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Down to Earth
 By ALICE WESSELS BURLINGAME

PLANNED GARDENS
 Vegetable gardens are coming in for a great deal of praise these days. Among the writers in this art we find Gordon Hess of 400 Wellslay.

The Hesses moved to Birmingham from Texas and maybe this fact accounts for the size of their vegetable items.

The vegetable bed is 123 x 19 feet. In the first six rows, which may be seen from the street, Mrs. Hess has "snuck in" some cutting flowers. She has arranged them so that the lowest varieties are in the front row and the height of the flowers in her "altered space" were selected so that snags are in the last row. She has a couple of rows of plox drummondii which are excellent for "different" flower arrangements.

Enter this garden and this is what you will find.

SELF-BLANCHING celery, turnips, and the list goes on and on. His eyes popped when I saw his 42 tomato plants stalked to neat, green poles 6 feet high and at their feet he had spread two bales of hay for summer mulching. This technique will eliminate weeding and will hold in the moisture to assure healthy plants to the end of the season.

THIS SEASON I have been noting many examples of smoke-trees in Birmingham. They grow as large as an old fashioned lilac bush. The flower heads resemble great puffs of smoke and in the fall this effect turns pinkish purple. This shrub likes full sun.

If you should have time on your hands soon, draw a picture of your property and make three copies, using a carbon. Then, at 9 a.m. indicate on the plan where the shadows are cast. Repeat this operation of tracing shadows at noon and at 4 p.m. This plan will be invaluable this

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next February when you settle down some cozy evening in your pet chair and make your garden plans for 1953.

Colorful catalogs will prod you on to experiment with "the new". Remember, the right plant in the right place with the soil it deserves, always succeeds.

Mrs. Frank Webb is president of the National Farm and Garden Club and resides at 924 Arlington. A visit to her garden is a real treat and the visitor at once feels the kindness and generosity of this fine woman.

SHE DELIGHTS in helping a new gardener catch her enthusiasm for planting by unfolding the lore and pleasure of working with different and unusual trees, shrubs and perennials.

At the focal point in her yard (remember, she "talked" about it in other issues, the point at the end of straight line from the most important window in your home), Mrs. Webb has a new rose garden this year. It is shaped like a large U with the open end toward the house. At the center of the inverted U within the rose area she has that beautiful statuette "The Littlest Angel".

To welcome the visitor and invite those to see the angel a little closer are two pillars rose enigmatic, in the rose bed, at the beginning of the grass path in the middle of the U.

The rose plants have been planted in flower arrangement and Betty Prior roses are in the background, to give elevation by their natural growing height. In front of them the colors of the roses graduate until at the front of the planting there are only the deep colors. Sweet alium has been planted around the rose bed.

A GINKGO TREE provides an interesting fan shaped leaf to observe. Mrs. Webb also has a variegated red twig dogwood which is very choice. This gardener is aiming to have her garden give a maximum effect with a minimum effort and has discovered that selecting plants having interesting textures by their leaf varieties is one way to achieve her goal.

Coleus is an annual, and one way to start at the ground level to introduce texture. Mrs. Webb has had excellent luck with pieris japonica which she plants to be used especially for flower arrangements.

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