

The Farm.

Some Common Shrubs.

Horatio Seymour pronounced the common elder bush to be one of the finest shrubs in existence. I think so too—only that it is necessary so often to cut out old canes. In blossom it is grand. Its huge umbels spread out for innumerable insects, including bees. The fragrance is rather too sweet for some, but it makes a grand basis for a pansy bouquet on the dinner table. Of late years little use has been made of elderberries for food. Two years ago we concluded to try an elderberry pie. Now it is the unanimous decree that elderberry pies must constitute a regular part of the autumn programme. It is quite as good as huckleberry pie, and some say better. Try it also for tarts. But as an ornament, what can be finer on the lawn than these huge heads of dark purple elderberries?

The barberry is so easily obtained that I wonder that it is so little appreciated and planted. If you wish to learn what is beautiful, ask nature. What she plants is, as a rule, either very useful or very beautiful, or it is both. She may not, however, consider our needs—and so gives us some very handsome thistles, and too many dandelions. But nature has given us in the barberry a shrub both very beautiful and very useful. She has set it closely along the roadside, where it is capable of brightening the winter months as well as the summer months. I understand that in New-England much use is made of the fruit for jellies and for tarts; but further west it is not needed for these purposes. The fruit is, however, very welcome to some of our winter birds. They drop down to a meal on my lawns, especially in the late autumn and the early spring. But for color what can be more delightful than a huge barberry bush, red as fire all winter? The flowers are very handsome, while the perfume is very pleasant to many, but to others offensive. The flowers hang in yellow clusters all over the bush.

Whatever else you omit, be sure to have a clump of red-barked dogwood for its winter effects. When the autumn leaves are dropped, the bark of this bush turns from a dull green to a brilliant crimson. It is a superb color, and conspicuous as far as you can discover any object. In the snow it is a delicious contrast. Plant it in wet soil. This shrub will spread, by suckering, over a great space; indeed, it will not be easy to restrict it. But it grows well on high land and dry. The foliage is not pretty or conspicuous in summer, and the flowers appear as white panicles, surrounded by pretty berries. The chief object of the bush, however, is the winter effect. It sends up such innumerable shoots that it can be freely cut for use in house-decoration.

I am becoming more and more attached to the very common native shrub, the high bush cranberry. It has many advantages which adapt it to growth about a farmhouse. It is strictly hardy, grows stout, and takes care of itself; and is loaded with berries of a brilliant color, that hang on all winter. These berries are very attractive to some classes of birds. The robins do not care for them, but the beautiful pine grosbeak is specially fond of them. This is one of the finest birds that visit our Northern States, and deserves to be well fed. The flower of this cranberry is pretty, but not specially attractive. In July the berries begin to show all over the bush, with a yellowish hue, which gradually deepens in autumn into a brilliant crimson.

Every farmhouse should be well supplied with the Tartarian honeysuckle. While not a native, it has become acclimated, and can be found along the edge of most of our second growth woods. The bush makes the best of all our ornamental hedges. Besides the superb flowers in pink and red and white, the bushes are loaded with yellow and crimson berries in July, which are greedily eaten by the robins and catbirds. A hedge will stand about ten feet high, making an admirable screen, and a fairly good wind-brake. For a hedge set the plants about three feet apart, and let the plants take their own growth for the most part.—(E. P. P.)

Lilacs New and Old.

We seldom find in country yards the Persian lilacs, probably because not so propagated as the common sorts. But for grand satisfaction there is hardly another such shrub in existence. The bushes grow less erect, are more graceful, and when full of flowers hang over to the ground with enormous tufts of bloom. I have bushes that are fifteen feet in diameter. They are about the height of the common lilac, but never grow as high as the common white lilac. This last variety should be grown only as a small tree. Let a single shoot grow erect to the height of twelve or fifteen feet and then be allowed to branch out and you will get a marvel of beauty. But the Persian white is quite another thing. It is like its companion, more slender and withy. The color also is not pure white, but a very soft shade of lilac. It is much admired by lovers of shrubs, and should not be left out of a small collection. A less common lilac is the Josikea. This blossoms later than the others, making a stiff shrub of about twelve feet in height. I do not think it is so remarkable for beauty, only that it fills a gap in the blossoming season. Much finer are the magnificent novelties coming from the French grower, M. Lemoine. The choicest of these are Mme. Lemoine and President Carnot, both double flowers, the first white and the second lilac in color. Linne is a large double flower of a reddish hue. One of the finest is the red Josikea. A magnificent lilac comes to us from Japan, called the tree lilac. The foliage does not closely resemble the other lilacs, being thick and glossy. The flowers grow in enormous panicles, and are of a light straw color. They blossom the last of June. Unfortunately this variety has little odor. It opens the way for a grand new set of seedlings. Another exceedingly choice variety of lilac is President Grévy, the individual flowers of which are large and double, while the panicles are nearly a foot in length; but, above all, the color is a rich blue. Frau Dammann is said to be the finest white in existence. There is also a weeping variety introduced from China, with white flowers. All the new varieties are entirely hardy, and should gradually find their way into general cultivation.—(E. P. P.)

Broad Tires and Good Roads.

In France when they set about making good roads wide tires were insisted on in the case of all country wagons, and some of them are so constructed that the outer mark of the 6 inch front wheel just meets the inner mark of the 6 inch hind wheel, thus making a 12 inch track of both and turning the wagon as it moves into a sort of road roller on a small scale. With this hint we leave the matter to the further consideration of all concerned.—Brooklyn Citizen.

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