

## Rural Improvement is Worth While

Practical Pointers on the Principles and Practice of Landscape Gardening about the Country Home, the Church and the School, by A. C. Blair, Peterboro County, Ontario

There is nothing that gives so much character to country places and villages as the appearance of well-laid out and well-kept grounds around and about schools, churches and the homes of the people. Rural improve-

ment of this kind not only affords pleasure to those who live in the vicinity, but it advertises the community to an extent that is not always appreciated. The private and public grounds of our people betray our ideals of comfort and beauty. Neglected country and village homes, as well as school and church grounds, ill-kept and unadorned, furnish the kind of national advertisement that we, as Canadians, do not want. Rural improvement is a striking advertisement of the progress of a country's refinement and the height of its civilization.



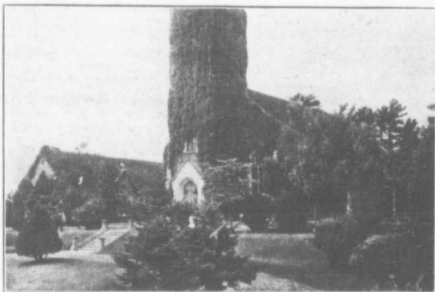
Shade Trees Lend an Air of Coolness and Refinement to Village Streets

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The influences of rural improvement are felt not only by the old folks but by the children as well for it is they who are the most susceptible to the beauties of natural associations. If children are constantly surrounded with influences that ennoble them, they will become satisfied with nothing less. In after years, they will make better citizens, for habits acquired in childhood have much to do with the character and worth of the adult.

The practice of ornamenting home grounds increases the value of the

neighborhood. The work of beautifying is neither difficult or expensive. Any



Climbing Vines Give Shade, Beauty, Repose and Dignity to Churches

farmer can make a good lawn and he can have an effective planting of shrubbery and trees by bringing na-

tive species from the woods or by purchasing common kinds from nurseries.

### MAKING LAWNS

In the planning and arrangement of such grounds, the lawn is the most important consideration. It is the basis of the whole scheme of decorative gardening. To get the greatest possible results from the lawn at the least possible cost, we must begin well.

A good lawn can be made on most any kind of soil but a rich, retentive loam is best. The permanent beauty of the turf depends largely upon the preparation and fertility of the soil, if it is not naturally rich, it should be made so. Apply manure liberally. Work this in deeply and evenly. Harrow or rake the surface and leave it smooth and even.

Small lawns may be made quickly by means of sodding, but seeding is usually practised. Sow the seed while the soil is freshly disturbed. Sow early in the morning and on a still day, and sow liberally and evenly. After sowing, rake and roll. A good lawn mixture is Kentucky blue grass, red top and white clover, equal parts by weight.

When the lawn is once established, it should be well cared for. Mow the grass often but do not mow too soon, not too closely the first time on a newly-made lawn. It is not necessary to remove the clippings, if the grass is mowed frequently.

### PLANTING TREES AND SHRUBS

Trees and shrubs should be planted in harmony with the surrounding conditions. On school and home grounds, plant the largest at the sides and rear. The tallest kinds should be used in the background. Plant shrubs mostly in groups. Occasionally single specimens with individual characteristics may stand alone. Use a comparatively small number of kinds, and mass each kind by itself. Trees and shrubs may be planted so as to hide objectionable scenes. Private and pleasure grounds should not be treated as places simply for treasuring beautiful trees, for in the attempt to preserve individual specimens, we deform the grounds and destroy the effect.

### VINES AND CLIMBERS

The bare walls of houses, churches and school houses may be covered with vines. Notice the beautiful vine that clings to the church in the accompanying illustration, and imagine how bare the church would be without it. Vines are valuable, also for hiding unsightly objects, fences, outbuildings, barnyards, and so forth. They may be used for shade and ornament over summerhouses and verandas. Old tree stumps and trunks may be covered with vines very effectively. Among

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our hardy vines are climbing roses, clematis, Virginia creeper, Chinese wistaria, Dutchman's pipe and honeysuckle. An excellent vine and one not appreciated as it should be, is the common grape vine. It is beautiful in foliage, graceful in habit and furnishes, in addition, luscious fruit.

### THE USE OF FLOWERS

No scheme of rural improvement is complete without flowers. It is a mistake, however, to plant flowerbeds in the middle of the lawn, except on formal grounds. Plant them in the foreground of shrub borders, in nooks and corners about the buildings, at the foundation of the house, at junctions of walks and driveways, and at the foot of rockeries, stone walls and fences.

### THE GENERAL ARRANGEMENT

The general arrangement of ornamental plantations should correspond

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