

# BEAUTIFY YOUR LAND AND GARDEN!

## AN ARTISTIC GARDEN

By THEODORE H. MILLINGTON

What is an artistic garden? There are as many ideas on that as there are garden-designers and garden-owners. If you ask a garden lover he or she may say, "I don't know if my garden would be considered artistic, but it is what I want. I love it. That makes it artistic to me." To give its owner satisfaction is, I suppose, the purpose of a garden.

To be sure, we all have seen great gardens which we recollect with longing and maybe envy. Yet considering all the circumstances we still prefer our own. When a boy, I lived where there was a twenty-acre garden. There was a great old house with a tower four stories high covered with English ivy a foot thick. On the south wall of the house in the court was a wistaria vine completely covering that whole wing, three stories high, and when in bloom its great blue clusters made the whole court blue.

The house enclosed the court on three sides, while across the fourth was an iron scrollwork fence, vine-covered, having double gates opening onto the bridge crossing the moat which surrounded the house.

On the banks of the moat were high-stalked grafted roses whose branches garlanded over wires from one stalk to another, and on the outside of the house-wall were more English ivy and Japanese ivy (Ficus Stipulata) so completely covering the walls that the windows were mere holes in the green.

In the moat were several varieties of water lilies, and a pair of swans. The swans' nest was built on piles in one corner of the moat only a few inches above water level. When the lady swan was on the nest during the hatching season the male swan was in high temper and permitted no one on the water. He would attack a person in a boat.

The garden-bridge over the moat connected with a broad walk three hundred feet long, lined on both sides by majestic century-old rows of lindens which completely vaulted the walk like a nave of a Gothic cathedral. The gracefully sweeping lower branches touched and caressed the ground.

At the terminal of this enchanting walk was another bridge over a narrow streamlet which connected two ponds, each about an acre in size, and thence walks branched off to various parts of the garden. These ponds were quite filled with waterlilies of various kinds and colors, and on the shore of one lake, mounted on a marble base of Greek design was a large sun-dial.

On each side of the Linden walk were wide lawns, and beyond these on one side was the fruit garden enclosed by pear trees trained and trimmed low from a fence. On the other side beyond the lawn were the espalier walls, hot-beds and greenhouses. The harder grapes, apricots and peaches which nevertheless, without practical value, were raised in the north northern summer, were trained on these walls. They were warmed in winter with window-sashes and board shutters. The shutters were removed during the summer so that the sun could warm up the glass-covered vines and give them an early start.

The more delicate varieties were grown in permanent greenhouses. There were grapes, figs, peaches, prunes, apricots and plums all planted in the ground in the houses.

In another house still rarer and more delicate fruit trees were planted in great earthenware pots sunk into the ground till only the pot-rims were slightly above the ground level. The main foliage had three divisions: tropic, moist cactus, hot and dry, and orchids, hot and dry.

Flowering plants, perennials and annuals were so arranged all over the place, along walks, at the terminals, in borders, in rockeries and on espaliers, that there was a constant element of surprise when wand-meister led to some new grouping in full bloom, or long vista with colorful terminals.

A large part of the garden had been left partly in natural woods with all underbrush cleared out, leaving the ground all four to five-foot trunks a hundred feet high, fully revealed. Narcissus, tulips, crocus, hyacinths and daffodils had been naturalized and were making a good show. The native flowers in their season—white anemones, blue anemones (Anemone Hepatica), English violets and dogtooth violets covered the floor of the forest, like an ever-changing, witching-carpet in Fairyland.

The moat, the ponds and the water-tower were filled by a great run from the nearby river.

But to a boy, the most romantic part was the fruit cellars and mushroom cellars. They were located under the house in what

had been in a by-gone day the dungeons. The great iron rings an inch thick by four inches in diameter were still set in the masonry, and some of them still had the chains attached. The vaults still seemed filled with the groans and curses of the former unfortunate prisoners, and when dark the place was spooky.

To step out of this dungeon into a modern up-to-the-minute garden, with water piped everywhere, with fountains and diminutive catacombs, the air filled with sunshine and the fragrance of the flowers, blooming everywhere, was to experience in a few minutes the transformation that took centuries from the crannies of the middle ages to the happy peaceful life in modern times in little old Detroit.

Fish in the ponds—birds—houses and birds' nests—the nightingale, the thrush, the sky-lark, a stork's nest on the house gable; white porcelain mannequins with the names, both common and scientific, burned in the glare on its awning; croquet courts, swimming-pool, garden houses, garden seats; dense shade under century-old monarchs of the woods, and sun-filled open spaces, this indeed was a garden where beauty, quiet and complete privacy reigned harmoniously. Rare exotic and beautiful things were brought to this garden from the ends of the earth to give their enchantment to this gracious spot, this earthly Paradise.

Was it artistic? I do not know by what standard to judge it. That country is full of such places, and even more gorgeous. I have seen many of them. They all are undeniably lovely, but they friendly familiarity of the home garden I have described is the one I loved best. Artistic? I don't care. I loved it!

Only a few complete such a garden. However, it is not the size of a garden that makes it artistic any more, but it is the size of a woman which determines her loveliness. It is the response to the attention, the care, the love, the study, that creates and holds affection.

A good landscape architect can do wonders with a city lot. A small garden is much more intimate and easier to maintain. After all, the garden is for the family rather than for the neighborhood.

### Plants Need Food Now For Summer

Now that weather conditions favor the growth of plants, it is desirable that other factors of growth be equally favorable. Because most of our soils have been so reduced in fertility, plant food is one factor that gardeners everywhere must give consideration. The development of commercial plant food that is complete and balanced makes it easy to deal with this problem. Happily, modern plant food is not only complete, but it is odorless and pleasant to work with, too.

To assure a beautiful lawn this summer, established lawns should be fed at this time with four pounds of complete plant food for every 100 square feet of lawn.

### Plants Need Food Now For Summer

The plant food should be applied evenly over the lawn when the grass is dry and immediately afterwards soaked in through a watering can. Vegetables, flowers, and shrubs should be fed by working the plant food into the soil at the same rate. In computing the area to be covered in feeding shrubs, consider that the spread of the root system is greater than that of the top and make due allowance.

Trees, too, should be fed now unless they were fed during their dormant season. The process of feeding trees is quite simple. Holes are made under the drop of the branches in a zigzag fashion. These should be 2 inches in diameter and from 12 to 18 inches deep. A crow bar may be used though better results are obtained through the use of a ground auger.

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**Eliminating Weeds**

I know lots of folks have given up hope of ever having a weedless lawn. And if I try to tell them that they really can have one they're likely to believe me. But the treatment I'm going to prescribe has cured lots of lawns that their owners had given up for lost, and I certainly want to urge



The real answer to this thin grass problem—and consequently to the weed problem—is proper feeding. Because a thin, weedy lawn is a half-starved lawn, almost every time. Here's why.

All through the growing season your grass roots are constantly drawing eleven different food elements from the soil, and every single one of these elements is necessary for healthy growth. If you let even one of them become exhausted from the soil, you're headed for trouble. Just like a child on an incomplete diet, your grass will become thin and sickly, will begin to die out. And right then the weeds get going. So the first and by far the most important step in controlling weeds is to make sure that your grass has all eleven of these needed food elements.

"It's good," you say, "it sounds like a great idea. But how about the weed roots that are already in my soil, just waiting to creep up and spoil my lawn?" Well, the answer is exactly the same! You see, grass roots start growing earlier in the spring than weed roots do. If you give your lawn a good square meal early in the spring—as soon as the first snow is out of the ground—it will give your grass a great big head start over the weeds. And later, when weeds do creep up, your grass should be growing so strongly that lots of weeds will find no room to grow; they'll be choked out.

Now, of course, I wouldn't want to promise that early feeding will make the grass choke out all the weeds in one season. But if you do it right, and do it early enough, it will cut the number down so greatly that you'll feel like going after the rest by hand.

But remember—to be effective, must be done just as soon as frost is out of the ground. And remember, too, that just any old plant food won't do. Manures, for instance, actually contain weed seeds, and putting them on your lawn just makes the problem that much worse. I'd recommend that you buy a complete plant food one that supplies all eleven of the food elements your grass needs from the soil. Apply it to your entire lawn, 4 pounds per 100 square feet.