

ARBOR DAY.

REG. 14. ARBOR DAY.—To encourage the proper adornment of school grounds, and thereby the cultivation of a taste for the beautiful in nature on the part of the pupils, the Council of Public Instruction has ordered the publication of the following regulation:—

“On such day of May as according to season, weather, or other circumstances may be deemed most suitable, trustees are authorized to have substituted for the regular school exercises of pupils, the planting by the latter of trees, shrubs and flowers on the grounds surrounding the school house. The day devoted to this purpose shall be known and entered in the register as ‘Arbor Day,’ and when duly observed full credit will be given for it in the apportionment of public funds, on the basis of the actual attendance of pupils as ascertained by roll call at the beginning of the exercises, or other convenient time during their progress. Additional value and interest should be imparted by mingling with the practical duties of the occasion short addresses from the teacher and other competent persons on the æsthetic and economic importance of arboriculture. During their summer visitation, Inspectors shall take note of all schools in connection with which ‘Arbor Day’ has been observed.”

There will be found subjoined some practical suggestions which will be serviceable to those who wish to make the occasion a really profitable one.

(1.) In selecting trees, it is well to avoid those that bear flowers or edible fruits, as such in the flowering and fruiting season are apt to meet with injury from ignorant or mischievous passers by, and to offer temptation to the pupils. Butternuts and horse chestnuts are not to be commended as shade trees. The balsam fir is objectionable from the liability of its balsam to stain the hands and clothing. Deciduous or broad-leaved trees are easily grown, their fibrous roots rendering transplanting a comparatively simple operation. If care is taken, the young saplings of the elm, maple, and ash, as found in the under growth of the forest, can be transplanted without difficulty.

(2.) No school grounds should be without a suitable number and variety of the standard deciduous trees. However, during the winter season these are bare and unattractive, and afford little or no shelter. On the other hand, evergreens such as spruces, pines, hemlocks and cedars, retain their foliage and provide a shelter as useful in winter as it is grateful in summer. Trees should always be planted according to a definite plan, being arranged either in curves or straight lines, according to circumstances, and with an obvious relation to the building and fences. They should not be placed so near the school house as to interfere with the free play of light and air.

(3.) Our native trees grow so freely in the woods that we are apt to suppose that they are merely to be taken up by the roots and transplanted, to start at once into as vigorous growth as before. This is a mistake. Great care should be taken in digging up the trees to preserve the fibrous roots; long runners should be cut across with a sharp knife, and not torn. All trees thrive best in well-drained soil, varying from sandy loam to clay. A clay loam suits all descriptions. The holes for the trees should always be made before the trees are brought on to the grounds. They should be too large rather than too small. In filling in, the better soil from near the surface should be returned first, so as to be nearer the roots, but where the soil is at all sterile, and generally, there should be put below and around the roots, some well-rotted compost, mixed with sand and sandy loam, in order to promote the growth of the rootlets. In setting the tree it should be placed a little deeper than it stood before, and the roots should be so spread out that none are doubled. When finally planted the tree should be tied to a stout stake in such a way as to prevent chafing of the bark. Some mulch or stable litter should then be thrown around the stem to protect the roots from drought. Stirring the ground is preferred by some cultivators to mulching. In transplanting evergreens, the roots should not be exposed to air or light—especially to the heat of the sun—more than can be helped.

Several varieties of shrubs planted together in clumps produce a very pleasing effect, while the care of judiciously arranged flower beds will be to the children an important means of education.

PATRIOTIC RECITATIONS AND ARBOR DAY EXERCISES (7 × 5 inches, XII + 374 pages, \$1.00), by Hon. George W. Ross, LL. D., Minister of Education, Ontario. Contains very excellent selections suitable for these and other exercises in our schools.