

# How to Make Work of Horticultural Societies Effective\*

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THE sixty or more horticultural societies of the province of Ontario are doing a splendid work for the general uplift of the communities where they are organized. The aim and object of these societies as stated in the Act under which they are organized is to encourage improvements in horticulture as follows:

(a) By holding meetings for discussion and for hearing lectures on subjects connected with the theory and practice of improved horticulture.

(b) By promoting the circulation of horticultural periodicals;

(c) By importing and otherwise procuring seeds and plants of new and valuable kinds;

(d) By offering prizes for essays on questions of scientific inquiry relating to horticulture;

(e) By awarding premiums for the invention or improvement of horticultural implements and machinery for the production of all kinds of vegetables, plants, flowers and fruits, and generally for excellence in any horticultural production and operation.

Many of the societies are accomplishing probably all or more than the Act originally aimed at. There are others, however, which we believe are not yet living up to their full opportunity. It is for the purpose of helping these to do better that we have consented to lead the discussion upon this subject.

The twofold purpose of the work of the horticultural societies is to benefit the members themselves and the whole community about them. The success of the work is usually in direct proportion to the unselfishness of the members in seeking their own good and their desire to benefit the community at large. We wish to call attention first to some of the means by which the work of the society may be made a benefit to the members.

First, by holding at least four or five meetings during the year at which timely topics are introduced and fully discussed, the members being encouraged to introduce subjects themselves and take an active part in all discussion.

Second, by furnishing good literature in a choice of two or more of the leading horticultural magazines, or good horticultural books, either as a premium or at a greatly reduced rate.

Third, a choice of a small selection of good reliable seeds, bulbs, plants or trees. The premium list should be prepared with a view to enabling each member to choose something of particular value to himself, either for house or outdoor culture. Great care should be taken in the selection of varieties that they are suitable for the locality.

There is a danger, however, of societies putting too much stress upon their premium list, thus over-emphasizing the importance of the value of the work to members and not emphasizing enough the good the society may do as an educational institution to encourage the work through the whole community. With respect to the benefit of the societies to the communities in which they are organized I would like to call attention to some of the means by which the work may be made more effective:

First, by interesting school children in the work through the distribution of seeds, bulbs and plants for growing



The Dedication of the Sun-dial

An interesting ceremony for children in school gardens as described by Miss Louise Klein Miller of Cleveland, Ohio, in an illustrated talk at convention of Ontario Horticultural Association. The proceedings of the convention are reported on another page of this issue.

either in their home gardens or school gardens wherever these may be established. In connection with such a distribution, there should be held a flower show at which the children bring their flowers and plants for competition, thus arousing enthusiasm and keeping up the interest in the work.

Second, interesting citizens in beautifying their home surroundings by instituting lawn and garden competitions. Such competitions have proved valuable in encouraging civic improvement at Guelph and in many other sections of the country, and might be adopted to advantage in many others.

Third, interesting all citizens by meetings and the use of the press in the general improvement of the streets and walks, grading and keeping of boulevards, planting and care of shade trees, removal of unsightly fences, buildings and bill boards, checking telegraph and

telephone companies in their unlawful mutilation of shade trees, and pressing for the removal of overhead wires wherever they enter the town limits or interfere with street trees.

These are some of the objects which every horticultural society should aim at for the good of the whole community. To accomplish the best results there should be united effort. The officers of the society should try to get the hearty co-operation of every influential citizen and organization in the community. There is strength in numbers, and horticultural societies may add greatly to their strength by getting the co-operation of teachers, school boards, boards of education, boards of trade, town or city councils and, especially, committees, boards or commissions having in hand the care of parks, streets and boulevards.

I know of several small struggling societies with but limited funds at their disposal, which are undertaking the task of making and maintaining town parks for the good of the citizens generally. Such efforts are certainly commendable, but we believe in some cases more effective work could be done by the societies seeking for the appointment of park boards or commissions, under the Ontario Parks Act, which provides for the appointment of a park board or commission by the council in any town or city where the citizens duly petition for the same. This Act places at the disposal of such boards funds to the extent of one-half mill on the assessment. Such boards, therefore, are in a much better position to undertake the work of making and maintaining parks and boulevards than a horticultural society with but meagre funds.

As to what such boards can do in the improvement of towns and cities through the improvement of boulevards and planting of trees, is not as fully appreciated here in Ontario as it should be. In this respect, we in old Ontario, have much to learn from the newer towns and cities of the western provinces. In the cities of Winnipeg, Brandon, Regina, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver and others, park boards level and grade the boulevards from the curb to the property line, seed, mow and, where necessary water the grass on such boulevards. They are also planting trees and shrubs upon them in a way that these western cities will soon be as far ahead of our eastern cities from a standpoint of beauty and neatness as we can well imagine.

There are one or two other particulars that I wish to refer to in which the work of the societies may be made more effective. One is by the more extensive use of printers' ink in properly advertising meetings and reporting the proceedings

\*A paper read at the recent convention of the Ontario Horticultural Association.