

Willows for Prairie Windbreaks

Norman M. Ross, Indian Head, Saskatchewan

FOR a quick growing shelter belt or windbreak suitable for the prairie farm or garden, there is practically nothing better than the hardy varieties of

the ends of the growing side shoots may be trimmed off once or twice during the summer.

Under ordinary conditions a willow

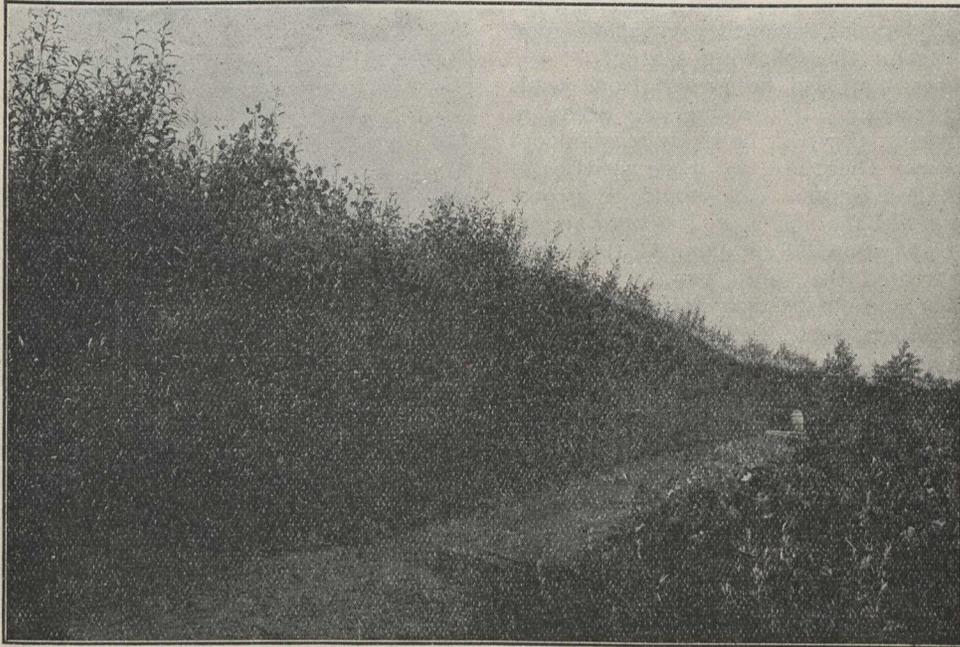
tered tightly on the branches and quite fragrant. It grows quite freely in the Niagara district naturally but can be had from most nurserymen.

The sweet-scented shrub (*Calycanthus floridus*) is a charming shrub bearing chocolate or purplish-brown flowers at intervals during the summer. As its name indicates, it is quite fragrant and is a desirable and pleasing plant.

The Japanese rose (*Kerria Japonica*) is a spreading delicate shrub with yellow tassel-like flowers. There is a variegated variety of this plant.

Spiraea Fortunei in its varieties *alba* and *rosea* makes a shrub almost suitable for bedding. So profuse is its blooming and being of a dwarf habit, it is useful for cemetery planting.

The dwarf barberry (*Berberis Thunbergii*) is a pretty little plant with small foliage and of a coppery-red colour, valuable for small hedges or borders. *Viburnum Opulus nana* is a neat dwarf variety of the snowball, but does not bloom.



Windbreak of Golden Willow Planted as Two-Year Roots in 1905

Photograph taken in August, 1908

tree willows. The best kinds are the Russian golden, the acute leafed willow and the laurel leaf willow. Though the golden willow cannot be called tender, parts of the new shoots are occasionally frozen back. The acute leaf variety seems to be the hardiest and is recommended for southwestern Alberta in preference to the others.

A belt of willows can be started very cheaply. This variety roots very readily from cuttings, so that it is usual to set the cuttings immediately in their permanent positions. For a belt of several rows the cuttings should be set from three to four feet apart each way. If properly cultivated they will grow very rapidly and quickly cover the ground, so that no further work should be needed after the second or third season.

For a single row the cuttings should be placed from eighteen inches to two feet apart. Shoots from two to three feet should be made the first season. It would be advisable in the following spring to cut these shoots back almost to the ground in order to induce the plants to branch out thickly from the roots and thus make a better shelter. In the third season the new belt should provide good protection for the vegetable garden. Under prairie conditions, when only a single row is set out, cultivation will, of course, be necessary every year to obtain the best results. In order to keep the belt within bounds and also to help thicken it up,

hedge should be from ten to fifteen feet high when five or six years old. In moister soils the growth will be more rapid than on high, dry land. Although it is generally supposed that willows must have a great deal of moisture, we find that the Russian varieties commonly used in the west withstand a considerable amount of drouth and are quite suitable for ordinary upland soils when given proper cultivation.

The great advantage of the willows in a comparatively treeless country, where many new settlers can ill afford to spend much money in nursery stock, is that they are so easily propagated. Any farmer having a few willows once established on his place can take cuttings from them every spring and extend his planting operations indefinitely without incurring further expense for stock.

Some Desirable Shrubs

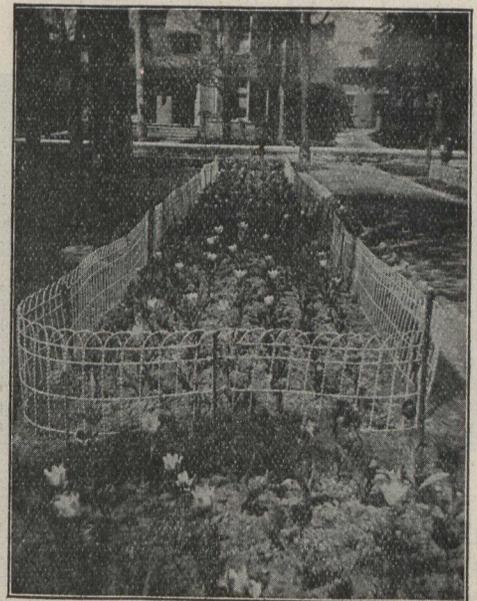
J. McPherson Ross, Toronto

The shrubs mentioned in the March issue of THE CANADIAN HORTICULTURIST, page 62, are attractive and desirable enough for limited home grounds but for large parks a more extended list is necessary. I shall mention six small shrubs that do not grow over two feet or so and are, from their habits and flowers, worthy of a place in every ground. The *Daphne Mezereum* blooms the first thing in spring. It has small pink flowers clus-

Saving Aster Seed

What methods are practised to obtain the best seed from asters?—L.W.B., Morrisburg, Ont.

Aster plants from which seed is to be saved should be selected early in the season when the first flowers have developed. Select the best types possible. Keep the small blooms cut off. Save seed only from the largest and best developed flowers. Cut the flower-heads when the seed is nearly ripe. Dry them thoroughly before putting away for the winter. Keep seed in a dry, cool place.—Wm. Hunt.



A Tulip Bed Protected Against Dogs

Victoria Park, Peterboro. In this bed last spring some excellent blooms were grown but the crooked fence marred the general effect.