

The Canadian Gardener

By Charles H. Chesley

VALUE OF THE HOME GARDEN

The first civilized man was a gardener. The fact is not recorded in the annals of mankind, neither can we prove the assertion by a mathematical hypothesis; nevertheless the fact is plainly obvious to him who has noted the effect of a good garden upon the human mind. This being the case, then, gardening is as old as civilization. Good gardening, however, is a much more modern creation—a thing that holds our interest and deserves our best efforts.

The soil of any part of the world, where man cares to make his home, is capable of producing something. Happily, in the most northern regions, where the summer season is short, conditions of growth are speeded to a higher pitch and plants mature with greater speed than in more southern latitudes. This makes it possible to grow crops in bleak Labrador and in the far Northwest.

It is not possible to measure the value of a garden. If we consider it from a material sense alone, we find that the actual worth of the crops produced is somewhat astonishing. I have kept an account of the products used from a small garden for a period of three months. Figured at retail store prices, a family of three persons used practically fifty dollars worth of garden products every month. This made a respectable sum at the end of the year, and I think the average would hold good for the twelve months, as large quantities of vegetables were canned, dried and stored for winter use.

As a business proposition, then, the garden pays. The work of caring for it is largely spare time effort and should be classed as recreation rather than labor. I cannot figure the value of the exercise, the mental relaxation and the rest for the nervous system which the garden gives. And the value is not all on the utility side; a large part of it is aesthetic for flowers and ornamental shrubbery and vines are part and parcel of our gardening operations.

The home garden is for everybody—the home owner and the renter. Certain kinds of garden work are permanent, but much of it is transient. It must be done year after year; therefore the back yard of the renter can be made to produce handsomely toward the support of his family. Likewise, the farmer and the farmer's wife should consider the garden, for out of it comes that which will add to the profits of their labor and reduce the size of the bill for the foodstuffs to feed the family and the flocks and herds. The physician can figure the value of the vitamins contained in the pot of spinach and the dish of green peas, but you and I can measure almost as accurately their value, without the aid of chemistry, by noting the roses that glow in the cheeks of the boys and girls who subsist largely upon garden products.

The labor of gardening is of most value to him or her who spends much time within doors. As a means of securing needful exercise, the garden patch is far and away ahead of the golf course and the tennis court. It is nothing against golf when I say that we need fewer golfers and more gardeners. For the man who gets home from the office

or the store at six o'clock, the garden has endless possibilities. What is more delightful than to spend an hour with the cabbage plants and the rose bushes? The garden, then, is particularly recommended to the person of sedentary habits. Its value cannot be reckoned in dollars and cents.

Everybody can have a garden. I have seen a good garden growing on a city dump. An enterprising Italian had hired the dump to raise vegetables and flowers upon, and he succeeded, too. Such melons and cucumbers and tomatoes were not seen anywhere about the city. This indicates that any kind of soil can be made to produce garden products. New lands are especially good. Wonderful crops are often grown out of the virgin soil just cleared of the timber. The wide prairies of the West furnish the wheat farmers boundless opportunities for gardening—the burned clearings of the north call for planters and the stony patches of the East need but a scattering of the seed, for all of these sections are ready to yield abundantly of fruit, vegetable and flower.

I need not compare the value of fresh vegetables with those usually offered in the markets. Everyone who knows is well aware of the fact that many products rapidly deteriorate in taste and value after they are gathered. Summer vegetables and fruits are particularly liable to this deterioration. Scientists tell us that certain chemical changes occur in sweet corn that make it of much less value for food even after it has been gathered but three or four hours. This is but one of many products that soon lose their best qualities after being gathered.

Many homes are remote from markets, and it would not be possible to have vegetables at all if they were not raised at home. The trapper in his isolated cabin, the lumberman in his hut, and the little farmer of our clearings should plant a garden. The amount it will add to his pleasure and health this summer, he alone will be able to judge.

Garden products are not only for the summer season. I raise all kinds of products for canning and drying, and many are stored in the root cellar for use during the winter. It is a pleasant task for the summer and autumn days to lay away a store for winter use. If we fail in this task, we do not show as much wisdom as do the wild creatures of the field and forest, for many of them have learned to provide for the bleak days of winter.

No better advice can be given than the admonition: Plant a garden, then can and dry and store the products for use when the wild elements are raging. No man or woman who is once a gardener, ever backsides; he knows the value in dollars and in other considerations, of the products he can make the soil give him in exchange for a little work.

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WILL PAVE AT MT. FOREST

At a special meeting of the Town Council held in the Council chamber on Saturday morning a motion was passed unanimously by the Council, all members being present, that Queen street, from the C. N. R. station to Main street, be paved. County Road Inspector Young and Engineer G. G. Reid, jr., addressed the Council. A delegation was appointed to meet the County Council on the matter.

THE FOSTERING OF CIVIC PRIDE

(By Ontario Horticultural Assn.)

Trees and urban beauty are inseparable, and yet it is possible to have too many trees growing on our streets and boulevards. Perhaps it is a want of imagination, or more likely the habit of copying others, that has led to the planting of trees much closer together on the streets than is necessary for the purpose for which they are intended. In the hot climates of the south, shade is of the utmost importance, but in this country trees have other purposes besides shading. Their purpose is rather ornamentalation but when they are standing so closely together as to almost or nearly shade the ground, no other kind of planting can prosper. One cannot help learning in his home town, or in any other that he may visit, that the planting habit has been about the same. From fifteen to twenty-five feet covers the distance between street trees. The intentions of those who have given it thought to remove every second tree later on, is very rarely carried out, with the result that it is practically impossible in either city, town or village to do any ornamental planting in the front part of the properties. Cities who have undertaken the control of the street trees and the further beautification of streets by shrubbery planting, have decided that thirty feet is the minimum distance apart that street trees should stand. From this up to eighty or ninety feet is regarded as the latitude that may be allowed.

The Ontario Horticultural Association, an organization distributed over the Province, has taken action to help this situation. At the

Annual Meeting held in Toronto in February, it was recommended that municipalities be given authority to control the street trees and to regulate not only the planting, but the keeping in order and thinning out where it is considered necessary from a horticultural standpoint. It is recognized that wonderful possibilities in street decoration lie before us, and further that municipalities are to escape the charge of backwardness in civic pride it is necessary that attention be given to these points. Without open sunshine it is impossible to have beautiful lawns, to say nothing of beds of flowers and clumps of beautiful shrubs. It is true that some courage is needed to remove well established trees, but it requires only a little imagination to realize the transformation that may result from exchanging our surplus trees for the park-like beauty that may be given to any of our streets by well directed landscape treatment.

SOME SAFETY FIRST "DON'T'S"

This advice may save your life. The Hydroelectric Commission have sent out these simple rules, which they hope to impress on everyone:

Use only one hand in switching electric lights on or off, and keep the other from metallic contact. Never switch on an electric light with one hand while the other hand is in water or on a water faucet. Never operate an electric light while standing in a bathtub. Always be sure that the hands are dry when operating an electric device. Never tamper with an electrical circuit with which you are not familiar.

In spite of the campaign against her, the bobbed hair girl seems to bob up serenely.—Lethbridge Herald.

AN INSPIRATION TO SPINSTERS

(Walkerton Herald-Times.)

As the garter snake points to the boa constrictor as an evidence of what the race is capable of, so those Walkerton spinster who have claimed for generations that the local matrimonial market is dull, should view with admiration that Walkerton lady who went through her fifth wedding ceremony here this week, and who stands out as a living contradiction to the folly of the statement and the absurdity of their claim. There are "Acres of Diamonds" right here, as one woman has been able to prove, and also the present age is just as chivalrous as when knights went around in armor plate and pounded each other up in

the presence of their lady love. As marriage is a scriptural injunction, verily some people will enjoy the plaudits "well done" while others are hearing reprimands for their sins of omission in this respect at the final rehearsal in the great subsequently.



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