

Minnesota Nurserymen's newsletter

Prepared by
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Institute of Agriculture
• Agricultural Extension Service
• Horticulture Department

In Cooperation with
• Minnesota Nurserymen's Association
• Minnesota State Horticultural Society



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November and December 1966

MINNESOTA STATE NURSERYMEN'S ASSOCIATION CONVENTION PROGRAM
CURTIS HOTEL, MINNEAPOLIS

MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1966



A. M.

- 8:30 Registration -- Hotel Lobby
Coffee Hour -- Cardinal Room
Visit Exhibits
- 9:30 Invocation -- Father Gerald Frier, St. Olaf's Catholic Church, Minneapolis
Opening Remarks -- Max Sargent, President
- 9:45 Analysis of Landscape Labor Cost -- Lawrence Bachman
- 10:45 A Garden Center Success Story -- James Brecka
- 12:00 Luncheon -- Wayne H. Dickson -- "The NEW AAN"
Introduce Exhibitors
- Special Note -
Ladies Luncheon, 12:00 Noon -- "Planning Next Year's Wardrobe" -- Mrs. Richard Clarke

P. M.

- 1:30 Visit Exhibits
- 2:00 New Plant Materials for Minnesota -- Leon Snyder
- 2:30 Machinery in Nursery and Landscape Work -- Panel Discussion: Allan Brostrom,
Moderator
- 4:00 Visit Exhibits
- 6:30 Social Hour -- East Room, Courtesy of J. V. Bailey Nurseries
- 7:15 Banquet -- East Room
- 9:00 Entertainment -- East Room
Harris Nelson, M. C.
Hal Garven Trio -- Dinner Music
Hut-Four Quartet -- Barbershop Singing
Louise Drake -- Vocalist
Strolling Accordionist and Song Leader

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 1966

A. M.

- 8:30 Coffee Hour
- 9:00 Report on Our Public Relations Program -- W. E. Westmoreland
- 10:00 Business Meeting
- 12:00 Luncheon -- W. C. Craig -- "Why We Laugh"

P. M.

- 1:30 Visit Exhibits
- 2:00 New Ornamental Shrubs for Minnesota -- Panel Discussion with Slides
Rodney Bailey, Moderator

SPEAKER PROFILES
(in order of appearance)

Lawrence Bachman. Bachmans Inc.,
Minneapolis, Minnesota.

James Brecka. Is the owner and operator of Brecka Nursery and Garden Center, Rice Lake, Wisconsin. Mailman turned nurseryman. Started from scratch 15 years ago. Operates a successful and growing business. Married and father of 3 children. Associated member of Minnesota State Nurserymen's Association.

Wayne H. Dickson. Director of public relations, American Association of Nurserymen. Started with the AAN in March 1966. Previously held reporting and editing jobs with various weekly newspapers. Was assistant editor of Petroleum and Chemical Transporter and managing editor of Nursery Business Magazine. Is a graduate of the University of Maryland School of Journalism in public relations.

Mrs. Richard Clarke. Better known as Jeany-K on Tea for Three, KSTP-TV, she has taught sewing and tailoring. Also has taught adult education classes in home economics and sewing.

Leon Synder. Is head of the Department of Horticultural Science, University of Minnesota, director of the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, and superintendent of the Fruit Breeding Farm.

Allan Brostrom. Is a sales representative, Jewell Nursery, Lake City, Minnesota.

H. E. "Wes" Westmoreland. Is president of H. E. Westmoreland, Inc., advertising and public relations firm. Has been a resident of Duluth since 1943 and is very active in civic affairs there. At present, he is on the board of directors of the Duluth Industrial Bureau, Rehabilitation Center, Chamber of Commerce, and Minnesota Arrowhead Association; is a member of the Advisory Council of Junior Achievement and on the Board of Trustees of the Duluth-Superior Area Educational Television Corp.; and is a member of Minnesota Republican State Central Committee since 1952.

William C. Craig. Is an author, theater director and commentator, educator, humorist, and after dinner speaker. He is now chairman of the Department of Speech at the College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio.

Rodney Bailey. Representative, J. V. Bailey Nurseries, St. Paul, Minnesota.

NEW FACULTY MEMBER

Harold M. Pellett joined the staff of the Department of Horticultural Science on September 1. Harold is responsible for the research and teaching in nursery management and is teaching a course in nursery practices this fall. He will teach courses in plant propagation, herbaceous perennials and annuals, and nursery management.

Harold grew up in a wholesale-retail nursery operation. He holds B.S., M.S., and Ph. D. degrees from Iowa State University and for the past 3 years conducted the highway research program on woody plants for the University of Nebraska.

Harold and his wife Shelly are the parents of Darwin, Laurie, Lorne, and Linda and are as happy about being in Minnesota as we are to have them.

ARCHITECTURAL ASPECTS OF PLANTS

Donald J. Martel
Department of Landscape Architecture
Oregon State University

In this discussion I shall come immediately to the point: the most important function of plants in any landscape composition, urban or otherwise, is that of developing livable space. Our immediate concern might seem to be that of making a place more beautiful by adding beautiful plants to it; but this, I am sure, is the wrong approach. If a landscaped situation is comprehensive to the observer - if it makes sense - then the beauty of it will be appreciated and the seasonal variation in leaves, flowers, stems, etc., will be acceptable as variations on the general theme.

Architecture plays an important part in our lives. We are born into architectural

spaces. We become accustomed to architectural spaces defined by floors, walls, and ceilings. These spaces are quite well related to the size of man, and are fairly well related to man's activities. The space of a dining room, a salesroom of a department store, or the space of a warehouse are usually well related to the size of man and the activity in which he is engaged. Since we become conditioned to spaces that are more or less standardized, it is not surprising that man is greatly impressed by spaces that are either very small or very large according to his standard of reference.

Creating Outdoor Spaces

Our problem is to create outdoor spaces, and it should be pointed out that some plants are more effective than others when used as the walls of exterior spaces. The illustration of *Cornus kousa chinensis* indicates why. The structure of this tree is such that there is a continuous wall of foliage from the ground up. Even the flowers are so arranged on the branches as to make it necessary to view them from the side. This plant, then, is best viewed in profile. As a matter of fact, getting under it would be most inconvenient and hardly worth the effort. Thus, we might say that any tree that is moderately compact with foliage from the ground up will be satisfactory as a tree for the establishment of a wall. If it also displays flower or other parts of its structure to good advantage from a side view, then surely it will do the job. It should be noted, however that in a very large space almost any type of tree will be satisfactory by reason of the fact that at a distance perspective is not evident and all things appear to be flat.

Space is not completely formed if there is not a suggestion of a ceiling. Unfortunately, many landscaped areas are finitely broad, finitely long, and infinitely high. On a mountain top - on the very edge of the universe so to speak - this is an acceptable condition, but in our cities and in our garden areas this is not an acceptable condition of space. As a matter of fact, wherever people congregate or move about, there is a need of the sense of seclusion or continuity of space which is attained only by an overhead or the suggestion of a cover.

Here again certain trees, by the nature of their structure, are better suited to the establishment of a ceiling. Certainly the Dogwoods do not qualify. A tree that forms a canopy is needed for small areas, and large broad spreading types are required for large spaces. The canopy over the entrance to a home might be achieved by some such species

as Oriental Cherries, *Cladrastis lutea*, *Phellodendron amurense*, etc.

Many round or oval-headed species are so ascending in their habit of growth that they fail to suggest a canopy and, therefore, are not completely adequate in the establishment of the required ceiling.

Naturally enough, trees that are selected to form a canopy are frequently used in places where people come to rest. The patio, terrace, or park bench will be covered by such a tree; and, if people can be taught to look up, a new experience is available to them. Surely a great deal of literature, describes trees as they appear in outline, but who writes of the pleasures of looking up into them? In this case we have committed a crime of omission, and it is high time that our trees be reviewed with an eye to making a selection of those which are for one reason or other interesting when viewed from below. Consider the variety of interest that can be observed in such species as Staghorn Sumac, Kentucky Coffee Tree, Japanese Angelican Tree, etc. This appeal is made primarily for those relaxed people who prefer to do their observing of nature from the prone position.

So when we speak of space, we speak of more than simple area. Walls and ceiling must be present along with an agreeable ground pattern in order to achieve a sense of seclusion and other attributes mentioned below. There is one significant byproduct, however, which should be featured at this point, and that is the effect that an overhead cover has upon the landscape about it.

Imagine standing in a meadow reviewing at some distance a fine composition of trees adjacent to a stream. Actually the trees, when viewed in silhouette against a tremendous plane of sky, appear to be relatively small in the total composition. Now change the situation and imagine yourself to be standing under a spreading tree that masks out most of the sky. It will not be observed that by eliminating the sky as a distracting influence the trees appear to be considerably more important in the total composition. Furthermore, the composition changes from one that is very tall to one that is very broad and, therefore, in much better agreement with the nature of the land.

Once space forms have been developed by trees or structures or by a combination of these in an urban situation some new experiences await the observer. Trees that make up the space, and other trees that might be included with the general space, serve as a

frame of reference by which the observer may judge his position, his motion, and the size of the space in which he is wandering.

Imagine a man walking across a thousand-acre meadow. Once he has left the near boundary he loses himself in this unmodulated space. Until he reaches the far side of the pasture, nothing has happened. At no time during this crossing has he been able to adequately judge his position in this area, nor has he been able to perceive his motion. Likewise, judging the size of the area and the distance to be travelled becomes quite difficult. Surely this man has our sympathy for his is indeed engaged in a very dull pursuit. If, however, we distribute a number of trees throughout this pasture, then it becomes manifest that our friend has been released from a problem. The existence of the trees give him something to do enroute. He walks under and around trees; he walks in and out of secondary spaces; he observes his position relative to tree masses; and he observes his motion in the apparent movement of the masses about him. In general, it might be said, that trees can make life a great deal more interesting in the pursuit of routine affairs.

Different Trees Needed

Daily routine is characterized by a sequence of events implying movement on the part of the observer. If, in this movement, a sequence of events occurs - if the observer passes from one space form to another - then, surely, a change in the nature of the trees is suggested. Too often, in spite of changes in architecture, size and placement of structures and obstructions, the trees along the street remain the same block after block. A much better solution to the problem presented by the variety of architecture characteristic of our cities would be the introduction of an ever-changing space pattern requiring the use of several different species. This requires more planning and a much more detailed examination of the site in order to exploit whatever interesting features the site may have to offer. Our streets and city parks will not be made more interesting by attempting to give "unity" to an architectural hodgepodge. Nor on the other hand will our countryside roads be made more beautiful by super-imposing a single, continuous species across numerous, different ecological situations.

It is really quite obvious that plants express the same physical qualities that may be observed in structures. In architecture, in addition to space forms, we have a great range of materials and structural systems that

dazzle the eye with seemingly infinite variety of color, texture, and form. Surely, it is not necessary to draw a comparison between each of these physical qualities of architecture and the corresponding physical qualities of plants. But since it must be admitted that all things in a landscape are observed against some particular kind of background in a particular existing condition or space, it behooves planners to give careful consideration to these various backgrounds and conditions of existing space, in order to make the best possible selection of the plant material needed to complete the plan. Too often a good general plan fails to come up to expectations because the plants selected to implement the plan are structurally in disagreement with the intent of the planner. So let us take a careful look at three easily distinguishable structural types.

Structural Types of Trees

For the sake of simplicity I call your attention to the three general structural types and give as illustrations plants which are not complicated by an exhibition of two or more contrasting structural characteristics.

The first type under consideration gives a generally ascending effect and this type is typified by such species as Mugho Pine, Meyer Juniper, Cornish Heath, and New Zealand Flax. It is interesting to note here that the structural character is quite independent of the form of the plant. A plant with an ascending effect may have the form of an Italian Cypress but it may also be round, square, or flat as a door mat. Thus it should be observed that the ascending quality of the plant may be established by the stems, branches, leaves, buds, flower, or fruit. It should also be observed that the structural character of a plant may change gradually from one type to another during the growing season or change abruptly in the fall or during the blooming season.

The second structural type has a descending effect. This quality is observed in such plants as the Weeping Willow, Amur Cork Tree, Spiderleaf Japanese Maple, Irwin Barberry, and Pieris. Here again the structural quality is independent of the form.

The third readily distinguishable type has a horizontal or arching quality that is typified by Pfitzer Juniper, Eley Crabapple, and Warty Barberry. To this group, and the two groups mentioned above, might be added all of the intermediate forms and apparent contradictory structural qualities that make complete classification of plants according to structure such a sticky business.

Thus it would appear that we are approaching the area of plant composition which is incidentally, the most complicated subthesis thus far encountered, and it certainly is not within the scope of this paper to adequately explore the topic. There is, however, a simplified statement that can be made which might suffice for our purposes.

Assuming that space forms have already been established by trees or structures and assuming also that the general space forms may have been further divided into secondary spaces, we are then faced with the problem of selecting plants which will complement architectural forms, look well together, and implement the intent of the plan. The intent of the plan here implies the intelligent selection of trees for defining space forms and the establishment of the canopy wherever necessary. The other two problems must be taken together.

Keeping in mind that even trees are observed against some kind of background - architectural or vegetative - the planner should then proceed to select plants which will, for one reason or other, meet the following conditions:

1. Appear in the strongest possible contrast with the background.
2. Appear in the least possible contrast with the background.
3. Appear as a combination of the above.

The deliberate use of the materials which display strong contrasting physical qualities results in the most bold statement that could possibly be made. A tree with strongly ascending stems, such as the Amanogawa Cherry or Sentry Maple, is observed to be in the strongest possible contrast with a wall characterized by predominantly horizontal lines. A plant of very coarse texture is observed to be in strong contrast with a fine textured wall. Color, likewise, can be exploited to attain the maximum of contrast. The use of material in this manner results in a simple, readily comprehensible and exciting composition. Surely, there is nothing subtle about contrast.

It should be noted here that reference is to the establishment of a particular composition effect determined by the observation of a plant against a particular background. If several species are to be employed in this situation, these should not be in strong contrast with one another. As a matter of fact, the various species should be quite similar to one another in at least one structural quality.

Referring again to the background, a tree might be selected which establishes rapport with its surroundings. In terms of color Eucalyptus might be used with pastel shades, a Vine Maple might be displayed against a fine-textured wall of predominantly horizontal lines and so on. Again if several species are necessary to the composition, these species should have dominant structural characteristics in common.

To illustrate this point, and the one previously made, we might examine the flora characteristics of the Oregon-Washington coast. In this area we observe several species that are almost continuously associated. These include the following: Shore Pine, *Pinus contorta*; Pacific Wax Myrtle, *Myrica californica*; Box Blueberry, *Vaccinium ovatum*; Salal, *Gaultheria shallon*; and Rhododendron *macrophyllum*, along with various other subordinate species. These plants, it is generally agreed, present a very handsome composition of plants and the question arises - why?

Actually this groups of plants represents considerable variety of forms, structural characteristics, colors, and textures. In regard to form we observe that each has the ability to form a continuous mass with its neighbors. Unlike some species, such as Alpine Firs, these plants make no effort to maintain their individuality - they tend to emerge into a single mass. In color we have considerable range from the dark green of the Pine to the bronzy hues of Salal and Blueberry. In texture we observe the very fine texture of the Pine and Blueberry in contrast with the relatively coarse texture of the Salal and Rhododendron. Thus, it might be concluded that these plants represent a borderline case - almost too much variety. However, there is one characteristic that each of these plants have very much in common - the leaves of each are arranged on the stem in an ascending manner. The leaves of the Blueberry, Wax Myrtle, and Rhododendron are arranged at almost the same angle to the ascending and the ultimate directional quality of the leaves of the Pine are likewise ascending. This I believe to be the key factor - the final touch that give real character to this composition of plants.

And now, without having so stated, we might justifiably conclude that neither attempts at complete harmony nor complete contrast will solve all of our compositional problems. Almost inevitably a combination of contrasts and harmonies will be required and, I believe the reference to the structural qualities discussed above will prove the feasibility of

combining unlike materials. I feel very strongly, however, about this matter of selecting plants of similar structural characteristics, have a much better chance of resulting in a composition that will be aesthetically acceptable.

Now, I submit a simple statement: is it not true that trees are of primary importance to use in the development of space forms; and, in addition, is it not necessary for us to regard these materials without emotion much as an architect might regard concrete, brick, steel, or wood? Surely, if we play favorites - if we use but a few we know well - then we will never quite succeed in implementing our plans nor will we succeed in developing a composition which is completely comprehensible.

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EDITOR'S COMMENTS
C. Gustav Hard

Time spent away from your work on
December 5 and 6 will be compensated by the

excellent program prepared for the 1966 convention. Remember, often it is just one idea that can change your business from a red to a black operation.

A total industry image can be created by a total membership attendance. Your first obligation is to be there and your second is to participate.

All newsletter mailings will require Zip Codes after January 1 to assure continuance of the newsletter. Please send your complete address to me:

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