

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



Vol. II, No. 5 and 6

July and August, 1964

Shade Tree Maintenance Short Course
September 14 and 15, 1964
Auditorium, Coffey Hall, St. Paul Campus

Fees for Short Course

Registration fees for the Shade Tree Maintenance Short Course will be \$3.00 for both days or for Monday only; \$1.00 for Tuesday only.

PROGRAM

Monday, September 14, 1964

Norman Pellett, presiding

a. m.

- 8:15 Registration-2nd floor, Coffey Hall. . .
9:00 Welcome. LaVern A. Freeh
9:10 Dutch Elm Disease 1965. Donald M. Coe
9:30 Selecting trees for public grounds and
 boulevard plantings . . Donald W. White
10:15 Coffee
10:30 The best of the maples
 Albert Johnson
11:15 Problems to watch for in 1965
 John Lofgren
11:45 Lunch Dining Center

Donald W. White, presiding

p. m.

- 1:00 Ash as a street tree.
 Lawrence Bachman
1:30 Lindens as street trees
 Robert Mullin
2:00 Other trees for city planting
 Albert Johnson
2:45 Questions and answers
 Panel of Speakers
3:30 Adjournment

Tuesday, September 15, 1964

Robert Mullin, presiding

a. m.

- 9:00 Assemble in front of the Student Center
for bus tour of Minneapolis. Selected
specimens of diverse species of trees
will be on display to provide an oppor-
tunity to see mature specimens useful
for public grounds planting.
11:30 Lunch . Howard Johnson's Motor Lodge

L. C. Snyder, presiding

p. m.

- 1:00 Visit Minnesota Landscape Arboretum
by bus to see firsthand diverse species
of the more uncommon trees.
3:00 Return to St. Paul Campus.

THE QUARTER-ACRE LIVING ROOM* (installment 2)

In addition to the room-without-walls concept, the outdoor spending pattern is influenced by other factors, many of which are related to the basic drives, fears, and ambitions of our society.

Status. Gardening is essentially a luxury and has long been associated with the rich. Now that so many Americans have achieved a measure of affluence, it is not surprising that they show off their gardens as an indication of their new status.

Competition. Gardening is a good field of competition in which to outshine the neighbors. One's skill can be measured by achievement, and achievement is outdoors for all to see. The present gardening ethic does not consider it improper to enlist mechanical and chemical help. Hiring professionals is frowned upon, however.

Another way to get one up on the guy next door is to memorize a number of Latin plant names and to use them knowingly in conversation across the back fence.

Self-expression. The houses in many postwar developments stand cheek-by-jowl--as indistinguishable as kernels on an ear of corn. The typical owner often resents regimentation, however. He wants to express his identity and say, "This is my property. Color it different." Trees, shrubs, plants, and flowers serve to set his house apart from the rest of the block.

Impatience. The popularity of instant this and instant that indicates that Americans do not like to wait long for results. It is not surprising, therefore, that garden spending is shifting from seeds to more expensive small plants. Such a running start means flowers in June rather than August.



Another popular item is the roll-on garden-seeds buried in a strip of green cotton batting. You spread it out, add water, and stand back.

The lust for newness. Dynamic obsolescence, as the regular style change is called, is a marketing mainstay in automobiles, appliances, pleasure boats, furniture, and clothes. Now it's big in the garden market, too. Many plant and flower merchants make it a policy to develop a new "model" every year. Gardeners pay top prices to own the very latest marigold, zinnia, aster and, of course, that number-one social-climber, the rose.

Frugality. The typical homeowner is convinced that a lush lawn and attractive plantings add substantially to the value of his property. Real estate men differ on this, pointing out that many sales are made during the winter. Nonetheless, gardeners continue to justify money spent on their yards as a sound investment.

More or less gregarious? Joan Parry Dutton, a garden expert from England, remarks on the relatively few hedges in America. She says this reveals a gregarious streak in the national character. Tall hedges, it seems, are a sign of unsociability.

Some psychologists might dispute Mrs. Dutton. They might mention our increasing use of fences--which could be called instant hedges--to insure privacy. Business Week feels that a growing insecurity based on national and international tensions is driving Americans to "... retreat to the smaller, safer world of the backyard." In other words, the outdoor room might be turning into a private hideaway to which the snug seclusion of fences is an important element.

The clean-slate syndrome. Many Americans enjoy being wasteful. When something breaks down they discard it with a flourish and get a new one. Now they can wipe away their entire lawn when it displeases them and start over from scratch. A new preparation will kill all growth without poisoning the soil and preventing immediate reseeding. It makes a nice, flamboyant gesture.

For Whom The Cash Register Rings

We couldn't find any firm handling silver bells and cockle-shells listed in the outdoor living industry, but we found almost everything else. Members of the industry range from giant chemical companies that produce fertilizers and insecticides to the part-time entrepreneur who raises evergreens for profit in his backyard.

Hand tools are manufactured by a number of firms including several of the nation's largest steel companies. Power equipment comes from hundreds of firms, but the top 25 account for a large majority of the output. There has been a shake-out in power lawnmowers with the number of producers shrinking from 300 to 150 in a few years.

The plant and seed industry includes giants like Jackson and Perkins which grows \$8 million worth of roses a year, but small firms are characteristic. Almost half of all growers have annual sales of less than \$10,000 and only 10 percent are incorporated.

Retailers. It used to be that outdoor supplies were sold almost exclusively in hardware stores. The postwar boom attracted a wide assortment of retailers, and now garden and other outdoor goods are available in department stores, supermarkets, roadside stands, auto supply stores, gas stations, mail-order houses, discount markets, and even drug stores. As in general merchandise, one-stop shopping has become popular in outdoor merchandising. Stores called Garden Centers have sprung up all over suburbia. There are some 11,000 of them today compared to about 700 in 1956. Such stores usually stock everything the nearby yardowner might want to sow, spread, spray, set fire to, start up, or sit down on.

About The Future

We have noticed that articles on the economics of the outdoor industry seem to wind up the same way. First the writer works in the phrase "a growth industry." Then he launches into a glowing evaluation of the industry's future.

Much of the optimism is based on the expectation that a high rate of home construction will prevail indefinitely. Every million housing units constructed is said to mean over 100,000 acres of new lawns and gardens. Mix in the standard projections for increasing consumer income and leisure and the result looks like a continuing boom.

The future of the outdoor industry is promising, but the rate of expansion enjoyed in the 1950's may slow down in coming years. There are several troublesome trends. The recent boom in apartment construction (see the December, 1962 Business Review) should not be overlooked. Almost 30 percent of all housing starts were apartments last year compared to only 8 percent in 1956. It is likely that the relative scarcity of well located, reasonably priced suburban land and the return migration to the city will be among the factors that maintain apartment construction at high levels.

Obviously, this could cut sharply into outdoor living sales. But apartment people offer a challenge as well as a threat. The garden industry is just beginning to exploit this market by developing new, compact products. Already miniature flower kits and window sill greenhouses are in the stores. Maybe exotic (and expensive) tropical plants will catch the fancy of the cliff dweller.

The market for garden tools and power equipment is nearing the saturation level. As evidence, power-mower sales sagged from

4.2 million units in 1959 to 3.5 million in 1961. Future demand will depend pretty much on replacements and new single-home construction and should be less dynamic than the demand of the 1950's.

New products, therefore, are particularly important in this segment of the market. Luckily, innovation is not being neglected. For the gardener who has everything, manufacturers recently introduced a sprinkler that crawls slowly over the lawn, a watering system with a "brain" that turns itself on automatically when the soil gets dry and all sorts of tools powered by rechargeable batteries.

Another burr in the outlook: surveys show that gardening expenditures decrease after a house is about seven years old. Many of the residences built during the unparalleled post-war construction boom have already passed that age, and presumably their owners are starting to cut back their outdoor budgets.

Finally, the typical American homeowner may change this attitude about making his outdoor living room as attractive as possible. Air-conditioning could keep him inside more often during the summer months. Increased weekend and vacation travel also might cut down on yard use. The trend to second houses may hurt the gardening industry, too. The second house is often in the woods or on a beach where Nature is the gardener. Also important, people who spend their spare time in a second home are likely to be less interested in the outdoor decoration of the first one.

* From an article by Lawrence C. Murdock, Jr. in Business Review, March, 1963, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia

ARBORETUM NOTES

Euonymus alatus koreana (Korean Winged Euonymus). This variety of the common Winged Euonymus is lower and more spreading than the species. It maintains a dense growth down to the ground. The fall color of the foliage is attractive but probably not as colorful as the species. The fruits are red and produced in greater abundance than on the species. (1)*

Euonymus atropurpurea (Wahoo - Selected form). Several years ago a compact form of the common Wahoo was discovered growing on the bluff, of the Mississippi River in St. Paul. The plant has been propagated and the resulting plants maintain their compact form. The maximum height appears to be about 6 feet. The leaves turn a brilliant red in the fall of the year. So far no fruits have developed on any of these plants. There is no commercial source of this selection at present. (1)*

Euonymus nanus turkestanicus (Turkestan Dwarf Euonymus). This upright form is superior to the species: The leaves are narrow, dark green, and nearly evergreen turning purple in November. The flowers are small and inconspicuous. These are followed by showy pink fruits in August. Plants should be cut back several times when young, to produce a bushy plant. (10)*

Forsythia 'Arnolds Dwarf' (Arnolds Dwarf Forsythia). A low-spreading forsythia that roots where the branches touch the ground. Excellent for covering banks or where a tall ground cover, up to 2 feet tall, is desired. No blooms are produced on this variety. (4)*

Fraxinus pensylvanica 'Marshall Seedless' (Marshall Seedless Ash). A seedless selection of Green Ash that appears to be well adapted to this area. (3)*

Fraxinus pensylvanica 'Summit' (Summit Green Ash). A vigorous selection of Green Ash that produces a straight upright leader. A seedless selection. (14)*

Fraxinus quadrangulata (Blue Ash). A small to medium-sized tree that produces a full round crown when grown in the open. The young stems are four-angled, and cut stems when put in water emit a blue color. Appears to be rather slow growing. (6)*

Ginkgo biloba (Ginkgo). A slow-growing tree of considerable interest. Leaves are bilobed resembling the leaves of the maidenhair fern. Leaves turn golden yellow in the fall. This tree is very resistant to insects and diseases. (4)

Gymnocladus dioica (Kentucky Coffeetree). A medium to large tree belonging to the pea family. The leaves are twice compound. The bark is deeply furrowed, giving the tree an interesting winter effect. It is quite free of insect and disease troubles. (9)*

Hydrangea arborescens 'Annabelle.' A selection of the common hydrangea with exceptionally large flower clusters. Individual clusters may measure a foot across. (1)

Hydrangea bretschneideri glabrescens (Shaggy Hydrangea). A little known hydrangea that shows considerable promise for early bloom. The flower clusters resemble those of the Highbush Cranberry and open about three weeks ahead of the common Snowhill Hydrangea. (1)*

Hypericum kalmianum (Kalms St. Johnswort). This low-spreading Hypericum is the hardiest of the St. Johnsworts tested. The shrub grows to a height of about 15 inches and is covered with yellow flowers in August. Stems bearing old seed pods should be cut back in the early spring. (10)*

Juniperus sabina 'Arcadia' (Arcadia Juniper).

This is a selection from the Morden Experiment Station that makes an excellent spreading ground cover. Needles stay green all winter. (2)*

Possible Sources of Plants

1. Arboretum - no commercial source known at present.
2. Bachman's Nursery - Minneapolis
3. J. V. Bailey Nursery - Newport
4. Coles Nursery - Paynesville, Ohio
5. Elmore Nursery - Elmore
6. Flores Nursery - Prairie View, Illinois
7. Green Ridge Nursery - Madison, Ohio
8. Greguson's Nursery - Minneapolis
9. Horton Nursery - Madison, Ohio
10. Interstate Nursery - Hamburg, Iowa
11. Kingsville Nursery - Kingsville, Maryland
12. Littlefield-Wyman Nursery - Abington Massachusetts
13. Orchard Gardens - Grand Rapids
14. Summit Nursery - Stillwater
15. Wayside Gardens - Mentor, Ohio
16. Willis Nursery - Ottawa, Kansas

EDITOR'S COMMENTS

Here are some observations on my recent European trip:

1. Trees are used in profusion.
2. Hobby specialties are given great play by the industry.
3. Grass areas are minimized.
4. Pot culture is universal.
5. Annual flowers are used in profusion.
6. Comfort and function seemed to supercede design. Harmony and unity were lacking in the small gardens.

7. Training of students to be professional craftsmen was the goal of most schools.
8. Considerable practical experience was given along with the classroom work.
9. Qualifications were high for entrance to horticultural schools.
10. Garden centers and nurserymen serve as information sources and provide diagnostic services.

* * * *

Television and Radio Series

The summer television series, Landscape Ideas, is being presented on three channels. It is aired live on Channel 2 each Wednesday night at 9:00 p.m. The program is taped off the air and then sent to Channel 11 (WTCN), Minneapolis. It is then sent to KDAL in Duluth. Starting September 1 the program will be picked up by a second Duluth station for simultaneous broadcast on Wednesday nights.

Radio Garden Tips are being distributed to 37 radio stations throughout the state. If you have special problems in your area, please let me know and a tape can be made to provide information on the problems.

IN THIS ISSUE

SHADE TREE MAINTENANCE SHORT COURSE

QUARTER-ACRE LIVING ROOM (continued)

ARBORETUM NOTES

EDITOR'S COMMENTS