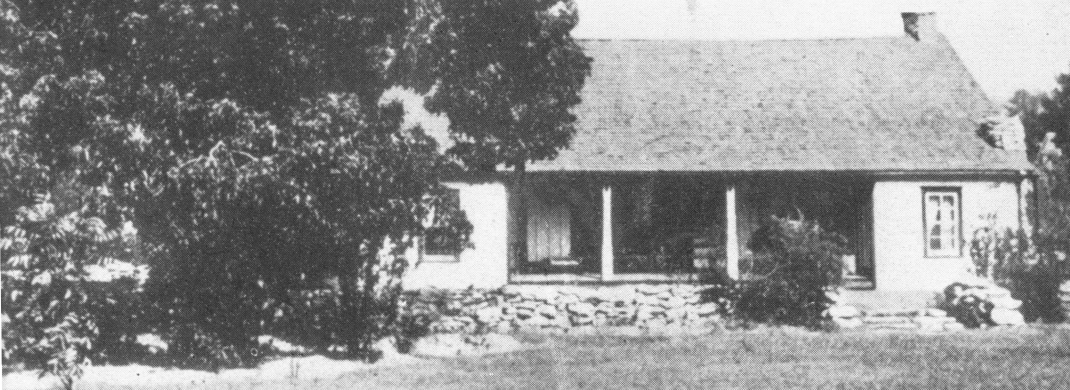


# Beautifying Country Homes

B 76



Issued By  
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"He breathed upon an empire and bade it arise. Texas started to its feet, in all the glow of youthful beauty and vigor. She took her place in the midst of nations. Millions looked upon her with earnest eyes and hopeful hearts."—Thus spake one writer of Sam Houston, whose old home, located at Huntsville, Texas, is shown on the cover page of this bulletin. It is interesting and significant that a man so engrossed in matters of state would feel the need of growing things and fulfill that need by planting trees and shrubs. Many other great statesmen have found pleasure in beautifying country homes.



## Beautifying Country Homes

Inez Derryberry, Landscape Gardening Specialist

“The foolish man sees happiness in the distance, the wise man grows it under his feet.”

Rest, peace and quiet: a farm home surrounded by a green expanse of well sodded grass lawn, a background of lovely trees, foundation planting of shrubs that gracefully tie the house into the surroundings—this is what landscape gardening can do for a home. With the unlimited amount of space, good soil, and native shrubs which Texas farm people have, there is ample opportunity for all to have lovely farm homes.

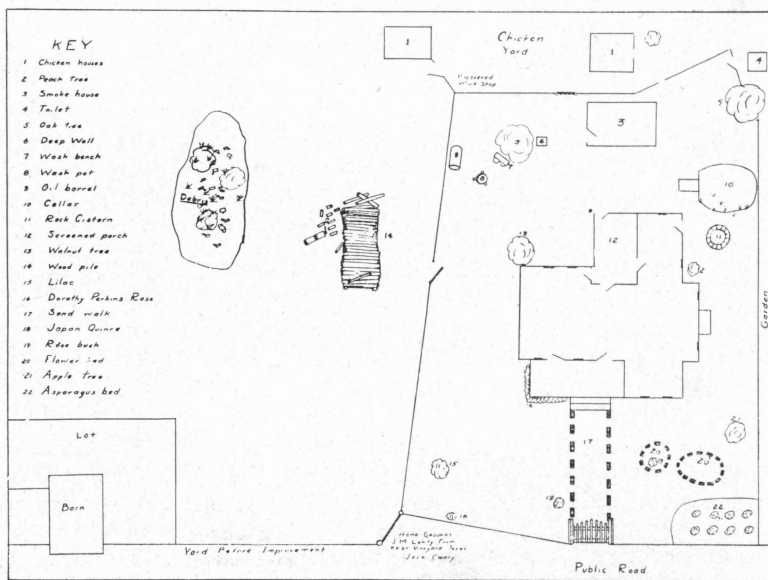
In improving a yard it is important to have a completed, unified landscape plan. It may take several years to complete the plantings, but the plan should be drawn and followed. No two plans can ever be exactly alike, since some homes are on hills, some on plains, and some are in valleys; some have many trees, and some have few; some face east, some in other directions. There can, therefore, be no set rules, but it is hoped that the plans and suggestions given in this bulletin may help you to know how to draw a plan for your yard, how to plant according to that plan, and how to care for the plantings made.

### Making The Plan

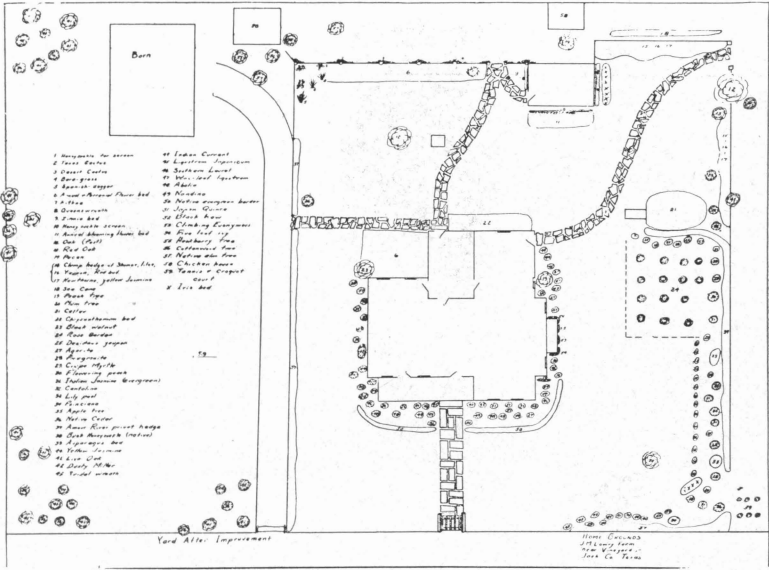
The first thing to do is to make, on paper, a landscape plan of the farm grounds. At first it will only be a rough sketch but as the family study and discuss it, it will be made over and over again until there will be a neat, usable plan, the planting of which, though it may take several years to complete, will make of the farm grounds a thing of beauty and a joy both to family and friends.

Using one-eighth or one-sixteenth of an inch to represent a foot, place on the paper a floor plan of the house and all the out buildings. If the distance between each, is not known pace by walking with natural step, from point to point, allowing 2½ feet per step.

After these buildings are drawn on paper, they should be studied to see if they need to be moved. Often the view of a farm home nestled



Yard plan of Jack county home before improvement.



Above—Yard plan made as guide for improvement (see opposite page for yard before improvement). Below—Same place after yard improvement.





Above—Smith county place before yard improvement. Below—Same place after improvement. Right—Flagstone walk used in this yard.

among a group of lovely old trees is completely ruined for occupants and passers-by by a garage or a barn located so near the road that a full view to and from the house can not be had. Before such a home can appear at its best, the buildings must be moved to the rear with both convenience and beauty considered. If the doors to the garage are not toward the road a more pleasing view will result as most garages contain various and sundry articles which cause them to appear unattractive from the roadside. Therefore, the garage may need to be turned.

After the buildings are placed satisfactorily the location of the fences should be studied. If yard fences are necessary, they should be as inconspicuous as possible, and of material suitable to the surroundings. Instead of the tall picket variety or the very ornate wire ones, low picket or very plain low wire for front fences are generally preferable. A large area is more easily landscaped than a small one. Therefore a yard 100 x 150 feet or larger is to be desired rather than a smaller area. This is true because a large area gives an appearance of spaciousness which a small lot cannot achieve. A farm home is surrounded

by fields and pastures and to confine the lawn to a small area would be to give a cramped and formal effect which would appear most unnatural in a rural setting. With these things in mind, the plan should include only the necessary fences with the gates located where they will give most convenience. After the buildings and fences are located, it is time to think of walks and drives.

### Walks And Drives

The kinds of walks and drives used should depend on the material available, the cost of different materials in various sections of the state, and whether these walks and drives are used much or little.

Brick, gravel and flagstone are all good materials for walks and drives, and cinders may be used. Concrete is used for special conditions. The important thing about each is that it should be correctly used. The flagstone walk should be used more on Texas farms since it can be made of native rock. Native rock laid flush with the surface of the lawn can also be used for stepping stone walks. The stones should be laid 20 inches apart from center to center. If native rock is not available, very attractive flagstones may be made of concrete. These are more attractive for the average farm home and are more easily made than a solid concrete walk.

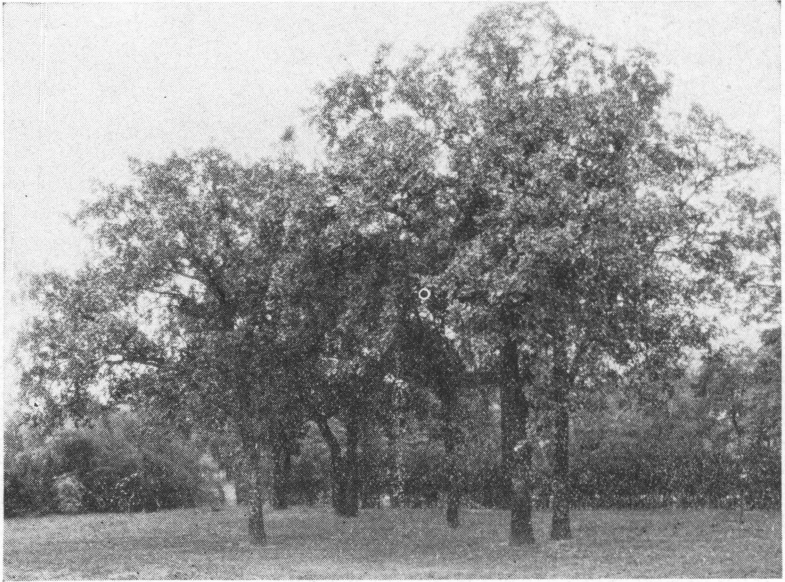
Walks and drives should be placed where they are needed for service. The width depends on the amount of travel. Usually 8 to 10 feet is wide enough for a single drive. Walks are usually 4 to 6 feet wide.

Curved walks and drives are most interesting, and more pleasing results can be had by using them, but since a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, straight walks are sometimes the most practical. Long graceful curves rather than sharp abrupt curves give the best effect.

Eliminate where possible the hard surface drives and walks as they are expensive and for most farm homes are not so attractive as other types. Illustrations are given herein to show how to draw walks and drives into the plan.



A lovely screen planting completely hiding a service building with stepping stone walk leading to the building on a Denton county estate.



Trees planted in groups are more restful and more attractive than when planted in straight rows.

### Trees

Trees should be indicated next on the landscape plan. First, locate those already growing. Then add as many as will be needed to make a nice setting for the home without a crowded effect. Few farm homes have enough well placed trees. Trees have to be moved while small but are worth the time required for their growth. Permanent shade trees planted to frame the house will add attractiveness, comfort and value to any home. The charm of trees as to light and shade, form and color can scarcely be estimated. Elms, pines, oaks, and maples all illustrate this.

Long lived hard wood trees should be planted and always in groups as nature plants them. Never plant in straight rows, these tend to appear monotonous and artificial. The number of trees to a group depends on the size of the lawn; for large lawns, use 10 to 12 in a group, for small lawns 2 or 3. Trees planted to the sides and back serve as a background for the house and give a more harmonious and quiet atmosphere than do trees planted in straight rows across the front. If the lower limbs have to be removed when a tree becomes a



fair size it shows that the tree has been improperly placed. When a house faces the west, it is often necessary to plant a tree to the side front as shade for the front entrance.

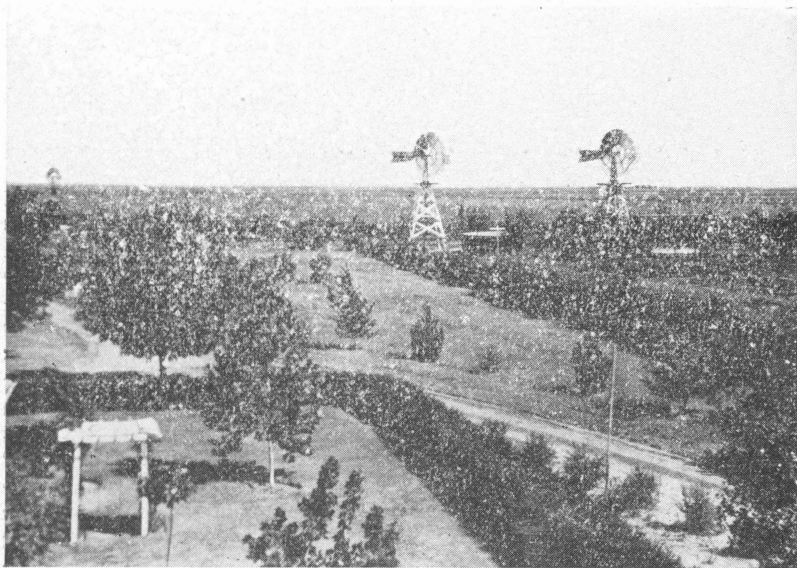
Fruit trees should seldom, if ever, be planted in the yard. Dropping fruit makes litter and an untidy appearance. The lawn around them is difficult to care for.

Secure standard trees which are known to be adapted to the section and avoid always the unusual or peculiar tree, such as the weeping mulberry or umbrella catalpa. They are entirely out of place growing in the average farm yard.

Small trees such as plum, redbud, dogwood, yaupon and haw are valuable for framing the view of a small house or when used in groups are valuable for screening. They also break the monotony and add interest to the shrub border.

### Windbreaks

In West Texas windbreaks of growing trees should be much more extensively used than they are at present. Planting in straight rows is permissible here because in windbreaks, the trees should form an unbroken line along the north and west sides of the group of farm buildings. They serve as protection both from sand storms and cold winds. For an evergreen windbreak, small Arizona Cypress (seedlings



Good West Texas windbreaks viewed from a height.



This wind break is guaranteed to do the work.

of 4 to 10 in.) planted in a well cultivated soil early in the spring will in four or five years furnish a lovely background. They will grow without much water after they become established; but with plenty of water and cultivation they will grow more rapidly.

The Chinese elm should be used extensively for windbreaks. The chief objection to it is susceptibility to root-rot, care should be taken not to plant it in infected soil. A strip of ground at least 20 feet wide should be thoroughly ploughed and worked. Thirty-six inch seedlings should then be set in a straight row down the center of the ploughed area about 15 feet apart. Allow them to grow naturally and to remain untrimmed. Until they become established, they should have a good watering once each week and should be kept well cultivated.

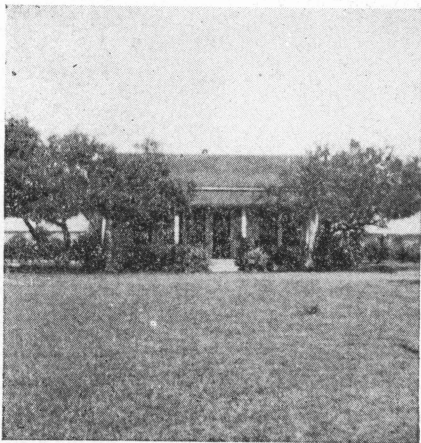
An even more effective but also more elaborate windbreak may be had by planting two or even three rows of trees. The trees should be set twenty feet apart in the row and should be placed alternately. Arizona Cypress, Chinese Elms, and Chinese arborvitae would make a pleasing combination for such a planting.

### A Lawn Is Nature's Carpet

Styles in yards have changed. When the first settlers came to Texas, the housewife who could hoe and sweep the largest spot around her cabin door making it free from spiders, red bugs, snakes and other biting pests in order that her children might have a place to play was considered the best housewife. These cleared spots gradually grew larger until the clean swept yard became the style. Later flower seeds were planted and the dirt yard became a mass of flowers; often shrubs were added. These flowers were lovely until the summer heat descended, but most unattractive after that. Grass lawns have come gradually into use, because they are more restful to the eye and more attractive than dirt lawns, and certainly eliminate a lot of dust and mud. Grass protects the house from extremes of temperature; makes a home cleaner and more attractive, and all else being equal a farm home with a lawn will sell more readily than one without. A well-drained, level lawn free from weeds is necessary to every attractively landscaped home.

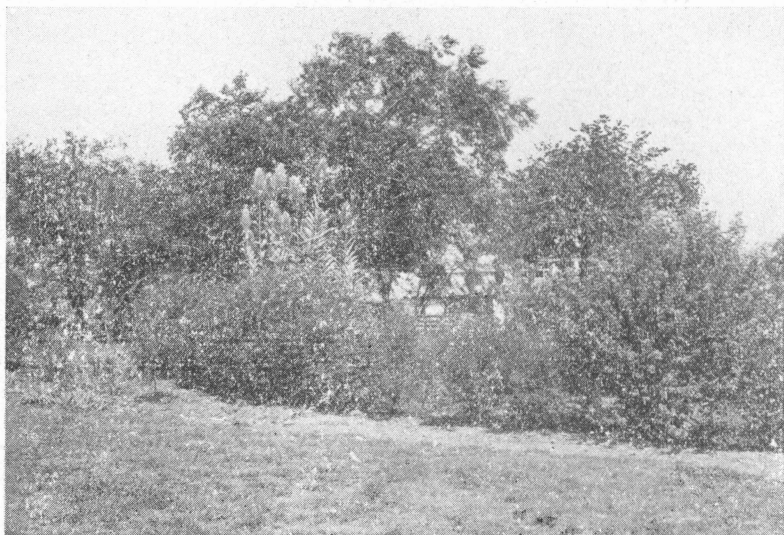
Several inches of good top soil are necessary since a lawn is permanent and the soil must furnish food to the grass for some time. If the yard has been swept clean for a number of years, it will probably need to be plowed to a depth of 10 to 12 inches, and have thoroughly pulverized and well-decayed stable manure worked in at the rate of 50 pounds per 100 square feet. It should then be raked and smoothed so that the top soil will be fine and firm. Dirt from excavations for wells or cellars should never be used because it often contains an excess of clay which causes a sticky lawn.

Generally speaking, Bermuda is the grass to use for lawns in Texas. While it does not stay green in winter, no other grass will stand the heat of summer like it, or do as well under adverse conditions. In Northwest Texas there are some lovely lawns of Kentucky blue grass, but they require much water. Bermuda grass roots may be planted in fall or spring. Where there is danger of winter killing, spring is a better planting time. Bermuda sod may be used. It should be cut in small blocks and set 12 to 16 inches apart and covered to the level of the surrounding soil, packing firmly around each clump.



A beautiful lawn in Kleberg county. Note how mesquite trees frame the house.

In many West Texas Counties there is an abundance of native buffalo grass. Since it is hardy and will, with minimum care, give splendid results, it should be left rather than replaced by other lawn grasses. To get a nice lawn started in one season is easily done by setting blocks of the buffalo sod one foot apart and watering occasionally.



An excellent screen planting which shuts out the view of the poultry houses—Cooke county.

### Shrubs

Before the shrubs are placed on the planting plan, one will need to familiarize one's self with many varieties of shrubs in order to know how tall they grow, whether they are evergreen, whether they bloom, and if they are adapted to the locality. The local nurseryman can help with this but much of the success of the planting will depend upon knowledge of shrubs and their uses, and on the owners good taste. These can be acquired through observation, study and thought. The bulletins and books recommended in the back of this bulletin should give the information which will be needed.

Shrubs are useful for foundation plantings, for borders, for enclosing a part of the yard, and for screening objectional views.

Foundation plantings are the plantings around the bases of buildings to break harsh angles and corners and make the house blend into its surroundings. They serve in effect to tie the house to the ground.

Shrubs should be selected for hardiness, suitability to locality, for height, flowers, fruit and foliage characteristics. Sufficient variety in the foundation planting can be obtained by using four or five dif-

ferent kinds of shrubs. As few as three can be used attractively (an amateur gardener will do well to confine his landscape work to fewer varieties well cared for).

Shrubs should not be set in straight rows but should be planted so that a pleasing irregular line can be kept around the shrub masses. All shrub beds should be from 4 to 6 feet wide. Too many arbor vitae, junipers, and conifers should not be used. They are expensive and are more attractive when mixed with flowering and berried shrubs.

If one is limited in the amount of planting to be done at one time the first planting of shrubs, after the lawn is leveled and sodded should be around the doorsteps and porches. Gradually as more shrubs are added the planting may be carried around the house and out to the border plantings. If shrubs are chosen for their variety, in height, form, foliage, and season of bloom, monotony will be avoided.

Many native shrubs of Texas are as lovely as can be found anywhere and may be transplanted from the woods at small cost. A few of these are yaupon, red bud, sumac, haw, Spanish mulberry, ceniza, salvia, bear grass, buck bush, wild plum, winter myrtle, trumpet vine, lantana, dog wood, and there are many, many others.

A small list of suggested shrubs for various uses is given here, but since climatic conditions in Texas vary so greatly, it can be nothing more than suggestive and can serve only to encourage the home maker to learn the habits of these and then add others.

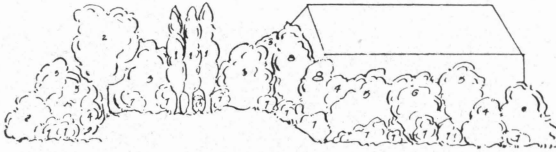
A few shrubs of medium height for foundation planting; corners; and in borders with tall shrubs.

Plant 3 to 4 feet apart:

Common name	Height	Bloom	Evergreen
1. Abelia grandiflora	3'-4'	Light pink—all summer	yes
2. Euonymus sieboldiana	4'-10'	dark green foliage	yes
3. Euonymus Japonicus	10'-12'	dark green foliage	yes
4. Wax leaf ligustrum	5'-8'	dark green foliage	yes
5. Nandina domestica	2'-4'	red berries and red foliage in fall	yes
6. Cydonia Japonica	4'-6'	red—early spring	no
7. Pomegranate	5'-7'	red—early spring	no

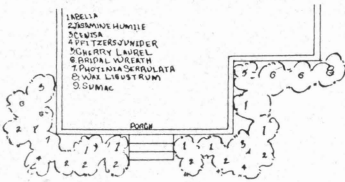
A few low growing shrubs for planting in front of medium and tall shrubs.  
Plant 2 to 3 feet apart

Common Name	Height	Bloom		
		Time	Color	Evergreen
1. Hypericum	1'-2'	Early Spring	Yellow	No
2. Jasmine Humile	1'-2'	Continuous through summer	Yellow	Yes
3. Salvia Greggii	2'	Continuous through Early Spring	Red Red	No No
4. Spirea Froebeli	2'		Foliage	No
5. Spirea Thunbergii	2'			No
6. Juniperus Pfitzeriana	2'		Dark green	Yes

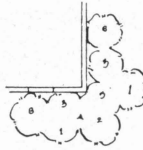


1. Toplar.
2. Redbud
3. Split Cedar
4. " " " "
5. Amoor Privet
6. Elderberry
7. Indian Currant
8. Lilac.

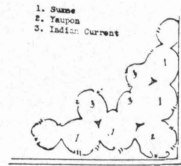
Screen planting for smoke house or garage using native shrubs and those grown from cuttings.



1. SUELLA
2. ZIMMONIUM
3. STAMPA
4. PETERSONVILLE
5. SOUTHERN LAUREL
6. BIRDAL WOODS
7. QUINCY CAROLATA
8. WINE LIGUSTRUM
9. Dogwood



An outside corner planting using both flowering and broad leaved evergreen shrubs.



1. Sumac
2. Yaupon
3. Indian Currant

A screen of native shrubs suitable for a back yard corner planting

### Tall shrubs and small trees suitable for screen planting.

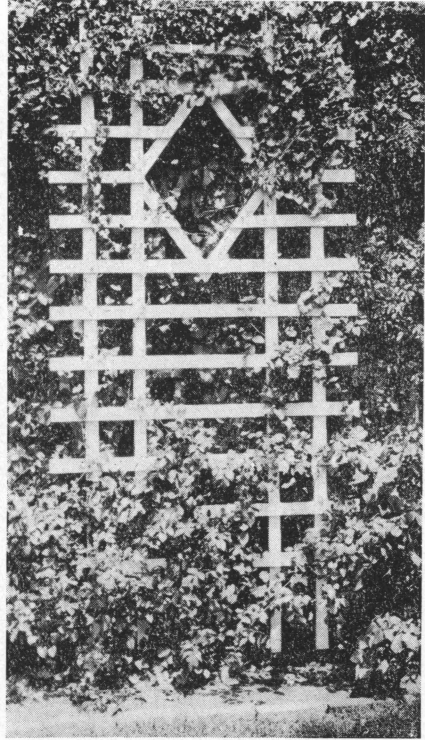
Plant 6 to 8 feet apart

Common name	Height	Bloom	Evergreen
1. Redbud (native)	12'	Red-early spring	No
2. Amoor River Privet	10'-20'	White	Usually
3. Yaupon (native)	15'-20'	Red berries	2 kinds
4. Southern Laurel (Wild Peach)	15'-20'	Lovely foliage	Yes
5. Chinese Arborvitae	12'-15'	Lovely foliage	Yes
6. Ligustrum Japonica	10'-12'		Yes
7. Crape Myrtle	12'-25'	Several colors	No
8. Dogwood	12'-20'	White and pink	No

### Screen Plantings

Screen or border plantings are used to shut out undesirable views such as old poultry houses and other out buildings which are unsightly. They also add interest and beauty to a house by framing views which are desirable. Native shrubs are especially good for screen plantings. The coarser and larger shrubs such as sumac, elderberry, yaupon, haw, red bud, wild plum, and dog wood should be planted at the back with finer and lower growing shrubs in front.

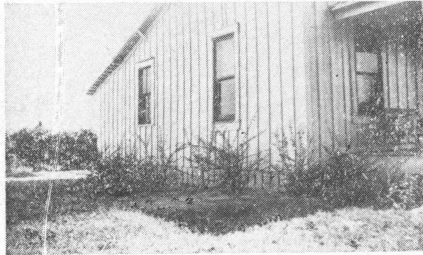
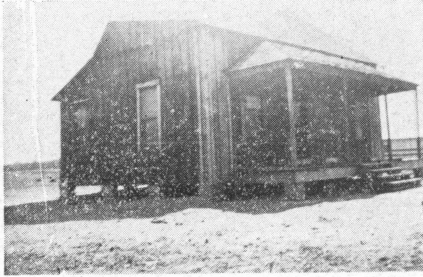
In order to make screen plantings with the least amount of labor a strip about four or five feet wide around the sides and the back of the yard should be plowed and fertilized. Then the plants should be set in irregular groups (never set in straight lines) four or five feet apart, depending upon the size of the shrubs when matured. If there are pleasing views from the porches or windows these should be framed by the border and corner plantings and not obscured.



A screen of native vines may be lovely if the trellis is built with care and the vine is cultivated.

### Cleaning And Repairing

After the plan is as nearly made as it should be when the preceding items have been included, it is time to begin the actual work. The first thing a farmer does with his land after the harvest is to get it ready for cultivation again, and so in planting a home, a clean-up campaign should be the first step. Before a home can be attractive its surroundings must be clean, neat and orderly. Any tin cans, old tires, bottles, trash piles, harness, plows and junk should be hauled away. All stumps and dead trees should be taken out. All porches



Even a sad little house (above) can be made happier by shrubs and a lawn (below).

wire. This should be done before any

and steps should be in good condition. Any fence not needed should be removed entirely and all needed fences and gates should be repaired. All flower beds and shrubs should be moved from the front lawn, leaving a smooth unbroken expanse of grass.

Every home should have an enclosed foundation of some kind. It is more sanitary; it is warmer in winter and cooler in summer, and it adds much to the attractiveness of the whole place. Many Texas farm homes have excellently built basements and cellars to form the foundation of the house. Some suitable and inexpensive materials are galvanized iron, 1 x 12 siding, lattice work or foundation planting is made.

### Summer Care Of Shrubs

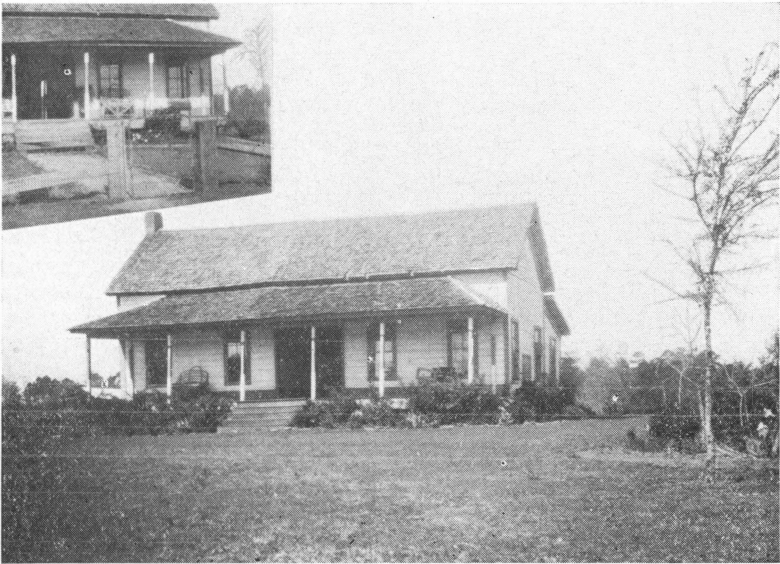
The big problem of the amateur gardener and one which causes many to become discouraged is the care of shrubs through the dry summer months, for the shrubs must have moisture to survive. If the beds are properly prepared and cultivated, the natural moisture of the earth will be conserved, and the necessity of excessive artificial waterings will be eliminated.

Loosening up the top soil secures a mulch which holds moisture, therefore, frequent shallow cultivation conserves the moisture. Well decayed stable manure worked in around the plants makes an excellent mulch. A finely raked bed is dry on top, and the loose soil reduces



evaporation to the minimum. A garden soil is not in good condition when it is hard and crusted on top. Instead of pouring water on the land, therefore, first attempt to keep the moisture in the land. Gardens more often need cultivation than they need watering.

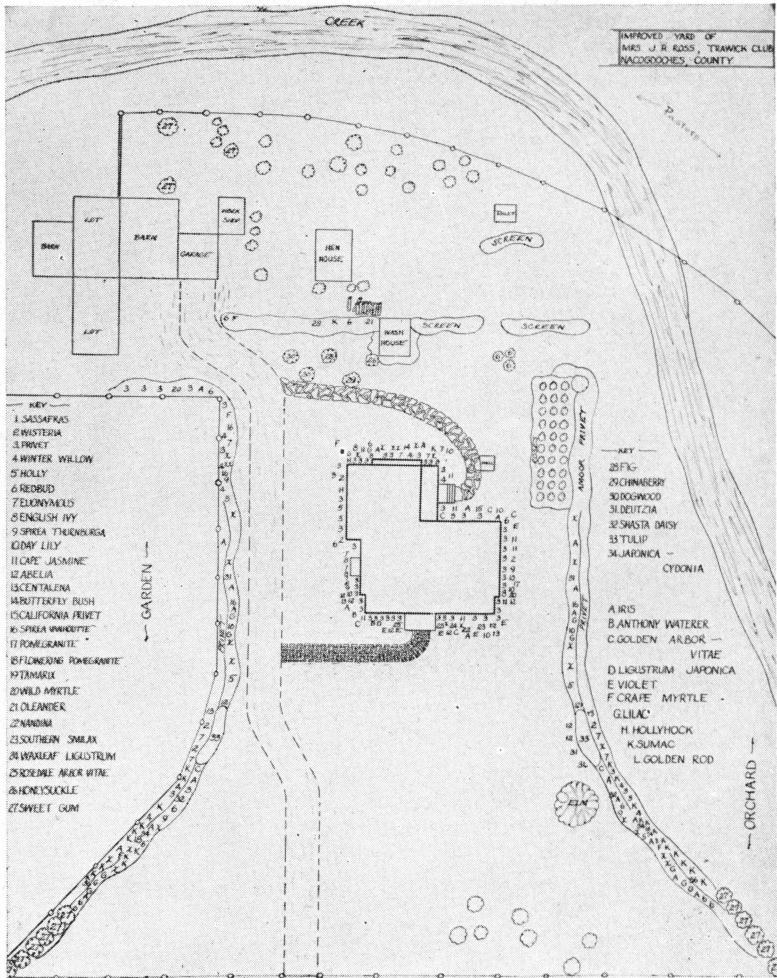
If the soil becomes so dry in spite of frequent cultivation that the plants do not thrive, then water the beds, if water is available. Do not sprinkle it but water it. The sprinkling of water will never reach



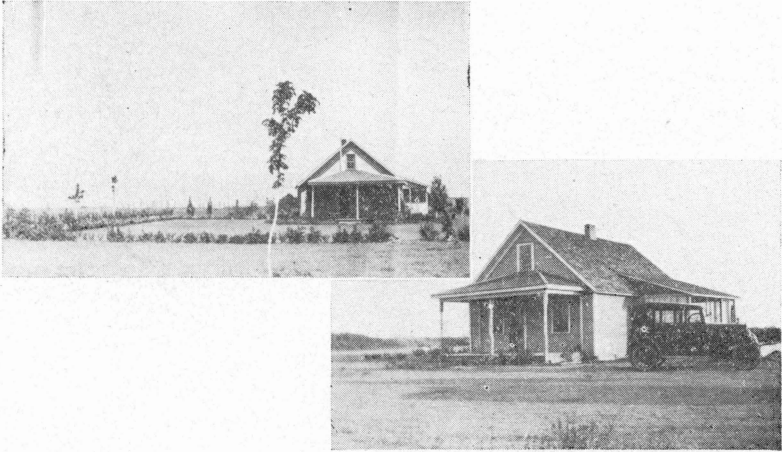
Before and after planting views of a home in Nacogdoches county. On the next page will be found the yard plan used in making the changes.

the roots, but the roots will have a tendency to reach up for the water and this is likely to bring about the freezing of the roots in the winter. Sprinkling plants every day or two is one of the surest ways of spoiling them. One good watering should last at least a week. Wet the ground clear through at evening, in the morning when the earth begins to dry, loosen the surface and keep the water from getting away.

If shrubs were planted in pot holes, surrounded by grass, the soil should be spaded out for some distance, making a wide circle around them. All annuals should be taken out of the shrub beds before the heat of summer since these lessen the amount of moisture and food available for permanent plants.



This unusual yard plan is of a type of landscape gardening being developed in Nacogdoches county. The significant features are spaciousness, the out curving border plantings, and the convenience and beautiful screening of the service arrangements.



Before and after yard improvement examples taken from the extreme Northwest section of Texas illustrating successful landscape gardening in that section.

### Insects And Diseases

To grow flowers, shrubs or trees and have their beauty marred by insects and diseases is discouraging. Do not let it be so when, with a little effort and some "bug dope" we can repel most of them. If the plants are attacked by insects that eat holes in the leaves or stems, dust with arsenate of lead (6 teaspoonsful arsenate of lead to 3 lbs. hydrated lime or flour), or spray with 10 teaspoonsful arsenate of lead to 3 gallons of water.

There is another class of insects that do not eat the foliage but suck the plant juices, causing the plant to become weakened or die. Plant lice, mealy bugs, red spider and scale of various kinds belong to this group. Nicotine sulphate (1 teaspoonful, 1-8 bar laundry soap and 1½ gallons of water) or Nicatrol (2½ teaspoonsful to 1 gallon of water) will control plant lice, mealy bugs and red spider. Nicatrol is recommended for use in cool weather, while nicotine sulphate is most satisfactory at temperatures over 70 degrees Fahrenheit. For scale dry mix lime sulphate 1 lb. to 3 gallons of water, is a satisfactory control. (Caution—Apply to plants only during dormant season).

After the bugs have been controlled diseases are apt to creep in and spoil our plants if we don't know how to treat them. There are two common groups of diseases—fungus and bacteria. Fungus diseases such as mildew, leaf spot, etc., attack the plants from the out-



Annual and perennial flowers are especially beautiful when used as border beds.

side and can be controlled by covering the surface of the plants with a chemical that will prevent fungus growth. The best treatment against fungus diseases is Bordeaux ( $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. bluestone,  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. hydrated lime, 3 gallons of water. Mix in earthen vessel).

It is frequently impossible to successfully combat bacterial diseases in plants. Destroying diseased plants when the disease first appears, changing the soil in pots or plant beds and pruning off diseased parts will aid in keeping bacterial diseases under control.

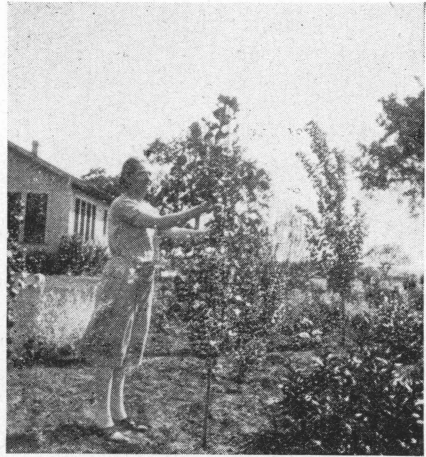
### Rose And Flower Gardens

No Texas farm home is complete without roses. Instead of using them as foundation plantings, an interesting and practical arrangement for them is in a group to the side or back of the house in a place where they will have a shrub background. They can then be enjoyed when they are blooming and will be less conspicuous when the branches are bare.

### Making A Cutting Bed

Cuttings planted in the open may be made an inexpensive means of propagating a large number of trees and shrubs for ornamental use and for wind breaks. Trees so propagated include the willow tamarix (salt cedar), and poplar; among the shrubs are included privet,

Here we have a poplar tree grown from a cutting to this height in eight months.



lantana, and others. These vary in the rapidity and readiness with which they form roots, and too, some that are easy to grow in one locality may prove difficult in another.

Cuttings should be taken during the late fall or winter months from well matured wood of the preceding season's growth. They should be from 6 to 8 inches in length and about one fourth inch in diameter. Since roots form most readily at the leaf joint, the lower end should be cut just below a leaf joint. The top end should be cut straight and the lower end on a slant in order that in planting the right end may be sure to be up.

Garden loam or sand is best for rooting cuttings. They may be planted in rows wide enough for horse cultivation but if only a few are to be grown, they may be put in beds and cultivated by hand. They should be placed from 2 to 6 inches apart with about two thirds under the ground.

The soil should be pressed firmly about each cutting. More detailed instructions can be found in Farmers' Bulletin 1567—Propagation of Trees and shrubs. With favorable conditions dozens of these shrubs may be rooted—both conifers and broad leaf evergreens. Where there is much strong wind and the sun is very hot, a large part of the day, it is best to partially shade and protect the cutting bed just as is done with any other bed of tender plants.

Trees and shrubs have seeds just as corn does and many of them can be grown from seed almost as easily as can corn. True, they are slower to grow but they will also last longer. Too much stress cannot be put on growing from seeds and cuttings for it is an economical and sure way of securing lovely plants.



In order to give shrubs and trees the best chance to live when they are transplanted they should be balled and burlaped. This club girl is doing an expert job in preparation for her yard improvement.

### —And Finally

The results in rural home beautification will be seen and felt in many ways. Casual observers will see the well-arranged grouping of the house and out buildings, the sloping, well-sodded lawn, the fine backround of shade trees, the mass of foundation shrubs and the screen plantings which shut out the necessary but unattractive equipment needed on every farm home. But the finest results will be in the increased interest and pride which each member of the family will feel in that home, the spirit of cooperation that will be developed as all work together, creating beauty with their own hands and the real satisfaction they will have from knowing that their home stands out in the community as an example of what a lovely thing a farm home can be when properly planted and cared for.

The words of Dr. Seaman A. Knapp epitomize the things for which one should strive: "The farm must be made a place of beauty, so attractive that every passing stranger inquires: 'who lives in that lovely home?' The house is of minor consideration—the gorgeous setting of trees and shrubbery holds the eye."

### Bibliography

For those interested in rural home landscape bulletins which teach correct principles, they may be obtained from addresses given:

1. Beautifying the Home Grounds—No. 98, Ext. Service, Lafayette, Ind.
2. Beautifying the Home Grounds,—No. 280, Ext. Service, Brookings, S. D.
3. Beautifying the Home Grounds,—by Fred W. Westcourt, C. I. A., Denton, Texas.
4. Planting the Home Grounds,—No. 270, Extension Service, Little Rock, Ark.
5. Beautifying the Farmstead, F. B. 1087, Extension Service, College Station, Texas.
6. Beautifying the Home Grounds,—No. 291, Extension Service, Morgantown, W. Va.
7. Planning and Planting the Farmstead,—No. 178, Purdue University, LaFayette, Ind.

Bulletins which teach methods and which may be secured from Extension Service, A. & M. College, College Station, Texas.

- F. B. No. 1132—Planning the Farmstead
- No. 157—The Propagation of Plants
  - No. 1581—Herbaceous Perennials
  - No. 1171—Growing Annual Flowering Plants
  - No. 750—Roses for the Home
  - No. 1547—Rose Diseases, Their Causes and Control
  - No. 1495—Insect Enemies of the Flower Garden
  - No. 181—Pruning
  - No. 1591—Transplanting Tree and Shrubs
  - No. 1203—Trees for Town and City Streets
  - No. 1677—Planting and Care of Lawns