

A Talk on Perennial Borders

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THE perennial border" is a phase which has been coined, as far as can be ascertained, within recent years. It is generally used to denote any type of flower border which contains a large number of perennial flowers. The term "herbaceous border" is practically synonymous with it, and is still used. The first term is preferable because for those borders which contain flowering shrubs as well as the herbaceous plants the term "herbaceous border" is much less exact.

ORIGIN AND HISTORY

We get some inkling that perennial borders were not unknown to our ancestors of the age of Elizabeth from the literature of the period, and especially from Sir Francis Bacon's "Essay on Gardens." In brief their history might be dismissed by saying that they are neither of very ancient nor of quite modern origin. It may be interesting to note, however, that during the nineteenth century three types of residences almost unknown until then became very plentiful. These were the suburban villa, the city man's summer house, and the city mansion with its formal garden.

These types of architecture more than all others need the support of effective immediate surroundings. Borders in which permanent flowers would grow helped immensely to form the surroundings and consequently we find that in recent years a great growth has taken place in the popularity of perennial borders and also of perennial flowers.

PERENNIAL FLOWERS

One authority says perhaps the most striking advance in modern gardening is the advance in favor of what are popularly known as herbaceous plants. . . They have been the means of encouraging thousands to take an interest in flower gardens who formerly did not do so. But love of the flowers pure and simple has also been a very great factor in stimulating their popularity. Of course a great many of the best perennial flowers are of recent introduction but it is interesting to note that many of the favorites were known one hundred and fifty years ago. The popularity of perennial flowers will make the perennial border much more popular in the immediate future than it has been in the past.

The form of perennial borders is vari-

able. All borders may, however, be here considered under four forms.

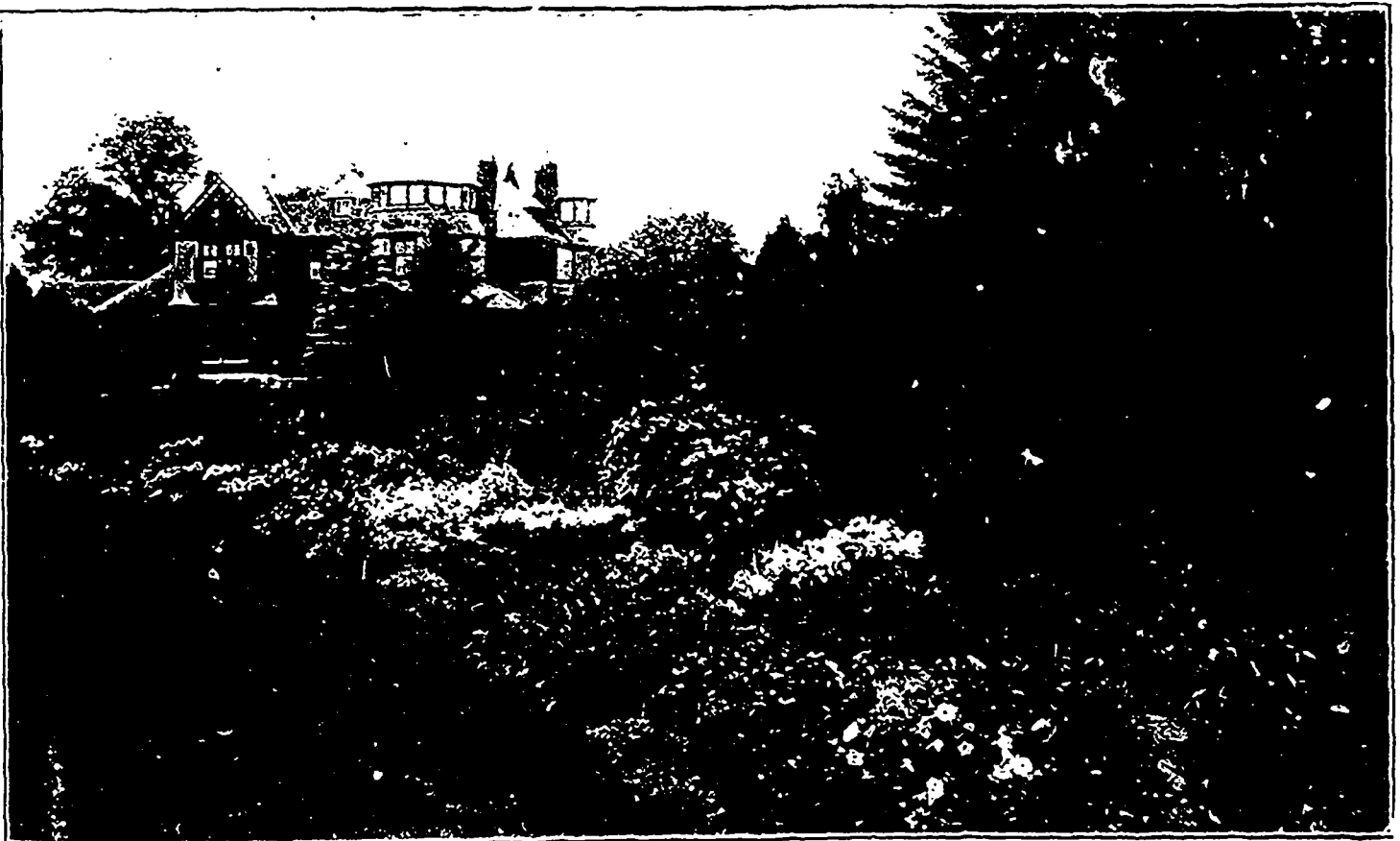
Form one.—The straight narrow border. This is generally found close to the house or by a boundary wall. It is particularly adapted to small lots and summer cottages.

Form two.—The straight wide border. This form is seldom used close to the house. It is generally seen to best advantage when placed close to main walks and when used in gardens of the formal type.

Form three.—The regular curved border. A very beautiful and perhaps the ideal form of the perennial border when rightly disposed. It appears to best advantage, perhaps, when placed a few yards back from a long curved walk.

Form four.—The irregular border. This form looks best in the foreground of masses of shrubbery. It is irregular in both depth and outline.

Perennial borders have more than a single purpose to fulfil. It is a mistake to think that the main purpose of all perennial borders is to give a succession of bloom. That should be the purpose of one particular type, but there are



At the Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa. A View of One End of the New Perennial Border

This border is four hundred and fifty feet long by twelve feet wide. It was planted in the autumn of 1911 from plants raised at the farm, many of them from seeds sown the same spring. This view was taken August, 1911. The border should look at its best during the next few years. Its flowers last from April till October.