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Landscape Gardening Tips

By Melissa Albright

LANDSCAPE GARDENING.

Landscape gardening has often been associated with the painting of a picture. Your art-work teacher has told you that a good picture should have a point of interest, and the rest of the points simply go to make the piece more beautiful. So in landscape gardening there must be a picture in the gardener's mind of what he desires the whole to be.

From this study we will be able to work out a little theory of landscape gardening.

Let's start with the lawn. A good extent of open lawn space is always beautiful. It is restful. It adds a feeling of space to even small grounds. So we might generalize and say that it is good to keep open lawn space. If someone to cover his lawn with a lot of trees, with little flower beds here and there, the general effect is choppy and fussy. It is a bit like an over-dressed person. One's yard has lost all individuality. A single tree or a small group is not a bad arrangement on the lawn. Do not center the tree or trees. Let them drop into the background. Make a pleasing side feature with them. In choosing trees you must keep in mind a number of things. You should not choose an overpowering tree; the tree should be of good shape, with something interesting about its bark, leaves, flowers or fruit. While the poplar is a rapid grower, it sheds its leaves early and is left standing, bare and ugly, before the fall is old. Mind you, there are places where a row or double row of Lombardy poplars is very effective. But I think you'll agree with me that one lone poplar is not. The catalpa is quite lovely by itself. Its leaves are broad, its flowers attractive, the seed pods which cling to the tree until away into the winter, add a bit of picture. The bright berries of the ash, the brilliant foliage of the sugar maple, the blossoms of the tulip tree, the bark of the white birch, and the leaves of the copper beech are beauty points to consider.

Placement makes a difference in the selection of a tree. Suppose the lower portion of the yard is a bit low and moist, then the spot is ideal for a willow. Don't group trees together which look awkward. A long-looking poplar does not go with a nice rounded little tulip tree. A juniper, so neat and prim, would look silly beside a spreading chestnut. You must keep proportion and suitability in mind.

I would never advise planting a group of evergreens close to a house, and in the front yard. The effect

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is very gloomy. Houses surrounded are over capped and are not only gloomy to live in, but truly unhealthy. The requisite inside a house is sunlight and plenty of it.

As trees are chosen because of certain good points, shrubs should be also. In a clump I would plant some that bloom early, some that bloom late, some for the beauty of their fall foliage, some for the color of their bark and others for the fruit. Some spireas and the forsythia bloom early. The red bark of the dogwood makes for a bit of color all winter, and the red berries of the barberry cling to the shrub well into the winter.

Certain shrubs are good to use for hedge purposes. A hedge is prettier usually than a fence. The Californian privet is excellent for this purpose. Osage orange, Japan barberry, buckthorn, Japan quince, and Van Houtte's spirea are other shrubs that make great hedges.

I forgot to say that in tree and shrub selection it is usually better to choose those of the locality where

you live. Unusual and foreign plants do worse and often harmonize but poorly with their new setting.

Landscape gardening may follow along very formal lines or along informal lines. The first would have straight paths, straight rows in stiff beds, everything, as the name tells, perfectly formal. The other method is, of course, the exact opposite. There are danger points in each.

The formal arrangement is likely to look too stiff; the informal, too fussy, too wiggly. As far as paths go, keep this in mind, that a path should always lead somewhere. Its job is to direct one to a definite place. Now, straight, even paths are not unpleasing if the effect is to be a formal garden. The danger in the curved path is an abrupt curve, a whirligig effect. It is far better for you to stick to straight paths unless you can make a really beautiful curve. No one can tell you how to do this.

Garden paths may be gravel, dirt, or grass. You may see grass paths in some very lovely gardens. I doubt, however, if they would serve you nearly as well in your small garden. Your garden areas are so limited that they should be re-spaded each season, and the grass paths are a great bother in this work. Of course, a gravel path makes a fine appearance, but again you may not have gravel at your command. It is possible for any of you to dig out the path for two feet. Then put in six inches of stone. Over this, pack in the dirt, rounding it slightly toward the center of the path. There should never be depressions through the central part of paths, since these form convenient places for water to stand. The under layer of stone makes a natural drainage system.

A building often needs the help of vines or flowers or both to tie it to the yard in such a way that it forms a pleasant whole. Vines lend themselves well to this work. It is better to plant a perennial vine, and let it form a permanent part of your landscape scheme. The Virginia creeper, wistaria, honeysuckle, a climbing rose, the clematis and trumpet vine are all satisfactory.

Close your eyes and picture a house of natural color, that mellow gray of the weathered shingles. Now add to this old house a purple wistaria. Can you see the beauty of it?

Of course, the morning-glory is an annual vine, as is the moon-vine and wild cucumber. Now, these

have their special function. For often, it is necessary to cover an ugly thing for just a time, until better things and better times come. The annual is 'the chap' for this work.

Flowers go well along the side of the building, or bordering a walk. In general, though, keep the front lawn space open and unbroken by beds. What lovelier in early spring than a bed of daffodils close to the house? Hyacinths and tulips, too, form a blaze of glory. These are little or no bother, and start the spring right. Some make bulbs an exception to the rule of unbroken front lawn. Snowdrops and crocuses planted through the lawn are beautiful. They do not disturb the general effect, but just blend with the whole. One expert bulb gardener says to take a basketful of bulbs in the fall, walk about your grounds, and just drop bulbs out here and there. Wherever the bulbs drop, plant them. Small bulbs as those we plant in lawns should be in groups of four to six. Daffodils may be planted, too.

The place for a flower garden is generally at the side or rear of the house. The backyard garden is a lovely idea, is it not? Who would want to leave a beautiful looking front yard, turn the corner of a house, and find a dump heap? Not I. The flower garden may be laid out formally in neat little beds, or it may be more careless, hit-or-miss sort. Both have their good points. Great masses of bloom are attractive.

You should have in mind some notion of the blending of color. Nature does not consider this at all, and still gets wondrous effects. This is because of the tremendous amount of her perfect background of

green, and the limitlessness of her space, while we are confined at the best to relatively small areas. We should not blind people's eyes with clashes of colors which do not at close range blend well. In order to break up extremes of colors you can always use masses of white flowers, or something like mignonette, which is in effect green.

Finally, let's sum up our landscape lesson. The grounds are a setting for the house or buildings. Open, free lawn spaces, a tree or a proper group well placed, flowers which do not clutter up the front yard, groups of shrubbery these are points to be remembered. The paths should lead somewhere, and be either straight or well curved. If you start with a formal garden, you should not mix the informal with it before the work is done.

Melissa Albright is the webmaster for the website [Know More Get More](#)

Giving you the information you need.

What's in Store for National Home Gardening Club Members?

By Nicky Pilkington

The National Home Gardening Club offer many benefits to its members.

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1. Members can enter competitions to win free gardening products such as gardening accessories, tools, and other gardening supplies.
2. A coupon will be given to members to claim a free gardening shears.
3. Members can also access a free trial subscription of the Gardening How-To Magazine.
4. They may be eligible to test and keep gardening tools such as pruning shears. These are some of the products tested by members in the past two issues of the Gardening How-To magazine:
 - Honda Harmony Lawn Mower
 - Miracle-Gro Garden Weed Preventer
 - Sunflower Garden
 - Cobra Head Precision Weeder and Cultivator
 - Preen 'n Green
5. Members can enjoy a free directory of public gardens, which contains information about lush gardens, arboretums, and conservatories throughout the US.
6. They can interact and talk about tips, ideas and methods with other members.
7. Members can obtain gardening and landscaping tips and plans for the completion of various gardening projects.
8. They have access to the members-only gardening website.
9. Members can also preview gardening books, gardening videos, etc.

Indeed, the for-members-only benefits are that grandiose. They are all for the gardening enthusiasts to grab.

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