

School Gardening

By H. W. WATSON

Provincial Superintendent of Elementary Agriculture for Manitoba



Individual Gardens, Stonewall School, three weeks after planting

The nature and scope of gardening possible in a rural school will largely depend upon conditions. In some schools, for a start, it may be difficult to go further than indoor culture and window boxes.

The values of school gardening are two fold. There is the aesthetic development, the beautifying of the grounds, and the practical or economic development, the experimental plots of vegetables, grains, etc.

The accompanying layout and improvement should be made a possibility at every school in town or country. The ground should be large enough to admit of the development of the aesthetic and intellectual, as well as the physical nature of the child.

The beautifying of the ground should receive first consideration, especially as this appeals very readily to younger children. The fences and gates may require repair, the walk to be improved, the wood to be piled neatly, the ground to be levelled and cleaned off. Shelter belts of trees should be planted on the north and west sides, a row of shade trees on the south and east, clumps of shrubbing in the corners, along the front, and about the out-houses. Hedges should be set, climbers planted, and perennial roots established along the borders of the front lawn.

For the proper planting of all this permanent material at least two years' thorough cultivation of the ground is necessary. While the ground is being prepared, it may be utilized by the children in growing potatoes, corn, beets, carrots, etc., and there is no better means of preparation. Then follows the planting of the permanent material, and the subsequent care and cultivation, in which the children should always participate and perform all the work they are capable of.

The Perennial Border

As a feature in the beautifying of the grounds, every school should possess its perennial border about the front. When once planted, with a little care and attention, it gives the greatest satisfaction, it may be said to be "A thing of beauty and joy forever."

Perennial borders should be placed at the sides or front of the ground or along a fence or row of shrubbery. Choose a sunny position generally, but a partial shade is acceptable for a few species, such as spiraea, iris, ferns, pansies.

To prepare the ground, dig thoroughly and deeply in early fall and manure with well-rotted farmyard manure. At the same time remove all perennial weed roots, especially sow thistle, couch grass, etc.

Flowering shrubs should be placed at intervals of twenty or thirty feet, and trailers or climbers along the fence, ten or twelve feet apart. Place taller varieties in the rear, medium varieties in the middle and dwarf varieties at the front.

Most hardy perennials may be successfully transplanted or divided in

early spring; disturb the roots as little as possible. Bulbs should be planted early in October. Iris, pansy, bleeding heart and lilacs are better divided or transplanted in the fall.

Plant in groups, not in lines, irregularly, not formally, to avoid sameness. Plant for variation of color effect and to have a succession of bloom thruout the whole border during the entire season. Place bulbs in groups of from six to ten.

Care of the Border

In the spring clear all rubbish from the ground before growth starts, then cut or margin the edge with an edging knife. Give the soil a good coating of well rotted manure or good top soil, mixing in the manure with a digging fork. Make any divisions, changes, or transplantings at the time of digging.

Very little winter protection is necessary except in the case of some tender plants, such as hollyhocks, Canterbury

bells, etc. Protection may be provided by throwing the coarse tops of the plants about the roots just before winter sets in. Leave most of the tops standing until spring; if these are tall and unsightly, the tallest may be cut down about six inches from the ground and laid on the border.

What to Plant

The best perennial climbers for the background are Virginia creeper, Japan honeysuckle, bitter-sweet, which will grow from 10 to 20 feet high.

For annual climbers there are morning glory, canary-bird vine, scarlet bean, nasturtium and wild cucumber, which run from 5 to 10 feet in height.

Suitable flowering shrubs, growing 4 to 10 feet high, are lilac, honeysuckle, high bush cranberry, wild plum, dog-

wood, caragana, mountain ash, hawthorn, spiraea.

As shrubs for hedges use caragana, honeysuckle, artemisia and wild rose.

The following is a list of hardy perennial flowers with the means by which each is most easily propagated by seed, bulb or division of root:

Four feet to six feet high—Larkspur (seed), golden glow (division), hollyhock (seed), double sunflower (division), plume poppy (division).

Two feet to three feet high—Peony (division), phlox (division), oriental poppy (seed), lily (bulb), iris (division), bleeding heart (division), columbine (seed), pinks (seed), Shasta daisy (division).

One foot and under—English daisy (seed), Iceland poppy (seed), moss pink (division), pansy (seed), crocus (bulb), tulip (bulb), squills (bulb).

Annuals for spring sowing, one foot to 3 feet high, are: Aster, candytuft, coreopsis, pinks, phlox, scabiosa, zinnia, stock, salpiglossis, marigold, California poppy.

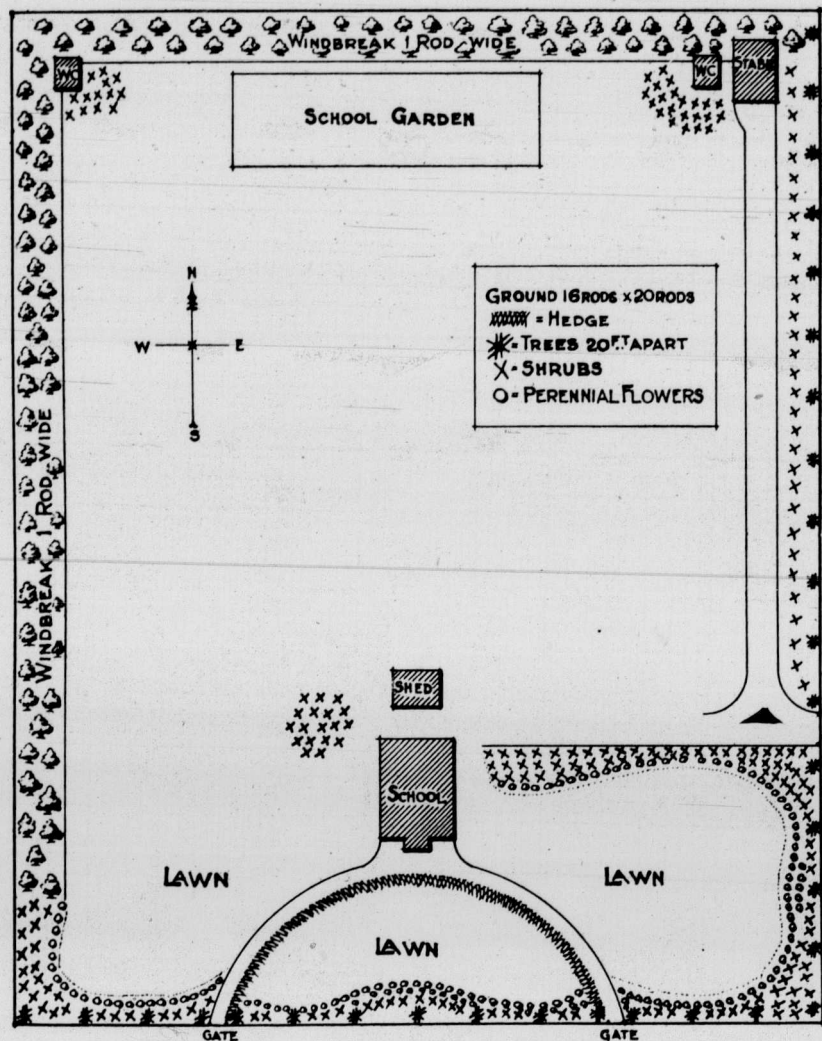
Annuals for borders are: Mignonette, sweet alyssum, nasturtium, ageratum, verbena, pansy, portulaca, pyrethrum.

The Individual Gardens

The borders, hedges and lawns will require constant care and cultivation, but an opportunity should be given the individual pupils to experiment, and this can best be done in experimental plots generally placed at the rear of the ground. Choose a good location for your plots. Do not have them near the school where they may be shaded or injured by the drippings from the roof. Do not have them beneath large trees to shade the plants. If possible, have them where they will be fully exposed to the sun, rain and air. If there is any difference in the soil, and there frequently is, this should receive careful consideration also. The quality of vegetables and flower blooms depends very largely upon the quality of the soil, and vegetables of much finer texture, as well as flower blossoms of a richer hue, are produced on sandy soils rather than on those of a clayey nature. Sandy soils will produce an earlier crop also; hence, for your garden, select the locality where the soil is lightest and most friable.

The simplest layout I think is the best, that is the square plan. This may be partially improved by placing along the centre one or two round plots. Divide the ground into oblong plots, four feet by ten feet, separated by main walks three feet wide and minor walks two feet wide. Give individual children one plot, and classes about three such plots. In rural schools, the garden may be sufficiently large to permit of individual plots entirely, while in towns the space may only admit of class plots.

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A Good Arrangement of a Two-acre School Ground



The same gardens two months after planting