

Landscape Plan Ends Maintenance Drudgery



PLAN FOR MINIMAL WORK—With a little forethought, you can design landscaping that will require little maintenance effort. This zelkova tree and the cherry laurel bush behind it are hearty plants that need almost no attention. The wide circle of ground bark mulch around the base of the tree makes grass cutting an easy chore.

Your yard should be a source of pleasure to you and all the members of your family. If you come to think of it as more of a source of drudgery than of relaxation (and good times, your yard is not serving the correct purpose. To people with plenty of time on their hands, gardening can be one of the most rewarding activities in the world. And some good hard yard work also serves as necessary physical exercise for people who don't get it elsewhere. But if you are interested in spending as little time as possible maintaining your yard, here are

some suggestions that will give you welcome results. When planning foundation plantings alongside your house, select trees and shrubs that won't require pruning. Too many people mistakenly buy small forest trees that will completely outgrow their intended uses. Save yourself future work by buying plants that will be most suitable for your needs when they have reached maturity. Use an effective ground cover around all plantings to eliminate the need for weeding and to avoid having to get a

lawnmower up against the trunks of trees. Mulches are the easiest and least expensive — especially wood chips and ground bark. CRUSHED STONE is an attractive material for this purpose, but be sure to put a layer of plastic sheeting on the ground first to prevent weeds from forcing their way through. If you want more plant material in the area, use one of several varieties of crawling ivy. You will have to nurture the young plants for a while to get them going, but once they

begin to thrive, you can forget about them. Outline all planting beds — whether individual trees or an entire row of hedges — with something that will provide a definite demarcation between lawn and planting areas. Bricks, sunk to the level of the soil, are most effective. Strips of wood or narrow trenches are also good. The simpler your overall landscaping plan, the easier it will be to maintain. Install trees, shrubs, and flower beds in cohesive units, to minimize the amount of careful mowing

that must be done. Keep the lawn areas free of bird baths, ponds, and other obstructions. YOUR LOCAL member of the American Association of Nurserymen will be glad to recommend varieties of trees and shrubs that require the least attention. The gingko tree, for instance, drops its needles rapidly in the autumn, making raking a one-time chore. The limited growth of the crabapple, the Japanese maple, and the dogwood makes them ideal for small areas, with no pruning to worry about.

To reduce your flower growing chores, concentrate on informal grades of wild flowers and herbs, which need only sunlight and occasional watering to thrive. Reduce your yard maintenance even more by installing a large patio. The unimpeachable designs that can be made with concrete, brick, stone, gravel, and other materials offer attractive possibilities for any lawn. If you are installing a fence, make sure you use a material that needs no painting and resists rot, such as redwood, red cedar, ornamental concrete blocks, or brick.

Soil Problems Can Wreck Dream House

You build or buy your dream house after months of anxious looking, several visits to the bank, and hours of juggling costs, savings, and home needs.

The house has everything you think you need: beauty, nice location, satisfactory construction, modern conven-

ences, enough space, and a price you can almost afford. The septic tank doesn't work, perhaps, some minor adjustments—the door may stick or the paint peels.

Then, the basement floods. The foundation slips or cracks, a hillside slides down into your house, or your split level house really does split. Your dream house turns into an expensive nightmare.

IT CAN'T happen to you, you say—not after poring over blueprints, watching the construction daily, and meeting with your contractor, or looking at dozens of houses before selecting one to buy. You were so careful to check everything.

Everything that is, but the soil—the basic foundation of your house.

Aid 'Pollution Solution'

LANSING The Michigan Shade Tree & Horticultural Research Foundation has joined the fight against air pollution. Pointing up the important role played by trees in removing carbon dioxide from the air and giving off oxygen, the foundation is making available attractive 2 1/4 inch plastic two-color buttons to be worn by persons wishing to support the campaign.

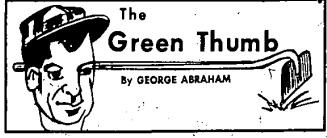
The buttons feature a tree with the green leaves forming the words POLLUTION SOLUTION and bear the equation CO-2 (Carbon Dioxide) plus 2 Tree equals O-2 (Oxygen). Foundation officers declare that an acre of growing trees provides four tons of oxygen a year, enough to support 18 persons. Through photosynthesis carbon dioxide is removed from

the air and oxygen is released to dilute the pollution in the air. Some trees filter out airborne ash, dust and offensive odors as well as some gaseous pollutants. Research will determine which species of trees will best do this, they point out. Proceeds from the sale of the buttons will help finance the air pollution fight as well as the foundations research program. The foundation is seeking members at \$10 each and donations in any amount. The Michigan Association of Nurserymen has contributed \$100. The buttons at \$1 each (less in quantity) and information on membership and donations are available from MST&HRP Pres. Theodore J. Haskett, Dept. of Parks and Recreation, City Hall, Lansing, Mich. 48933; Phone (517) 372-5000, ext. 244.

soils so they may be used for their best purposes. About 45 per cent of all privately owned land in the United States has been surveyed since work was started in 1899. These soil surveys contain valuable information intended in the beginning mainly for farmers. Now they are widely used by developers, contractors, government plan-

ners, highway engineers, and individual homeowners as well. It is entirely possible that the land you are considering buying has a soil survey. If so, it may be seen in the office of the local soil conservation district.

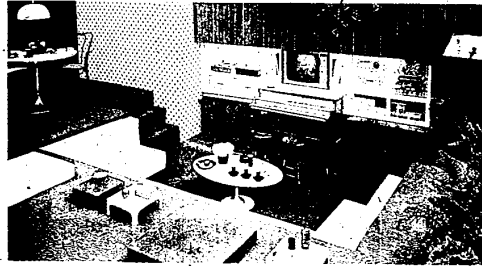
You can get more information on soils and soil surveys, and tips on what to look for in the soil when considering buying a home, by getting a copy of the Soil Conservation Service bulletin "Know the Soil You Build On." To get this bulletin contact your local Soil Conservation Service office or Soil Conservation Service, Box 642, Wayne, Mich. 48184.



The Green Thumb
By GEORGE ABRAHAM
Ground covers: Two of the best ground covers are myrtle (Vince) and Japanese Spurge (Pachysandra). Both can be started by root divisions. Pachysandra can be started by rooting the stems in a green glass containing plain tap water. Another trick is to work up a small plot of soil (lots of peat moss) and placing cuttings of Pachysandra in there. Keep the soil moistened at all times. Start your project next spring or early next summer. We've had complaints from readers telling us their myrtle turned black, sometimes dying back. The trouble is usually due to crown or root rot disease. Control: Dig up and burn severely diseased plants, including 3 to 5 inches of surrounding soil. Mix up a trench using one tablespoon of zinc, maneb or captan, to a gallon of water, and apply one pint per square foot of area. Disease is worse in poorly drained soils in wet seasons. LATIN PLANT NAMES: Quite often a whimsical student or reader will write and ask me for the longest Latin plant name. I've seen some mighty long ones, with jaw-breaking pronunciations. At present, the longest one that comes to mind (springing it on your teacher) is this: Echinofossulocactus zaccatecensis. While there are perhaps longer

ones, I think this is a good sample of how long a name can be. Any one knowing a longer plant name? Please send it along and we'll include it in this department. CHANGING gladioli: It happened again in 1969—many letters from readers asking why their gladioli changed colors. The question: why did the pink or other colored gladioli revert back to white? Here's my own explanation: There are several fungus diseases that can kill gladioli bulbs. Colored bulbs are more susceptible to disease and the whites are more resistant. The weak types die out (often completely) leaving the stronger types (white) to remain. Now it is true that some varieties such as "Friendship" will flower a normal pink, then will mutate or change to red. This is called mutation, and it's nature's way of throwing out a new variety, but this does not happen in wholesale numbers. We've seen a white change to a pink, but it happens only rarely. The mechanism of these changes is not known. We do know that whenever you grow a mixture, you often wind up with flowers "reverting" to white. Chrysanthemums change colors also, and the reason is the same: weak types die out, leaving the stronger ones to carry on.

GREEN THUMB CLINIC: A reader writes: "Our rose of Sharon was full of buds this fall, but most of them dropped. Why?" Answer: It's the nature of rose of Sharon to shed some buds and blooms. In other words, it's a varietal characteristic. Also, too much water or too little (dry soils) will cause buds to drop. If your plant is full of wood, thin it out in early spring.



A SUNKEN MUSIC center offers novelty of appearance, a separate area devoted to music, and a special treat for guests on the second level. A well-designed, bi-level arrangement like the one shown is handsomely color coordinated from the richly-paneled Teak walls to the sculptured carpeting. Relief from the darker colors comes in several dramatic touches — the polka dot wallpaper, the white topped tables, the white and yellow tables and benches, the handsome green ferns and other touches that are the grademark of the adept home decorator.

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