

Bedding Plants, Where to Use Them*

RIDING through parks, along boulevards and country roads, speeding in trains through villages and towns all over the country, passing the magnificent palaces of the wealthy with their beautiful lawns and the humble cottages of the poor surrounded by modest yards, everywhere, during the growing season, the eyes meet the brightness of flowers and richly colored plants, which at once impress upon us the popularity and universal love for bedding plants.

There is such a large variety of these plants, from the smallest annual, like portulaca, to the stately sub-tropical plants. The perennials figure greatly in various effective displays. Then we have tulips, hyacinths, daffodils, and so forth, for early spring flowering. No garden need be without flowers from the time the dainty little crocuses peep out of the snow until late in fall.

No matter how small the purse, enough seed can be purchased to obtain a very harmonious and artistic effect, as well as a continuous season of flowers. It is not the means of being able to procure a large number of choice plants, but it is the good taste and skill of the designer, who understands how to make an arrangement, to harmoniously and discriminately combine the various colors with immediate surroundings, no matter how inexpensive, that appeals to the lover of nature with all its art and beauty, and this is what we are striving for more and more every day.

It requires just as much artistic judgment and ability to arrange flowers properly, as the painting of a picture on canvas. The designer must show individuality and know exactly what proportions the plants will attain, how soon they will be fully developed, also how the colors will blend together; in fact, he must see the finished picture before him when he designs his plans. We have everything to do it with; now let us understand how to do it. To cover the subject best, I have divided it into two chapters, as the title of this article indicates: "Where to use them and how to use them."

PROPER SELECTION OF PLACE ESSENTIAL

The proper selection of the place for the floral display is first to be considered; a place where it will be properly effective is just as important as the execution of the planting, as this takes a definite part in the entire scheme. Locality, building and size of grounds must be taken into consideration. The smaller the

place, the simpler should be the display. It is so easy to overcrowd a small front lawn, whereby the proper effect is entirely lost. Large places in proportion will have more elaborate paintings, and the artist will have occasion to plan special features, such as courtyards, parterres, sunken gardens, Italian gardens, and so forth.

The front of a building is almost always selected for the display, which is generally formal, and, if the space is limited, a narrow border of plants adjoining the building will be sufficient, with perhaps one or two beds on the lawn, proportional to the latter. There should always be plenty of green grass to offset the beds. The backyard, as a rule, is very much neglected and in many instances unsightly; here I would advocate to have a grass plot with a border plantation. How much more cheerful one would feel looking into a well-kept yard than at a lot of rubbish.

Places of larger dimensions, with their beautiful landscape effects, must be treated more in detail; here we have an opportunity to lay out in connection with residences, conservatories and public buildings, courtyards, parterres, rose gardens, and so on, which, as a general rule, are part of the architectural scheme and in harmony with the style of the building. In the last few years Italian gardens have again become quite popular, and these especially set apart from the rest of the landscape must be treated by themselves; they are very set and usually contain considerable color well blended together.

Besides the forms of special treatment already mentioned, we also have other flower gardens, which give an opportunity for a larger variety of flowering plants, in the line of annuals, roses and perennials, and so forth, which properly arranged make a brilliant effect without interfering with the more subdued and restful landscape.

IN CEMETERIES

A few words should be devoted to the homes of our loved dead. There is nothing more soothing to the grief-stricken heart than the sight of well-kept cemeteries, bedded with appropriate flowers speaking the language of peace and rest.

PARKS AND FACTORY GROUNDS

Public parks, especially, are a great field for floral displays, and although some authorities on landscape gardening do not favor them, I believe the public fully appreciate flowers; though the utmost care must be taken not to let them run wild all over the park, but keep them in the vicinity of buildings or entirely away and screened off from the quiet landscape. Boulevards also and

small squares can be most admirably brightened with the ornamentation of flower beds.

FLOWER BOXES

How many people are not fortunate enough to possess a home with a lawn and flower beds! There is no necessity to deprive themselves of nature's gifts, but they can enjoy them in a more modest way, by keeping flower boxes, which, no matter how obscure and unassuming the dwelling, give it a home-like air and enliven the aspect of many an otherwise sombre home. On the other hand, many beautiful residences rely solely upon piazza boxes for their floral display and exquisite results can be obtained in this manner.

Making a Tennis Court

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In making a lawn tennis court, there should be a clear margin of at least twelve feet on each side and twenty-one feet at each end of the court. When the ground is selected, measure off a portion, say 100 by 50 feet, which will allow ample margin. The portion for playing on requires only seventy-eight by thirty-six feet. If economy must be considered, only the latter need be carefully prepared, but it is better to do the whole if possible.

The ground which is to be turfed is best prepared previously. Carefully remove the weeds from the turves. If it is very poor, work in a dressing of decayed manure, taking care not to have it rank. Make it perfectly level and evenly balanced by means of a straight edge and a spirit level. The whole plot should be made very firm with a rammer or the back of a spade. Scratch it over with a rake, lay the edges of the turves close together and ram thoroughly.

If grass seed is to be sown, see that it is good by purchasing from a reliable firm. I prefer turfing, if sods can be procured free from weeds.

During the season the grass should be kept cut very close and the court afterwards rolled well with a heavy roller.

To have extra early cucumbers for slicing, start the seed in hotbeds in March.

Sow seeds of nasturtiums in pots or boxes, but do not sow thickly, as nasturtiums do not transplant readily. Early flowers of mignonette may be had by sowing the seeds in pots; also, petunias, verbenas, cosmos and lobelia.

*Extracts from a paper read by Mr. Alois Frey, Chicago, at the last convention of the Society of American Florists and Ornamental Horticulturists. Valuable suggestions are given that are applicable to Canadian parks and home gardens. In the next issue the question of how to use bedding plants will be discussed.