

HOME AND GARDEN

GARDEN HINTS

By Dr. J. F. Fonder

Editor's Note: We are happy to provide for our readers, a series of articles by a recognized expert on gardening subjects, Dr. J. F. Fonder of Evanston, who received his Ph. D. degree at Michigan State college, after attending colleges in his native state of Colorado and in Utah. He has lectured extensively on gardening in many states and has written much on topics of soil and plant physiology. His experience extends into the practical business end of plant culture, thus enabling him to write with authority on all matters pertaining to this subject. Dr. Fonder's articles appear in this section each week.

Grandfather's clock, scratched and battered, may still stand in the hall. In its youth it did an excellent job of ticking off the minutes, but now it is silent, its work being done by the very modern and absolutely accurate electric clock which operates without fuss or bother. And in grandfather's time it was also the best practice to cover the lawn in the fall with a heavy mulch of farmyard manure and leave this until the following spring. But now this has generally been discontinued in favor of more modern and more effective methods.

Manure is a valuable adjunct to the list of supplies to be used in the preparation of flower beds, vegetable gardens, and in planting trees and shrubs. Here it is used effectively to improve the physical condition of the soil by adding organic matter and to provide a source of supply of plant nutrients which will become available slowly over a considerable period of time. It may also be used with good results in mulching the rose garden and under trees and shrubs. But when this is said the story is told, because manure should not be used on the lawn or in lawn construction for several very good reasons.

Why Avoid Use?

Score one against the use of manure is its obvious unpleasantness. Also it at best is a very dilute fertilizing material, one ton containing less than thirty pounds of nitrogen, ten pounds of phosphorus, and twenty pounds of potash. This would mean that a heavy application would be necessary and at its present price it would be a very uneconomical source of plant food. The food elements it contains are not present in proportions which permit it to provide plants with a balanced diet. The nitrogen content is high in proportion to that of phosphorus and potash and the phosphorus content is much too low in proportion to the other two. Furthermore, the phosphorus is much less readily available than the other two elements and as a result the plants are never properly fed.

Would Smother Grass

If manure were used on the established lawn it would be necessary to apply so much that the grass would be

smothered. It should be accepted as one of the most important principles of lawn culture that the grass should never be covered with any material which will bury it, be this manure, straw, leaves, or soil. The lawn grasses are injured rather than improved by a winter mulch and a manure mulch applied in the spring will produce a patchy, uneven lawn until midsummer if it by any chance does not kill the grass.

Manure is frequently applied to the established lawn in the belief that organic matter will be added in this manner. This is very definitely not true, for two reasons. First, it is not possible to get organic matter into a lawn soil by surface application. This must be built up by the plants themselves through the accumulation of root residues which are produced in rather large amounts by properly fed lawn grasses. Second, the ammonia water which is produced by rain passing through manure is an effective solvent for humus and it will actually wash out of the soil large quantities of the organic matter, which is already present.

Another serious count against the use of manure on the lawn is that it

contains weed seeds. The dry shredded manures are just as bad from this stand point as are fresh manure. Finally, manure is definitely related to two serious diseases, gas gangrene and lockjaw, but this is an interesting story which will be reserved for next week.

COLOR SCHEME

Light gray-blue walls make an interesting background for copper and white modern furnishings. The trim

in a light walnut finish, a deep gray-blue floor, and a light cream ceiling will harmonize with the wall color. For the curtains, a thin net with a light rust or yellow cast will add warmth to the cool blue grays. Accents in paintings, flower pots, the interior of book cases, etc., may range through the tones of blue greens and rusts or yellows may be added.

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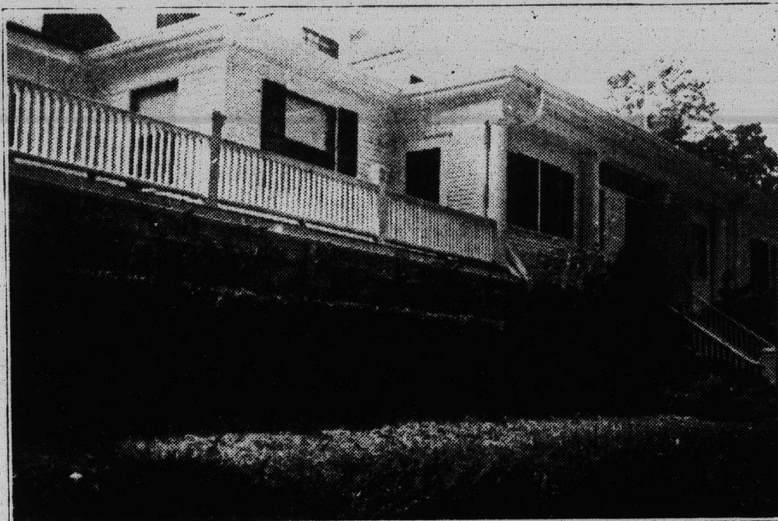
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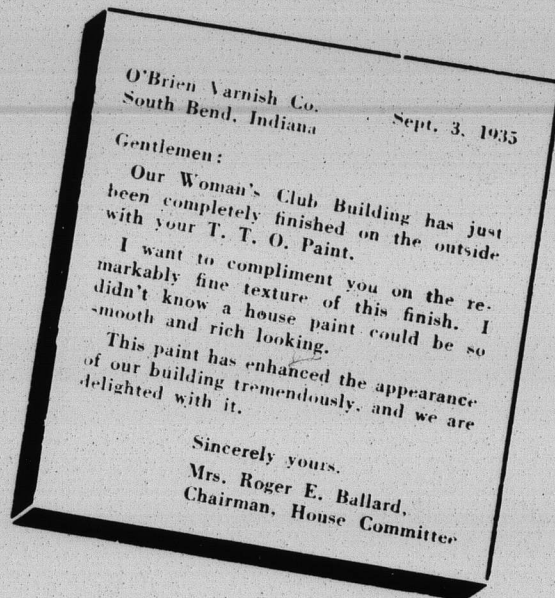
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