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Making the Farm Grounds Attractive

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Fig. 1.—Attractive grounds of a Missouri farm home.

The farm home with its immediate surroundings is the greatest asset that the farm family possesses. The attachments that are formed for one's childhood home are associated with the surroundings of the home as frequently as with the home itself. Nothing in after life so holds the affection of the children to their old homestead as the trees, shrubs, and flowers, many of which they helped to plant and cultivate. The impressions that children obtain from interesting and at-

tractive home surroundings remain not only as a pleasant memory, but as a standard of comparison and a stabilizing influence throughout life.

The yard is the setting for the picture made by the house and out-buildings, along with the trees, shrubs and flowers, and no home can be attractive without taking these into consideration. Pride should urge every farm family to make the picture which their home presents to the passing public a charming one.



Fig. 2.—An appropriate setting of trees and shrubs.

The farm home offers great possibilities in the way of attractive surroundings and yet the majority of farm dwellers have not taken advantage of this situation. Probably the outstanding reason for this apparent neglect is the supposed cost of beautifying the farm home grounds.

This need not be discouraging even though the farm folk have not much money for such expenditure. The farm home usually has a setting of natural beauty and ample room for planting. The farmer has access to native shrubbery, vines and flowers near at hand and facilities for transplanting them.

NEATNESS AND ORDERLINESS

The goal in home ground improvement is to develop attractive surroundings as easily and inexpensively as possible. A smooth open lawn with the necessary buildings and equipment neatly and conveniently grouped form the basis for such improvement.

Putting the grounds in order is the first step in beautification. Farm machinery, old stumps, discarded household utensils and other unnecessary articles should be removed.

The service portion of yard, screened or fenced off, is an ideal place for the woodpile, grinding stone, laundry equipment and other supplies which may be reached with the fewest steps. The clothes-line placed close to the side or back of the house is convenient.

Flower beds enclosed with walls of rocks, bricks or similar materials present an unnatural appearance and are difficult to keep in good condition. The flowers planted in borders where they may be better cared for are more desirable.

Clumps of shrubbery and perennials scattered about the yard obstruct the view and interfere with adequate care of the yard. They should be dug up, planted around the borders or in corners, and the ground leveled and seeded.

REPAIRS

The house, outbuildings, and fences should all be kept in good repair. Broken front steps leaning against a porch, open beneath, do not make an inviting or safe entrance. A new plank or two and some lattice work will change the appearance of the entire front. A replaced board in an outbuilding, or a new hinge for its door, will cost so little and take away the run-down appearance of the building. Fence posts that are bent or broken, with their sagging gates, detract from the appearance of any place. Some spare time and a little outlay of money will remedy this.

PAINTING

As a usual thing, the application of paint when and where needed is more often neglected than any other task about the farm. The longer the painting is delayed, the more expensive it becomes and more difficult to apply. No farmer can afford this neglect since paint not only preserves the wood in dwellings and outbuildings but adds much to the appearance of the place.

Anyone can do an average job of painting. If some member of the farm family applies the paint the cost will not be prohibitive. A gallon of paint will cover from 400 to 800 square feet of surface, depending upon the condition of the surface painted. A well prepared surface gives the best results.

Good linseed oil and white lead will produce the best results both for wear and appearance. A small portion of tinting color may be added, if a light color is desired. Due to their spacious settings and freedom from discoloration by soot, farm buildings are especially well adapted to a light color or white.



Fig. 3.—Outbuildings painted the same color as the house. An open lawn with foundation planting just started.

The outbuildings should be painted the same color as the house since all are a part of the same unit. A white house, a red barn, and a gray garage, with all of the other buildings unpainted, cannot present an attractive appearance, even though they possess great elements of architectural beauty.

WALKS AND DRIVEWAYS

Walks and driveways should be as few as possible, both from the standpoint of cost in making and labor of upkeep. They should be conveniently located and generally direct as to course. This does not mean there should be no curves, but there should be some apparent good reason for making the curve.

It is better to keep the driveway to one side of the yard rather than divide the yard into two sections, thus making it appear smaller. It should be on the side of least attractive view and least exposure to the living rooms of the house.

Practically every farmer has available material suitable for making a substantial driveway for the farm, such as cinders, creek gravel, chat, shale or crushed limestone.

Where built by the labor available on the farm, cement walks are not prohibitive as to cost. However, nothing is more attractive or appropriate for walks on a farm than flat stones set low enough to permit a lawn mower to be used. Often the only cost of this type is that of transportation.



Fig. 4.—Barns and lot partially screened from the dwelling with tall shrubs.

TREES

The chief function of trees is to provide shade, but in addition, they should appear to shelter the home and to form a frame for the picture made by the house and outbuildings when viewed from the highway. The house should have as a background a few tall trees to break the sky-line.

Shade trees should not be planted directly in front of the dwelling, but at the sides, or, if in front, in line with the corners. They should be grouped as found in nature, not planted in straight rows, as this results in a stiff, inartistic appearance, not in keeping with a farmstead. Too many shade trees will prevent a good growth of

grass, shrubs and flowers and may cause a musty odor in the house by shutting out the sunshine and air which is so much needed.

February, March and early April form the spring tree planting season in Missouri, beginning about February 1 in the southern section and about March 1 in the north. Native trees such as American Elm, Sugar Maple, White Ash, Red, White and Pin Oak, and the evergreen Red Cedar, together with Shortleaf Pine in the Ozarks, form attractive shade and ornamental trees, and can usually be transplanted from nearby fields and woodlands with little or no expense save time or labor. Native flowering and fruit bearing shrubs, such as Dogwood, Redbud, Wild Black Cherry, Sumac, Elderberry, Shadbush or Service Berry, Wild Plum, Hawthorne and Buckbrush, also make attractive clump plantings and tend to attract birds. All native stock may be successfully transplanted if the following general rules are closely followed:

1. Transplant early, as soon as the frost is definitely out of the ground, and before the buds have started to swell.

2. Transplant small stock, preferably from two to six feet in height.

3. Preserve as much of the root system as possible and prune the ends of broken roots with a sharp knife.

4. Prune the top of the tree heavily, and the larger the tree, the more pruning is necessary. Make all cuts at the fork of a branch or just above an active bud. No one ever prunes a tree too heavily. A good rule to follow is to prune twice as much as you think necessary. The tree will then be pruned about half as much as it should be. With small shrubs and sprouts cut off the entire top, planting only a stub a few inches above ground, and a large root system.

5. If planting is to be done in full sunlight, obtain stock which has been growing in the open. Densely-grown, shaded trees have tender bark, tall straight trunks unable to stand strong winds, and usually have smaller root systems than trees growing in the open.

6. Transplant trees to sites similar to those in which they have been growing. Trees growing in moist, deep soil can not be expected to survive if transplanted to dry upland ridges and the same is true of trees transplanted from dry to moist sites.

7. Keep roots moist from the moment trees are lifted until they are planted. Soaking roots after they have once thoroughly dried out can not restore them.

8. Dig large holes for planting, spread roots out naturally, tamp soil firmly about roots, water heavily, and fertilize. Mulching with straw or leaves will reduce soil moisture evaporation and make

additional moisture available to trees during dry periods. Cultivate and water during the first growing season, as this is the critical period for all transplanted stock.

THE LAWN

In this publication it is not feasible to attempt to adequately cover the whole question of lawn culture, therefore only maintenance problems of the established lawn will be considered.

Fertilizers.—The systematic and regular use of the proper fertilizers is essential for maintaining a satisfactory lawn. The lower the fertility level of the soil in the lawn the greater the necessity of an adequate fertilizer program. One good procedure is to apply 3 to 5 pounds of sulfate of ammonia or 10 to 20 pounds of 4-12-4 per 1,000 square feet, early in April and again about the middle of May and 10 to 20 pounds of 4-12-4 per 1000 square feet in September or October every year. Where crab grass is not a problem some organic fertilizer may be used in the place of the sulfate of ammonia. The fertilizer should be applied when the grass is dry (free from dew and rain) and then thoroughly watered if possible.

Mowing.—It must be remembered that grass is cut primarily to improve its appearance and not as a benefit to the grass. On the contrary, mowing is more or less of an injury to the grass and the problem is to mow it so as to cause the least injury consistent with maintaining the desired appearance. The grass should be cut as high as possible and the clippings should not be removed unless they are thick enough to mat down and damage the grass. Mowings after the first of June should be much less frequent than during the early spring when the grass is growing rapidly. Frequent, and short mowings during the dormant period from June to September, encourages crab grass and other summer weeds.

Watering.—Water should probably not be applied unless the soil can be wet at least 4 inches deep. Frequent light sprinklings usually do more harm than good.

Weed Eradication.—If the lawn is properly fertilized and the grass mowed as little as necessary, most weeds will be practically controlled. No method of control of dandelions, crab grass, chickweed, plantain and similar weeds will be successful on a lawn that is mowed too close and too frequently or where the fertility is so low as to keep grass from growing vigorously.

Reseeding.—Even under the best conditions of management it is essential that thin spots be reseeded from time to time. The best time to do this is in the fall in September or early October. The

land should be raked enough to work in the fertilizers and seeds. Kentucky bluegrass and red top mixtures are best for this use. If the lawn is in very bad condition, with a poor soil and weeds prevalent it is usually best to start a new lawn. County agents can give recommendations on procedures, mixtures of seeds and fertilizers and time of seeding.

SHRUBS

Shrubs should be added to the picture made by the lawn and the trees, with the house as the center of interest, if the picture is to appear finished.

Shrubs planted around the buildings will break the formal straight lines and make them appear more a part of the landscape. In border plantings they will form a frame for the yard as a whole insuring unity and privacy. In mass plantings they may be used to screen unsightly objects or views or to make parts of the ground more private. They should seldom be used to outline walks and driveways. This is a practice consistent with the design of public parks.

If one is limited in the amount of planting to be done at one time, the first consideration should be given to the planting around the foundations of the buildings as this will make the most perceptible improvement in the appearance of the place in the shortest time.

The height of the house and its elevation will determine the variety of shrubs to be selected for foundation plantings. Large shrubs that look well at the corner of a large house would appear to smother a cottage. A house with a three-foot foundation does not look well with plantings of extremely low growing shrubs, or annual flowers.

Corners of the buildings, corners formed by ells and porches, and long unbroken spaces between windows, provide the best location for tall shrubs around the foundation. Lower growing shrubs should be planted in front of these in order to have continuous foliage from the tops of the taller ones down to the ground. The plantings at the back corners of the dwelling may be extended out into the yard in an irregular line in order to partially screen off the back or service portion. This affords greater privacy. The appearance of planting in straight lines should be avoided except in hedges or in outlining driveways. No driveway which cuts through the lawn should be defined by side plantings of this sort. Shrubs of medium height and low growing ones may be used under windows and around porches. Portions of the foundation should show

to give the impression that the house is resting upon a firm support. Shrubs planted at the foundation should be set out far enough from the building so that root and branch growth will not be restricted. If house eaves are wide, shrubs should be placed out far enough to catch the rainfall, not under the eaves. This distance out from the building will be determined by the size of the shrubs when full grown and the projection of the eaves. Planting too close to a building is a most common mistake.

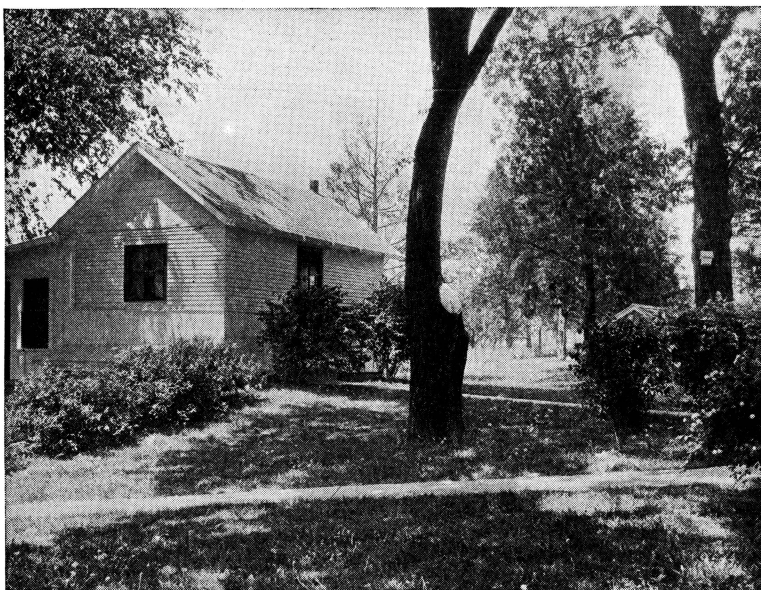


Fig. 5.—An attractive back yard.

Another thing to be avoided in foundation as well as other planting is using too many shrubs of the same kind together or having different groups too much alike. There should be a variety in height, form, foliage, and season of bloom of the shrubs to avoid monotony of appearance. However, enough of one kind should be planted adjacent to each other to give a definite effect at that point in the planting.

A border mass planting around the yard is desirable as a frame to the farmstead picture. Between the planting at the foundation and that along the border there should be an unbroken, gently sloping lawn. A shrub border is useful in screening off the poultry yard, the barnyard, the vegetable garden, and to hide abrupt changes in

Low Growing Shrubs for Planting in Front of Medium and Tall Shrubs
Plant 2-3 feet apart

Common name	Height	Bloom		Botanical name
	in feet	Time	Color	
Anthony Waterer Spirea	2	July-Aug.	Crimson	<i>Spiraea Anthony Waterer</i>
Dwarf Deutzia	2	May	White	<i>Deutzia gracilis</i>
Thunberg's Spirea	3	May	White	<i>Spiraea Thunbergii</i>
Hills of Snow Hydrangea	3	June-Aug.	White	<i>Hydrangea arborescens</i>
Fragrant Sumac	3	May	Yellow	<i>Rhus aromatica</i>
Flowering Almond	2-3	May	Pink-White	<i>Prunus communis</i>
Dwarf Red Spirea	2-3	May	Red	<i>Spiraea callosa rubra</i>

Native—Wild Gooseberry, Wild Rose, Buckbrush, and Staghorn Sumac.

Shrubs of Medium Height Suitable for Foundation Planting and in Corners and Borders
with Tall Shrubs
Plant 3 or 4 feet apart

Common name	Height	Bloom		Botanical name
	in feet	Time	Color	
Red Weigela	4	June-July	Crimson	<i>Weigela</i> , (Eva Rathke)
Japanese Rose	3-4	June-Sept.	Red	<i>Rosa rugosa</i>
Snowberry	3-4	May	Pink	<i>Symphoricarpos racemosus</i>
White Kerria	3-5	May	White	<i>Rhodotypos kerrioides</i>
Lemoine's Deutzia	3-4	May	White	<i>Deutzia Lemoinei</i>
Van Houtte's Spirea	5	May	White	<i>Spiraea Van Houttei</i>
Butterfly Bush	4	June	Blue	<i>Buddleia variabilis</i>
Japanese Barberry	4	June	No value	<i>Berberis Thunbergii</i>
Flowering Currant	4-5	May	Yellow	<i>Ribes aureum</i>
Deutzia Pride of Rochester	4-5	June	White	<i>Deutzia scabra-P.O.R.</i>
Japanese Quince	4-5	May	Scarlet	<i>Cydonia-Japonica</i>

Tall Shrubs and Small Trees Suitable for Corners, Screens and to Give Variety in Borders
Plant 5 or 6 feet apart

Common name	Height	Bloom		Botanical name
	in feet	Time	Color	
Red Bud	10	April	Red	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>
Rose Weigela	6	May-June	Pink	<i>Weigela Diervilla rosea</i>
Japan Snowball	8	May-June	White	<i>Viburnum plicatum</i>
High Bush Cranberry	8	May-June	White	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>
Tamarisk	8	April	Pink	<i>Tamarix Africana</i>
Wayfaring Tree	10	June	White	<i>Viburnum Lantana</i>
Arrow Wood	6	June	White	<i>Viburnum dentatum</i>
Fragrant Mock Orange	8	May	White	<i>Philadelphus coronarius</i>
Bush Honeysuckle	8	April-May	Various	<i>Lonicera tatarica</i>
Althea or Rose of Sharon (bush form)	7-8	July-Oct.	Various	<i>Hibiscus syriacus</i>
Golden Bell	5-6	April	Yellow	<i>Forsythia media</i>
Red twigged dogwood	6	June	White	<i>Cornus alba sibirica</i>
Flowering dogwood	10-15	May	White	<i>Cornus Florida</i>
Fragrant Honeysuckle	4-6	April-May	Pink	<i>Lonicera fragrantissima</i>
Bush Hydrangea	8	July-Oct.	White	<i>Hydrangea paniculata</i> <i>grandiflora</i>
Lilac (common)	8-10	May	Various	<i>Syringa vulgaris</i>
Lilac (Persian)	7-8	May	Lavender	<i>Syringa Persica</i>

Native—Sumac, Elder, Redbud, Dogwood, Hawthorne, and Wild Crabapple.

grade. To plant the border with the least amount of work a strip about four feet wide should be plowed around the yard then harrowed and fertilized for the planting. This strip should be eighteen inches out from the fence to provide for convenient cultivation. Taller shrubs should be planted in corners and at the back with finer and lower growing ones in front of them. They should be planted from three to five feet apart, depending upon the size of



Fig. 6.—The shrubbery planting effectively screens this poultry house from the dwelling.

the shrub when mature. Borders will be more interesting if, instead of a straight front, there is an irregular succession of curves or bays along the lawn side of the planting. Where there is a pleasing view in any direction from porches or windows, the border and corner plantings should frame the view and not obscure it. This is done by using low shrubs or omitting them for a space.

PROPAGATION OF SHRUBS

Branch Cuttings.—These should be from five to eight inches in length, and have not less than two buds or two pairs of buds. The top end of the cuttings should be about an inch above a bud to conserve the moisture around the bud until growth starts. The lower end should be cut just below a joint with a slanting cut to furnish greater space for sending out root growth. These cuttings can be made from semi-mature wood in early summer, and placed in boxes of sand with a layer of pebbles in the bottom, to afford good drainage. The sand should be kept moist, and the box shaded from the sun in the middle of the day until the root system is well started.

Or if time does not permit the work being done in the summer, these cuttings can be made in the fall when growth has stopped,

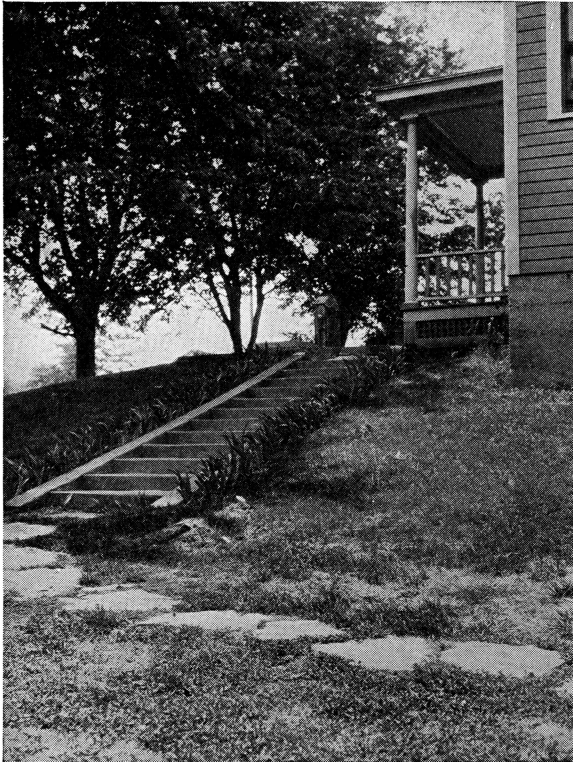


Fig. 7.—Iris outlining the steps and the flat stone walk are attractive additions to this back yard. Could be further improved by planting shrubs around corner of foundation.

tied in bundles and placed upside-down in sandy, well drained soil at a depth sufficient to prevent freezing. Or they may be kept in moist sand in the basement or cellar. In the spring the bundle should be taken up and the cuttings planted in trenches about four

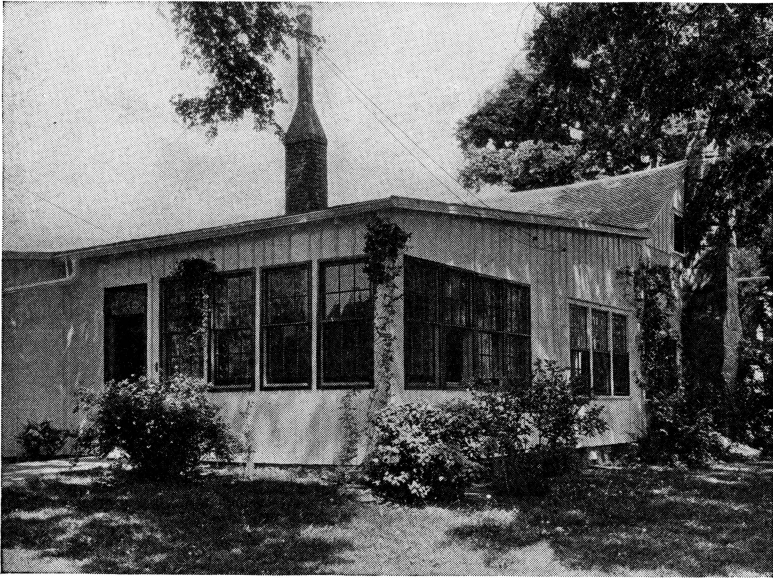


Fig. 8.—Shrubby plantings add beauty to the side and rear of a house as well as to the front.

inches apart in the row and three and one-half or four feet between the rows. One or two inches should be left above the ground. The soil should be well firmed around the cuttings. If cuttings are made in the late winter or early spring, they may be set directly in the trench for growth.

The new plants should be cultivated through a season before being put in a permanent place. Not all cuttings will live, nor does every seed that is planted germinate, so the amateur should not be discouraged if some cuttings fail.

One may easily propagate such shrubs as the deutzias, forsythias, hydrangeas, Japanese barberry, kerria, mock orange snowball, weigelas, willows, spireas, snowberry, tamarisk, and dogwoods by starting the cuttings of semi-mature wood in the summer, or the cuttings may be made in the fall.

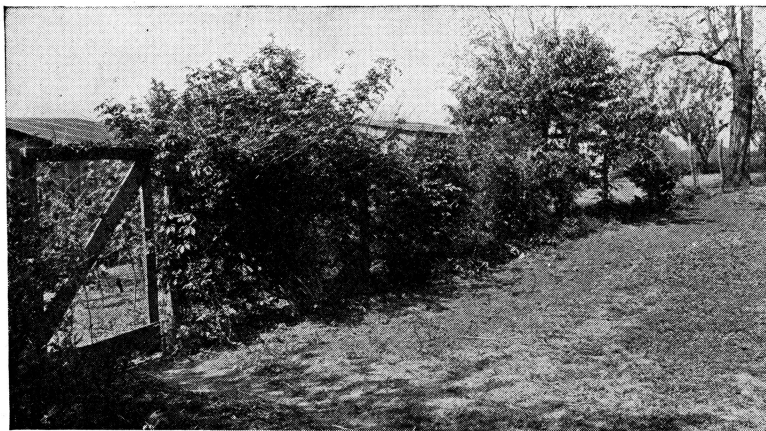


Fig. 9.—Vines on the back fence make an excellent screen for the poultry yard.

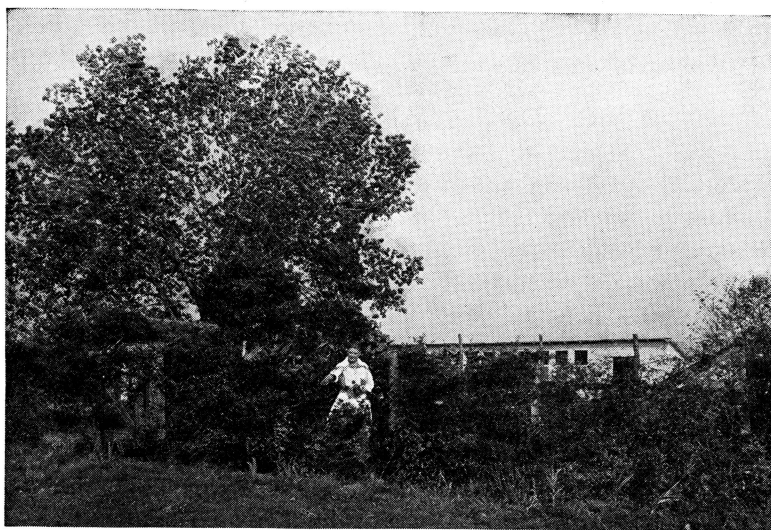


Fig. 10.—The poultry yard well screened with vines and annuals.

Layering.—The process of causing a branch to strike root and put forth shoots while still attached to the parent plant is known as layering. This method of propagation is often successful when cuttings fail.

Tip layering is accomplished by bending down a branch and covering the end with soil to induce root and new branch. Any shrub with long drooping branches will lend itself to this method of propagation. Or the branch may be bent down and partially covered with earth between the end of the branch and the parent plant, and left until roots form, when, it can be detached. The climbing roses, honeysuckles and snowballs are some of the plants that can readily be propagated by this method.

Mound layering may be used where a plant sends up a number of stems from the roots, and is accomplished by heaping the earth up around the stem to a depth of about ten inches. This will induce root growth up along each stem, and the following spring, the plants may be separated.

If the shrub to be mound layered is pruned back to real short stubs the spring prior to layering, the number of shoots may be increased. The spiraeas and shrubs of similar growth may be increased in this manner.

In vine layering, a branch, preferably of the previous season's growth, is stretched along a trench and either covered its entire length, or else at intervals of four or five inches with a joint exposed between the sections covered.

VINES

Vines such as five leaf ivy, bittersweet, trumpet and wild grape may be used to shade porches, on fences to screen lots beyond, on buildings whose outlines are ugly, and to hold terraces to prevent washing.

Trellises will form a support for vines against a frame house, and may be laid flat to permit the house being painted when necessary without destroying the vine.

PERENNIALS

Shrub plantings may be greatly enhanced by introducing hardy perennials in front of them. Throughout the spring and summer months a continuous bloom may be had in the shrub borders by a wise choice of perennials. The perennials will show to better advantage with shrubs for a background. They should not be

scattered a few in a spot, but a mass of each planted in irregular outline for the best effect.

Wonderful and pleasing effects may be had by using some of the old favorites such as hollyhock, bleeding heart, tiger lily, hardy phlox, and columbine along with iris, delphinium, shasta daisy, coreopsis, blanket flower, golden glow, peonies, poppies, and chrysanthemums.

Many of these may be grown from seed sown in boxes in the house and afterwards transplanted in the open. It is easier to propagate them by division, and as they increase rapidly, this may be done without injury to the original plant.

THE OUTDOOR LIVING ROOM

Every home whether in town or on a farm should have its outdoor living room. The proper location of this living room is to the rear of the front line of the dwelling, to insure it the privacy it should have for the use of the family. There is always enough room, if rightly divided, to take care of the necessary uses one may have for a back yard and still leave ample space for a comfortable outdoor living room.

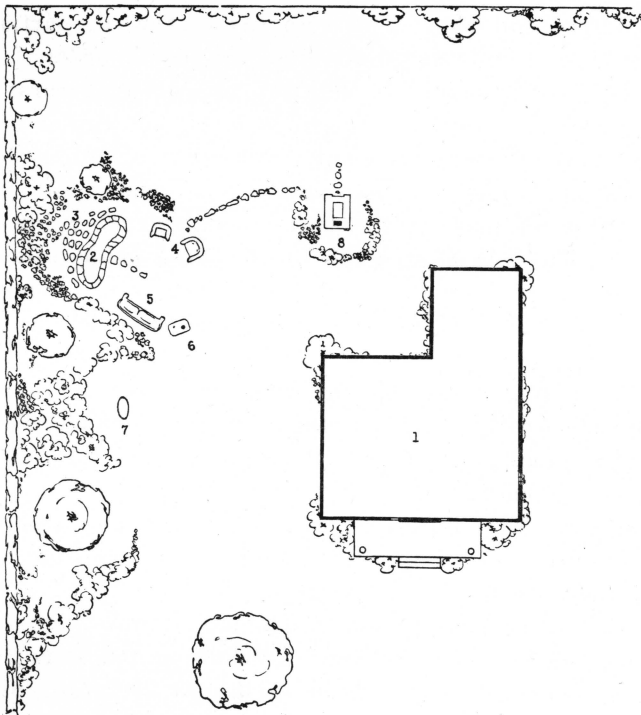


Fig. 11.—A plan for an outdoor living room: 1 dwelling, 2 lily pool, 3 rock garden, 4 chair, 5 seat, 6 table, 7 bird bath, 8 oven.

Good shade must be provided, if the outdoor living room is to function at its best. Tall, broad-branching trees, grouped, or as single specimens make the most desirable shade. The charm of an outdoor living room depends largely upon its natural appearance, so the location of the trees is an important item. Those located in or near the borders are most desirable, since too dense shade will destroy a good carpet of grass.

Privacy may be secured by a boundary fence well covered with vines or screened with shrubbery plantings, or it may have only a rather dense shrubbery planting for its green walls. Just as one has windows in the indoor living room, open spaces in the planting should be left in order that beautiful views may be enjoyed. These openings may be framed by tall plantings.

Just as there are points of interest in the indoor living room, such as a fireplace or a beautiful painting, so in the outdoor one, there should be objects that would gain immediate attention. The rock garden, pergola, lily pool, bird bath and sun dial are the usual centers of interest. These appear best when partially concealed by bays or indentations in the shrubbery border.

The rock garden should be built to appear as natural as possible, therefore it rarely belongs on a level, but rather on a hillside slope where drainage is good. Some part of it may be sunny and the rest in the shade. The stones in a rockery should be placed with the heaviest part at the bottom, and slanting inward and downward. The whole structure made firm enough to hold a person's weight without the stones becoming loose. A mixture of equal parts of top soil and humus is most satisfactory for rock plants. A number of the same variety of plants placed together produces a pleasing mass of color when in bloom.

Appropriate weather resistant furnishings add much to the comfort of the outdoor living room. Comfortable chairs or seats where persons may sit and read or talk, some place for reading material to be kept away from inclement weather, a table and a play corner for the children, are important points to be considered when planning the outdoor living quarter.

There should be beauty and restfulness if one is to have the keenest enjoyment from the yard. Shrubs and flowers that provide a succession of bloom from spring to late fall, birds, encouraged by calm and shelter and fragrance afforded by well selected vines, flowers and shrubs all contribute to a delightful, restful atmosphere.

A plan for developing the home grounds is a great help in working out the time, energy and money to be expended. More satisfactory finished results are made possible as well as more efficient use of available resources.

This Circular at a Glance

There are certain definite things that need to be done so that a farm home will present the most attractive appearance:

1. The yard must be kept in order, free of farm machinery, livestock, poultry and bee hives.
2. The clothes line, grindstone, and other such necessary equipment should be in the back yard, wholly or partially screened from the side and front for privacy.
3. The yard should be well graded, seeded, and kept mowed, with the lawn unbroken by clumps of shrubbery or flowers, flower beds, concrete or other ornaments.
4. All unsightly objects should be screened and all good views well framed by plantings.
5. The house and outbuildings should be kept in good repair and well painted, all the same color, with simple harmonious trimmings.
6. There must be sufficient shade furnished by long-lived trees planted in irregular groups or as single specimens, never in rows.
7. There should be permanent foundation, corner and border mass plantings of shrubs, and flowers with an occasional tree to vary the sky line.
8. Walks and drives should be constructed only where needed, should be simple and direct in design, and constructed of smooth, permanent material.
9. The outdoor living room should be accessible, comfortable and attractive, with definite points of interest.
10. A long time plan based on the needs of the individual yard will insure most satisfactory and economical results.

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