

How Nature Can Be Assisted in Covering Ugly Places.

That very old and trite saying, "Nature abhors a vacuum," has its companion in "Nature abhors ugly places." Turn your attention to the wild places of the earth and notice how quickly Nature lends her kindly aid in covering and protecting and preserving with thick-growing moss or vine or bush all old stumps, blighted and dead trees, dilapidated and ruined walls and buildings. When the Spirit of Growth is forced by unchanging laws to journey elsewhere for a season, along comes blustering old Winter who does all the mischief he can and then he, too, does effective work in softening and beautifying things.

Now, if only we all would set out to help in this work, how lovely the world would soon become.

If people could only be made to realize that they can take many of their heart-breaking troubles out into the garden and bury them deep out of sight and on their graves plant a flower bed! If people could only be made to realize that every moment spent in the garden, however small it be, will bring a two-fold blessing, a mind, strengthened and refreshed, and material aid to the garden.

Let us see then in what respect we can imitate or improve on Nature's methods. First, turn our attention to the subject of vines and see how we can make use of some of the easiest grown varieties.

The Choice of Suitable Vines for the Purpose in Hand.

The selection of suitable vines is, by no means an easy task, especially if one is forced through ignorance to depend on the questionable help to be obtained from the ordinary catalogue. The number and variety of vines one may use, for even the most ordinary purpose, however, is legion and since fortunately most of them are easily grown, shade and protection at least are obtained with little trouble. But when one desires to obtain the greatest amount of beauty and luxuriance of bloom as well, then one must make a judicious choice. This means the study of certain very necessary points, otherwise much useless labor and disappointment will follow.

In the first place vines fall naturally into two classes, the hardy vines and the annuals.

The annuals grow from seed and must

therefore be planted every season. Many of them are very lovely, their growth luxuriant, the bloom profuse, and beautiful, and they give great satisfaction. But, since they die down every year, there is no permanency of effect. Almost without exception the first touch of frost causes quick destruction to the entire vine thus leaving no old branches to form a support for the new growth the following year. The whole growth then of an annual must be accomplished between the early spring planting and the arrival of frost, so that no matter how rank the growth or how dense the shade produced, the effect can only be temporary.

With hardy vines, however, conditions and results are quite different. With the first touch of Spring tiny leaves and shoots appear from countless parts of the old vine-stalk left standing from former seasons; creeping in and out in every direction, weaving a thick, close, yet airy curtain of waving tendrils, the new growth produces a very appreciable shade in an incredibly short time; while, on the other hand, an annual will have barely commenced to form its central supporting stalk. This being always borne in mind, one can readily understand how the hardy vines are capable of giving such a much more adequate protection from the earliest part of the season and especially through the hottest days of summer. Also unlike the annuals, the first frosts do not have such disastrous effects, many of the varieties retaining most of their leaves and continuing to blossom long after their foliage has become entrancingly beautiful with autumn tints. This is one of the most important differences between the two classes of vines, and is one of the reasons why the amateur gardener will do well to have some knowledge of his vines before planting.

The gardener who owns his garden is a lucky man. He can plant for permanent effect. This means much. It means he can choose his vine and plant it. He can watch his vine grow in beauty and grace year by year; he can count on an ever increasing growth of protection and shade; for every year it will become more deeply rooted, will gather more strength, and by its greater luxuriance of growth and profusion of bloom, more than pay for every minute of time that has been spent on it.