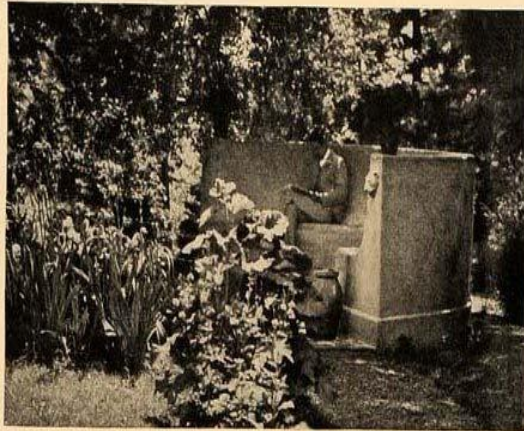


## The Right and Wrong Way to Plan a Garden—By W. Miller New York

YOU MUST NOT HAVE EVERYTHING YOU WANT, EVEN IF YOU CAN AFFORD IT—GET THE BEST ADVICE YOU CAN AND YIELD GRACEFULLY TO THE PERSON WHO KNOWS

I HAVE lately spent another month visiting in gardens. I have been motoring, driving, and walking, talking with owners, gardeners, and landscape designers, studying, browsing, and dreaming. I have seen hundreds of gardens with good features, dozens that were good as a whole, but oh! so few that completely satisfied the soul! I close my eyelids. Immediately there arise gorgeous visions of these perfect gardens. And a great flame of desire leaps up within me, a yearning to share with others the secret of these lovely gardens. I know I have it, but alas! I can never tell it. To me it is all summed up in one word—*fitness*. That means everything to me; it probably conveys very little to you.

But if you will conjure up all the delightful qualities that a garden may have, you will find that fitness includes them all—harmony, proportion, personality, privacy, peace, mellowness, neatness, brilliancy, charm. Of all the people who have lived,



The first consideration in planning a garden is comfort—not show. A garden seat at Mr. Beal's, Newburg, N. Y.

the Greeks, in my opinion, best understood the art of living. Their rule of life was fitness, and their motto was, "Nothing too much." Keep tight hold of this talisman. It will explain all the failures that we make and show how the perfect gardens are made.

1. *The perfect garden must fit the climate.* Most of our gardens are misfits. Many of us make a feeble imitation of the tropics by

depending too much on tender bedding plants, which leave the earth bare five-twelfths of the year. Instead, we should use hardy plants wherever possible. The wealthy squander fortunes on Italian gardens, but Italian marble crumbles in this climate and the broad-leaved evergreens of Italy—illex, bay, and olive—are not hardy in our Northern States. They would better lavish their wealth on flowers because our summer is better adapted to them than the Italian. Beginners plant chiefly European trees and shrubs, which, as a rule, are showier but short-lived. Experienced gardeners plant chiefly native material.

2. *The perfect garden must fit the soil.* It is fighting nature to have a rose garden on sandy soil. It is fighting nature to try to grow rhododendrons on limestone. Nature has adapted boxwood to lime and dozens of fine flowers to sandy soil. If you have rocky soil, do not blast out the rocks and make a lawn; have a rock garden. Real-estate dealers sweep off every native tree



The next consideration is how to use water to the best advantage. The Kneeland garden at Lenox, Mass.



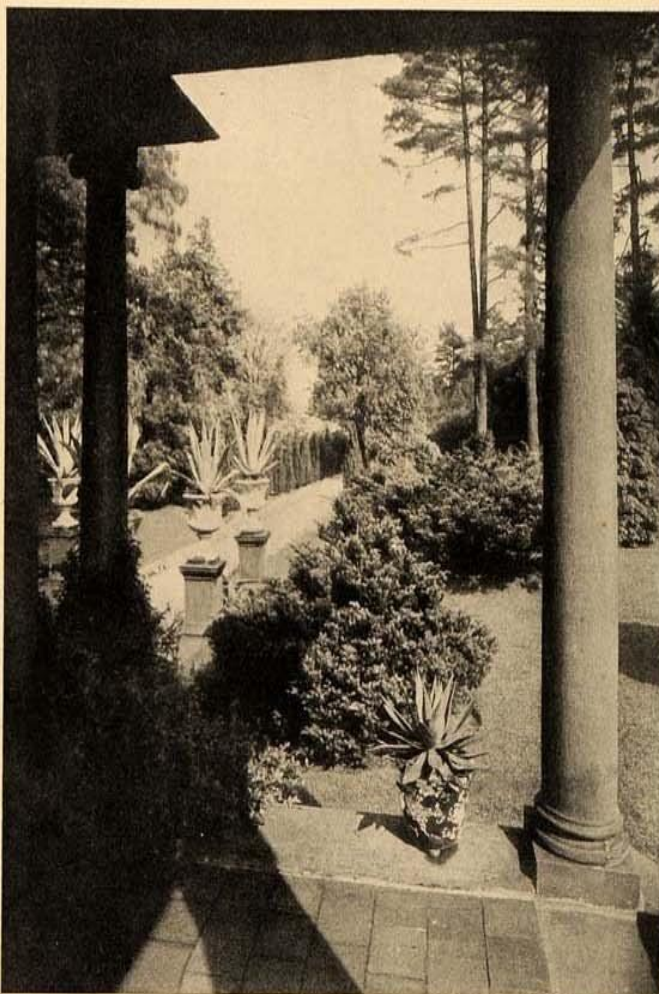
A water feature in the garden of Mrs. F. N. Doubleday, Mill Neck, Long Island

and bush. Yet these very plants can tell you more about the texture of your soil, the plant food and moisture in it, and its possibilities than the analyses of chemist and physicist. Study the wild growth on your land, and make it a feature of your garden and grounds.

3. *The perfect garden must fit the laws of design.* The plan must be evident, but not too evident. There must be a sense of order, but not an overwhelming system. The garden should be connected with the house, not detached. There should be some symmetry, proportion, balance. The walks should be simple and direct, not intricate or inconvenient. These are not matters of private rights, taste, or fancy. They belong to the realm of law.

4. *The perfect garden must fit the personality of the owner.* Any rich man can hire a supreme artist and give him a free hand, but if a garden is merely a landscape architect's garden you can recognize it every time. The wrong way to put one's personality into a garden is to override the expert, for the laws of design cannot be violated. The right way is to give the landscape designer every chance to study your personality — to learn what flowers you like and dislike, your favorite amusements and your ideals. He ought to see as much of your home life as a portrait painter. His job is to know you better than you know yourself, to blend your conflicting desires, to discern what you will like best ten years from now.

5. *The perfect garden must fit the purse.* A good rule is to spend 10 per cent. of the total cost of a home on the outdoor features. But there must be many exceptions e.g., a cottage costing \$1,000 may have an appropriate garden at a cost of thirty cents for flower seeds. People of moderate means are tempted to spend too little and their places for gardening are in danger of looking



Hunnewell garden, Wellesley, Mass. Japanese yew in the foreground, kalmia at a distance



This picture and the next illustrate the four things that ago can give—size, shade, mellowness, associations. The first three can be gotten quickly. (Mr. Magarge, Philadelphia)



Ancient box and venerable crape myrtle in the Wade Hampton garden

thin, poor, stingy, tasteless, or sporty. The wealthy are tempted to spend too much and their gardens are in danger of being ostentatious, unlivable, and soulless. A show garden for the present owner is not half so valuable as a garden that posterity will love. Aim to make a garden that your children will be able to preserve and will reverently cherish because it is full of your personality.

In other words, the right spirit in gardening is the spirit of *obedience* to the laws of nature and art. The wrong spirit is the

your own way and these things will *clash*; do what is fittest and these things will *blend*.

As Kipling says, every man should pray to be delivered from his heart's desire.

So far, I have been trying to illustrate the right and wrong spirit; now I shall try to illustrate the right and wrong methods. I wish I could tell you how to make a perfect garden, but I cannot. No magazine can tell you how to paint an exquisite picture. No book can teach you how to compose a musical masterpiece. The best I can

shade is to plant trees inside a garden; the right way is to have a pergola or summer-house.

2. *Use all the water you can—and with imagination.* If possible, put in tile drains and sub-irrigate, because then you will be insured against drought and floods. When other gardens have more bare ground than foliage, yours will be luxuriant; when others are poor in flowers, yours will be rich. Have a well to furnish drinking-water, to water the plants, attract birds and butterflies and



Rhododendrons are the most gorgeous of all garden plants—costly to buy and plant and slow to grow, but cheap to maintain and attractive the year round. Estate of Prof. Charles Sprague Sargent, Director of the Arnold Arboretum.

*domineering* spirit. Has it ever occurred to you, my wealthy friend, that money cannot buy a perfect garden? You can have your own way about everything, but do you realize that the surest way to fail is to follow your heart's desire? Everything that you wish is opposed to something else that you wish. For instance, you "want lots of flowers," but you also want "grand old trees." If you have too many flowers, your garden will look new, "checker-boardy," trivial. If you have large trees in the garden they will rob the flowers. Have everything

do is to give a set of rules and these pictures. But neither can be taken literally. They merely illustrate the right and wrong spirit.

1. *Make your garden an outdoor living-room—not a place for show.* Do not fill it with cold, hard, marble benches. Have a comfortable seat with a back to it where you can rest in comfort, enjoy the shade, watch the flowers, read a book, listen to the rain, or think. If possible have a tea-house or place to eat outdoors or a screened veranda free from mosquitoes and the typhoid fly. The wrong way to secure

reflect the flowers. If possible, have running water for the charm of its motion and the soothing quality of its sound. If you can afford a fountain, think more of water than of marble. Let the fountain suggest the magic of water, its coolness, its rainbows, its mists, its purity, its inherent color rather than imposing statuary and a paltry dribble. Do not have fake-antique well-curbs without water, dry-throated dragons, concrete mermaids, dying gladiators, iron boys and girls under umbrellas, or any ready-made designs.



A wild garden that should be charming for hundreds of years—Gen. Weld's, Dedham. Pines, rhododendrons, euonymus. Beside a lake



A seaside garden where gardens were thought impossible. Mrs. Wyckoff's, Southampton, N. Y. The tall privet hedge is a famous windbreak

3. *Get the effect of age quickly, but not by means of quick-growing trees.* Shun Lombardy poplars, willows, silver maples, and all such trash, for they are short-lived. Instead, buy large specimens of red cedar, magnolia, and flowering dogwood—trees that are long-lived and will never grow too big. The precious things that age can give are grandeur, shade, mellowness, associations. The first three can be bought at a nursery or procured by the mover of big trees. Extra large boxwood or rhododendrons will give at once imposing size and mellowness. Extra large vines in pots will shade your pergola the first year.

If you live in the South, plant live-oaks,

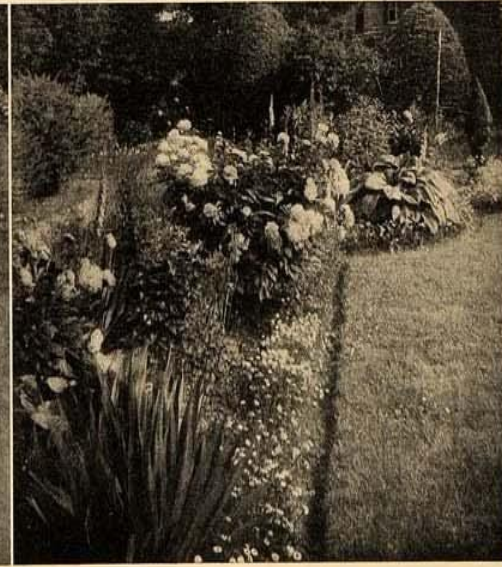
and turn your back on the tempter who suggests water-oaks.

4. *Get an expert to make a general plan.* The wrong way to begin is to rush impulsively upon details. For example, it is wrong to begin with a catalogue and make a list of your favorite flowers. It is wrong to begin with statues, wall fountains, or any "junk." It is wrong to set one's heart on any one thing, e.g., an Italian garden, a Japanese garden, or a collection of standard roses, for they may not fit the climate and soil. Get the very best help you can. Eschew ready-made plans. No first-class designer will make plans without seeing the property, because the perfect garden must grow right out of the soil.

5. *Make fitness the supreme consideration—not heart's desire.* The straight road to perfection is not through self-gratification, but through self-denial. Verily, it is easier for a camel to pass through a needle's eye than for a rich man to make a perfect garden. "Oh, if I had only known enough to yield gracefully to the expert," sigh the past masters of gardening (such as Mr. W. C. Egan and Mrs. Francis King), "I should have saved so much money, so many humiliating disappointments, and so many years of beauty!" Be warned! Garden design is a fine art, so get the best help you can. And if you cannot afford any, then study, study, study. And above all, see gardens, gardens, and still more gardens!



Miss Sarah B. Fay's rose garden at Woods Hole, famous for the new varieties that have originated there



A garden that has found itself—just a simple border of hardy flowers set off by healthy old evergreens

