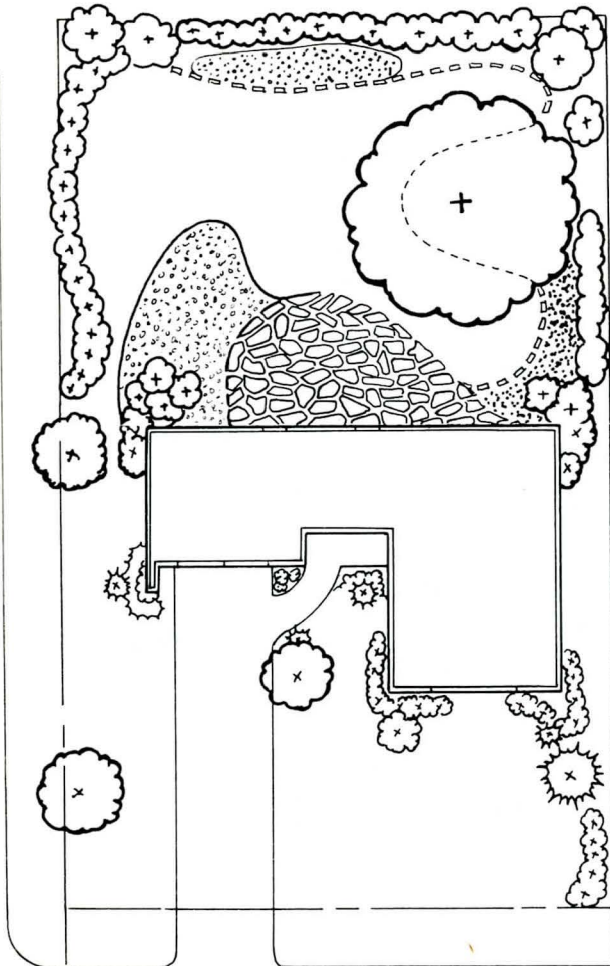
Evergreen Shrubs



Evergreen Tree



Grouping of  
Deciduous Shrubs



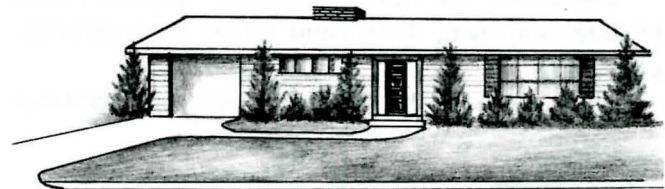
You will tend to plant young trees and shrubs too close together, so that crowding will occur later when they attain their full size. Don't clutter open areas of the lawn with trees, shrubs, flowerbeds, or mixed collections of lawn ornaments.

By over-planting or making poor selections you can become a slave to your yard. Select the plant materials carefully. You can get plants, either evergreens or deciduous, in any size or shape to fill a given landscape need without shearing. Beware of bargain nursery stock and fly-by-night landscape designers. A reputable nurseryman can help you find the right plant for the right place.

### OVER - PLANTING



5th Year



10th Year



15th Year

## Scale

Select the right size trees and shrubs for your home. Large trees and shrubs should be used in landscaping larger homes; small trees and shrubs should be used for lower, one-story houses.

Before you plant, take time to look up to see whether an overhead utility wire will interfere with the normal growth of the plant. It may be possible to relocate the wire.

## Focal Point

There should be a focal point for each view, that is, some dominant feature to which the eye is drawn. From a distance this would be the home itself. In a closer view the focal point may be the entrance. Night lighting may provide a scene of beauty from either inside or outside your home.

## Balance

Let the arrangement of plant materials balance the view of your home. The material need not be same on both sides, but the impression of the total balance or symmetry should prevail. Through proper placement of plant materials, you will enhance the overall view.

## Planting Order

Plant first the most important features, which include the lawn, trees, and screen or windbreak plantings,

Next, perhaps the following year, are plantings

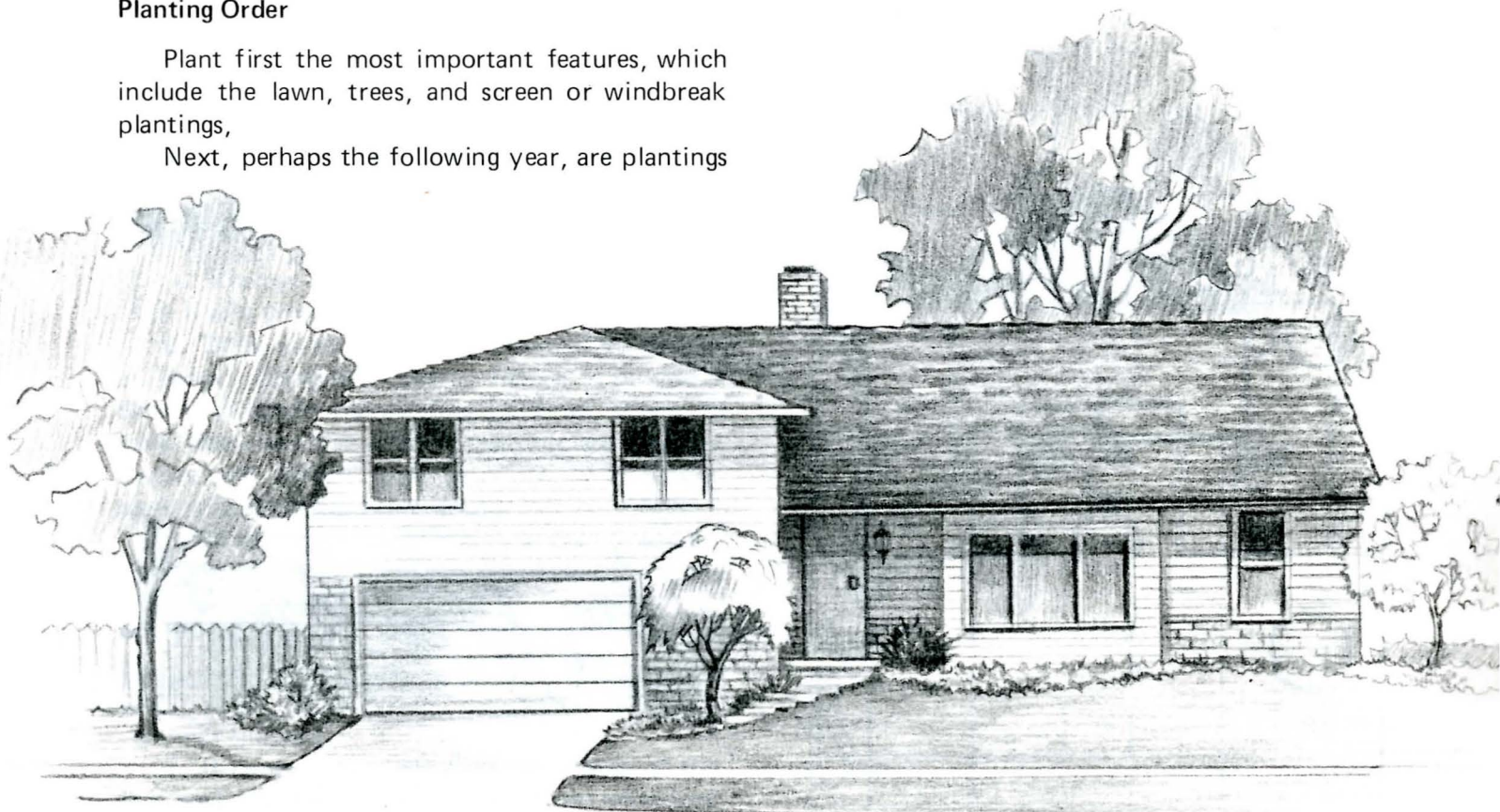
around the foundation. Then come perennial borders, rose beds, naturalized plantings of bulbs around the base of shrubs, and other plantings desired by the family.

## Entrance Plantings

Entrance plantings can help establish symmetry and balance. A heavier planting of shrubs on the architecturally light side of your home will give it more balance and better symmetry.

The entrance is usually the point you wish to accent, so you may want an accent plant here to draw the viewer's eye. The entrance will be more in balance with a larger plant on the short side of the house. A corner planting also may be more massive on the short side to restore balance. If the entrance is near the corner, the corner planting and entrance planting may converge upon each other.

Occasionally, vines planted in an entranceway may complicate the design and make it difficult to achieve a completed appearance.





## Foundation Planting

Foundation plantings are shrubs planted along the foundation to soften the lines of your home and to minimize essential but unattractive features.

Usually lines most harsh to the view are vertical lines. A typical example is the corner. The foundation planting should be lower under the windows and slightly higher at the corners.

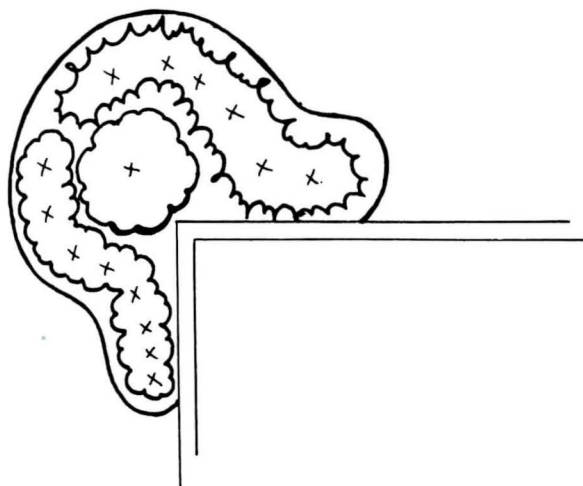
Planting distance between small, low-growing shrubs will vary from two and one-half to three feet. Medium shrubs require from three to four feet while larger shrubs require from six to eight feet in spacing.

Locate shrub and tree plantings a minimum of three feet from the foundation. A general spacing rule is two-thirds of a shrub's ultimate height away from the foundation or from another shrub the same size.

It is not necessary to plant shrubs continuously around the foundation of your home. Foundation planting materials should accent your home, not hide it. If you wish to hide a specific area of the foundation a solid foundation planting may offer a better display.

## Corner Plantings

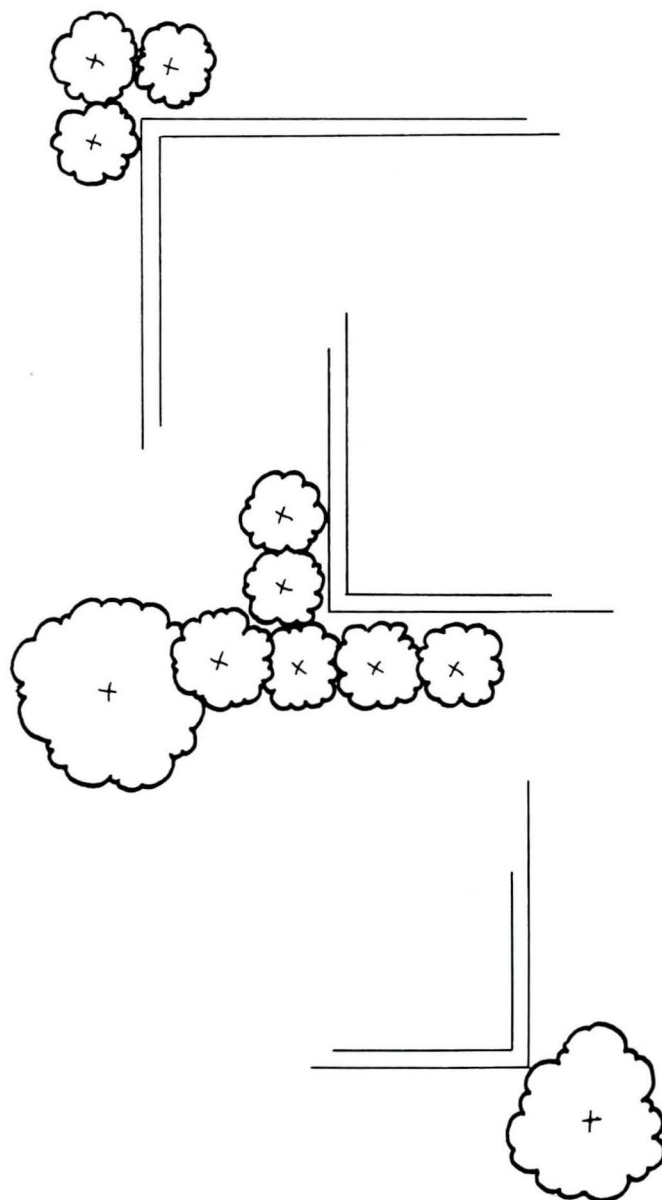
The vertical lines of the corner of a home are not considered a thing of beauty. Therefore, attempt with shrubs to soften these lines or draw the corner roof line nearer ground level. On the corner use taller shrubs with lower plants flanking them to allow them to better unite the building with the ground.



A shrub planted at a corner of the home should not exceed two-thirds of the distance to the roof line. The size of these corner plantings will vary with the size of the house. If you have a small home use small plantings of ornamental trees and shrubs; for larger homes choose larger plantings.

If you plant small shrubs at the base of the corner of your house you may want to plant a small tree 10 to 20 feet from the corner. This will give the corner a more natural look.

Plant this tree far enough away so that the limbs will not mar the finish of the house after it has reached full size. Observe corner plantings from both inside and outside the house to make sure these plantings do not break the view. Also, give careful consideration to height of the planting. If a





window is nearby, select plant materials that will not form a dense cover and interfere with the view.

### **ADD COLOR AND VARIETY TO YOUR PLANTING**

Plant materials if carefully selected can provide a variety of beauty during the year, such as Red Stemmed Dogwood which has red canes during the winter, green foliage in the spring and white flowers in summer.

Time of flowering, color, and size may be worthy of special consideration. There is a wide variation in foliage texture of shrubs. Many blooms will be followed by a crop of berries for still another color effect. Some shrubs provide seasonal foliage coloring while other shrubs and trees may not change color.

Many shrubs and trees provide an all-season color contrast while others offer only a seasonal color change.

Proper selection of shrubs that add variety and color will give you the effect of two or three shrubs in a single planting space.

#### **Screen Plantings**

Screen plantings may be either evergreen plant materials or deciduous plantings which lose their leaves during the winter. A screen planting may vary in height from one you can look over from a sitting position to one 10 to 12 feet high and allowing little or no visibility from either side. Screening may be done with plant materials, fences, or other materials which will alter the view.

A number of plant materials provide good screens. Taller screens can be provided using large varieties of honeysuckle while lower screens may consist of cotoneaster, pfizer, or euonymus. Slow growing screens may include the barberries and dwarf honeysuckle.

Tall screens make use of such narrow trees as poplar or the slender crabs. These will attain heights of 20 to 35 feet and usually will provide screens not quite as dense as those previously mentioned. Remember to consider the height of the plant when it has reached maturity rather than its height when you plant it.

### **PLANT TO MINIMIZE ARCHITECTURAL PROBLEMS**

You may observe architectural defects in your home which plant materials can soften. A shrub

may soften the effect of a jog in the wall or tie down a chimney that would otherwise dominate a viewer's attention. A small tree may break monotonous horizontal lines or a vine spread over a large expanse may soften the view.

Blank walls extending for some distance may be minimized by planting a small tree or a shrub to improve the appearance and provide an interesting shadow pattern.

### **THE LAWN AREA**

In any landscape the lawn area is one of the most important single beauty factors. It is the setting upon which the rest of the landscape is built.

Avoid the use of circular flower beds with unnatural rock gardens, small winding sidewalks, and white-washed or other discolored stones. These may detract rather than add beauty to the appearance of your home.

A large expanse of unbroken grass should direct the viewer's attention toward the location you want to emphasize. Narrow strips of lawn are not as effective as larger areas.

### **DRY WALL CONSTRUCTION**

A stone retaining wall may be an answer to a problem slope in your yard. Retaining walls can be made from almost any type of stone.

Refer to EC 73-1222 Rock Retaining Wall Construction.

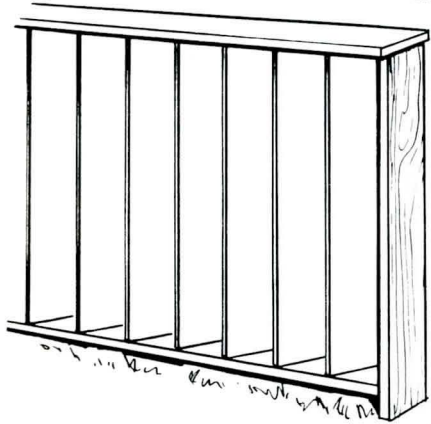
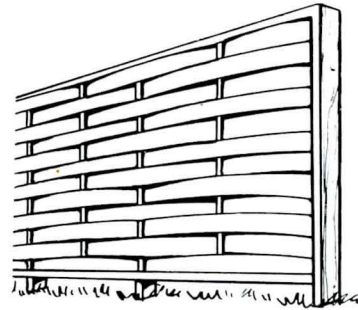
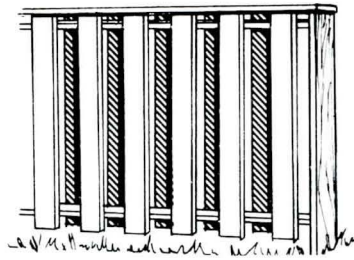
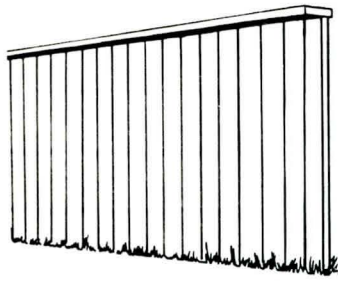
### **FENCES**

Many types and styles of fences can be used in your backyard. They are usually used around the private or service areas only.

One reason for a fence is privacy. Another purpose is to contain children and pets. Boards in a board fence may be placed vertically, horizontally or in other combinations.

Wire fences will not provide the privacy of a wooden-type fence. To break an expanse of bare fencing you may plant shrubs in groups of three to five or an occasional climbing vine or shrub in strategic spots.

Fences are architectural elements in the landscape. They should therefore be attached at right angles to buildings, preferably at the corners. Do not mix the style of fencing. Try to repeat the



architectural materials and forms found on the building.

## SOILS

In flower beds and vegetable gardens the soil may be improved in time with an application of organic material.

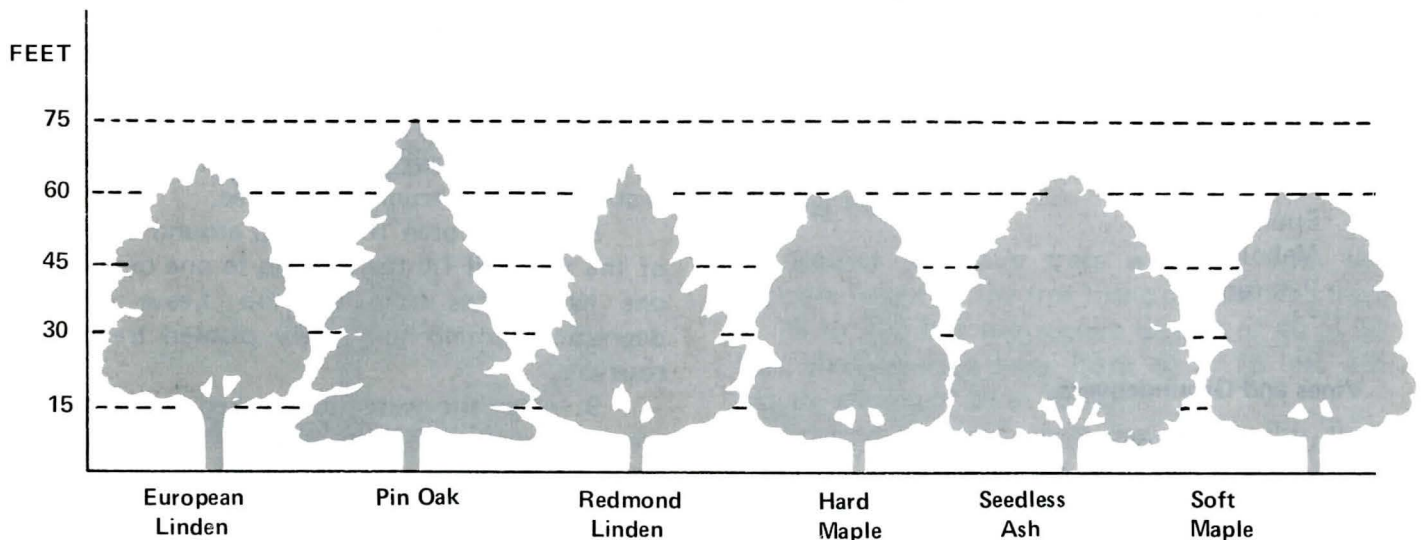
Clay soils may require organic material or sand to improve water penetration and water holding capacity. Sandy soils may also be improved by adding organic material like peat moss or compost.

For trees and shrubs you should improve the soil condition at the time of planting as much as possible. Some heavy clay soils take in moisture slowly and incorporating organic material encourages water absorption and improves drainage.

## PLANT SELECTIONS

### Lawn Trees

Seedless Ash  
Linden  
Maples  
Oaks  
Honey Locust (Podless and Thornless)  
Hackberry





## Flowering Trees

Flowering Crab  
Flowering Plum  
Mountain Ash  
Red Bud  
See E.C. 74-1737 Broadleaf Trees for Nebraska.

## Deciduous Shrubs (Low-Growing)

1½ to 4 feet  
Cotoneaster  
Barberry  
Spirea  
Lodense Privet

## Tall Shrubs (over 6 feet)

Euonymus alatus (S.E. only)  
Cotoneaster  
Forsythia  
Lilacs  
Honeysuckle

## Medium-Sized Shrubs (4 to 6 feet)

Honeysuckle (Clavey)  
Cotoneaster (Divericota)  
Euonymus (Alatus Compactus)  
Ninebark  
Spirea  
Weigela

## Coniferous Evergreens

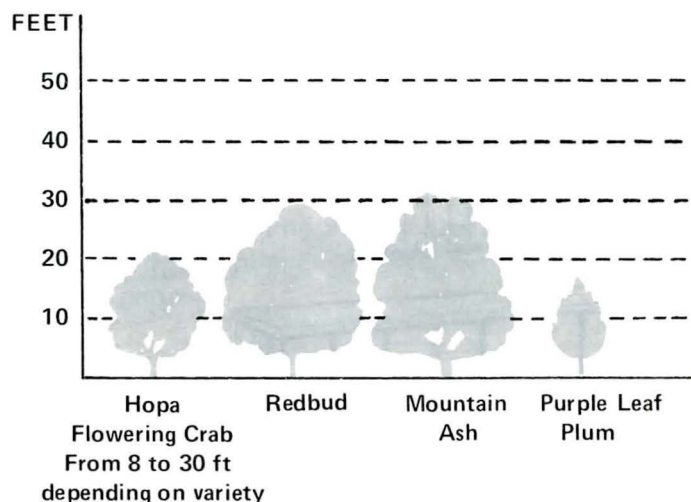
Concolor fir  
Ponderosa, Austrian, Scotch  
Blue Spruce (S.E. only)  
Juniper (Spreading and upright)

## Broadleaf Evergreen Shrubs (S.E.N only)

Euonymus S.E.  
Mahonia  
Pyracantha

## Vines and Groundcovers

Vinca S.E.N. only.  
Trumpet Honeysuckle S.E. Nb. only  
Boston Ivy S.E. N only  
English Ivy S.E. N only



## HOW TO PLANT BALLED TREES

1. Don't handle or lift balled trees by their tops or branches.
2. Provide protection for the tree from excessive wind and heat. Keep the ball of soil moist until it is planted.
3. Dig a hole from 8 to 12 inches wider and from 3 to 4 inches deeper than the ball measurements.
4. Keep the top soil separate when you dig the hole then place it next to the ball when you are filling in the soil around the new planting.
5. Planting depth should not be more than two to three inches deeper than the original soil surface on the ball.
6. Burlap should *not* be removed from the ball when planting.
7. Next, fill the hole 3/4 full of good soil. Keep the newly-added soil firm, but not packed. Add water until the new soil is settled and all of the air pockets have been removed. Cut the cord which is attached to the trunk of the tree.
8. Now, loosen the burlap around the trunk of the tree and fill the hole up to one or one and one half inches from the top. Leave a slight depression around the newly planted tree for a reservoir.
9. After the water has soaked in mulch the area around the tree with peat moss or some other organic material.
10. Follow a careful watering program. This will vary with the soil and the weather conditions.

## PLANTING

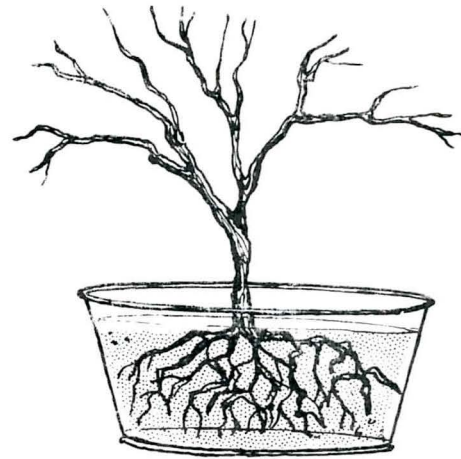
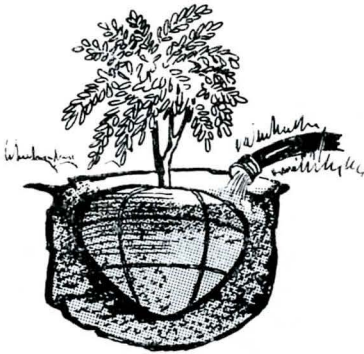
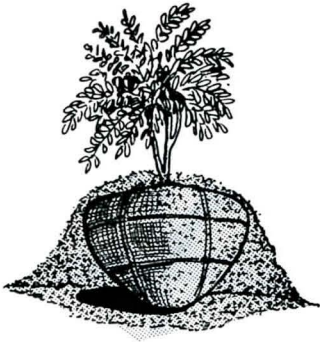
### When to Plant

Bare-root or deciduous trees are usually planted in the spring. It is well to plant them as early as possible so growth may begin before the hot summer temperatures. At planting, most deciduous tree trunks with smooth bark should be wrapped with a treated tree wrapping paper to protect them from sun scald.

Balled and burlapped deciduous trees may be planted either in spring or fall. Canned or potted deciduous plants may be planted anytime. However, best survival will be experienced if you plant in the spring. Try to plant most trees and shrubs before the new growth begins to show in the spring.

In general, planting may be done when the ground is thawed and air temperature above freezing.

Care for your nursery stock after it arrives by keeping its root system moist. Proper planting depth and a well organized watering program will do much to insure the success of your newly planted nursery stock.



### Spacing Trees

Spacing of shade trees will vary with the ultimate height of the tree being planted. Tall trees of 75 to 100 feet will require spacing of 40 to 50 feet. Medium-sized trees from 40 to 75 feet will require spacing of 35 to 45 feet.

Spacing of small trees may vary with their purpose. They are often used in smaller group plantings requiring closer spacing than were they planted as individual trees.



## Planting Tips

Before planting, take time to look up. Avoid overhead utility wires which will interfere with normal plant growth. Place the plant so it will not become a victim of a snowslide or water runoff from the roof of your home. Consider whether you are planting in an established yard or next to one with trees that will shade your new planting and prevent normal growth.

Never allow plant roots to become dry. After you receive your plants from the nursery, soak the roots and keep them damp until planting time. Keep them out of the wind in a cool, moist place. Most bareroot plant materials will grow better if you soak them in a bucket of water several hours before planting. Check your nursery planting guide for instructions for each type of plant.

For bareroot planting make the hole large enough for the root system. Allow six to twelve inches between the side of the hole and the ends of the root system. If you are working with a heavy, hard soil, loosen it sufficiently in the bottom of the hole to provide good water penetration. If the soil condition is such that water penetration is altered, you may have to add organic material or gravel to allow drainage away from the root system.

Place a mound of soil in the bottom of the hole and spread the tree roots evenly over the top of the mound. Set the plant in the soil at about the same depth it was planted in the nursery. The old soil line is often visible on the trunk of the tree.

Work the soil around the roots carefully as you fill the hole. When the hole is two-thirds full, firm the soil around the roots again and fill the hole with water. Water soaking into the soil will settle it and reduce air pockets. After watering the plant, settle it by lifting it up and down slightly to release some of the air pockets which may have accumulated around the root system.

When the water has soaked in fill the hole level with soil. Water again, and you should have about an inch to an inch and one-half depression around the tree. A mulch may be applied to aid in retaining moisture. For most trees and under general conditions, water again in three to five days.

A maintenance program of one watering every seven to ten days should be sufficient depending upon the type of soil and weather. Continue these waterings until the tree is established and then gradually reduce the frequency of waterings.

