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Thank You,
Bob & Doug Olds

Suburban Gardener

Choose The Right Tree For Arbor Day Planting

By BETTY FRANKEL

Celebrate the 100th anniversary of Arbor Day: Plant a tree for "many happy returns of the day."

Make sure, though, that the tree you plant is the right tree. Whether you are planting by a school or a factory, in a park or in your own back yard there is a right choice and a wrong choice.

The size and shape is up to you, but nature helps you decide what kind of tree to plant. Some trees thrive in wet soil; some need dry—and you can't fool Mother Nature!

Many examples can be mentioned of what happens when the right tree isn't chosen, but few examples can be found. They have died.

In Farmington Township, in sections 13 and 24, is an area where people have been having planting problems. With very humor, many of the residents call the area "Death Valley" because they have had to replace trees and shrubs three or four times since they first moved into their homes less than six years ago.

THE SOIL is a fine-grained sticky clay and drainage is poor. The soil is heavy and moist, and poorly aerated. Because of the high mortality of trees planted in the area during a beautification committee tree planting program, a survey was made of the planting problems in the area.

A survey determined the kind of trees and shrubs that died and those that were thriving. Also, studies were made of the kinds of trees and shrubs that grow naturally in such areas when they are "wild."

Not surprisingly, the kinds that grew well for almost everyone in the area who planted them were the kinds to be found in nature in flood plain areas—the kinds that grow along streams and in low valleys. Those that are found naturally in high, dry places just couldn't make it in "Death Valley."

Trees that will grow well in poorly drained clay soil, included maple, silver maple, green ash, Marshall seedless ash, poplar hawthorn, and willows of various types. They are fast growing trees that give good shade in a very short time. They tend to be somewhat weak and brittle case such as this, the disadvantages should be overlooked. Better a short-lived tree than no tree at all.

SHRUBS that will take "wet feet" include red-osier dogwood, buckthorn, ink-berry, Michigan holly, button bush, spice bush, sweet-pepper bush, highbush cranberry and other viburnums, elder and various shrub willows such as pussy willow.

In addition to choosing the right kind of plant, there are things the homeowner can do to improve the soil texture and drainage. There are various techniques that have proved beneficial in this problem area.

Some people have found it helpful to dig a very deep planting hole and put a deep layer of gravel in the hole. Then fill it with porous, light soil and set the plant at the normal ground level.

Even more helpful is to plant in raised beds with railroad ties or rocks used for low retaining walls. A layer of gravel and sand goes in the bottom of the bed and then the bed is filled with light, porous soil rich in humus. The raised beds added interest to the flat yards and the trees and shrubs grew better.

ANOTHER similar technique is to plant trees and shrubs on a mound that slopes gradually into the lawn contour.

Various things were done to improve the texture of the soil. Some residents reported good results from working gypsum into the soil, although others were less sure of the benefits.

Almost any sort of organic material worked into the soil is helpful. Grass clippings, leaves, peat moss, compost and wood chips were all beneficial. The more worked in the better.

Your problem may not be wet clay soil. It may be dry sandy soil—maybe you have no soil problem at all. Check first, though, then choose the right trees and shrubs and they will be healthy and beautiful for many Arbor Days to come.

Handy Jim's FIX-UPS

Adventure: Boy's Room

TASTEFUL but dramatic changes can make a boy's bedroom an exciting adventure for the grown-up. Parents, with fix-up skills can create a room that's "just right" for their son.

As shown in the illustration, a family covered the sleep wall with rough sawn textured Masonite brand Shale White paneling, with the grooves running horizontally instead of the normal vertical orientation. The other walls were lined with a textured Masonite brand panel to provide a soft-resistant, attractive background for the work-study area and the general lounging and closet section.

Once the vinyl floor was laid, Mommy hung up the bed and including molded plastic chairs, large seating cushions for the floor, flag rug near the bed and a transparent headboard behind which colorful art posters were mounted.



Garden Reminders

Take a spring break and go to the Ford Garden Forum at Greenfield Village April 19, 20, 21. . . Planting season has arrived. Trees, shrubs, evergreens, seeds can be planted. Wait, though, to set out plants or sow seeds of tender annuals and vegetables that need warm weather. . . Prune roses. . . Give lawns a spring feeding and reseed bare spots. . . This is the last call to use a pre-emergent crab grass killer. . . Check for gray webs of tent caterpillars and cut off or remove these webs before the caterpillars crawl out.

Fylking Passes Ecology Tests

Few lawn grasses have been subjected to as many tests before being marketed to the consumer as has Fylking Kentucky bluegrass.

For more than a decade Fylking was challenged under conditions to encourage failure—drought, disease, weed infiltration, extremely low mowing, high traffic activity and just plain neglect.

Each test, compared side by side with many varieties, strengthened the researchers (and there were many reaching coast to coast throughout the United States and Canada) in their resolve that they had found a very special bluegrass with excellent vigor and very low susceptibility to either disease or weeds.

This testing of the lively Fylking bluegrass that originated in Svalof, Sweden preceded the nation-wide marketing program now in its fifth year. This was also prior to a major emphasis on ecology.

Fylking, again, is proving to be a favorite—this time with the ecologists. It grows thicker than most, so it's one of the most prolific oxygen producers—something every urbanite is beginning to be concerned about as more concrete, shopping centers and apartments replace lawns.

Since Fylking requires little or no weed or disease control chemicals, it is meeting with great encouragement from environmentalists.

Of course, the ultimate judge is the consumer who is prone to choose grass seed for color and appearance as first considerations.

The researchers believe that this "most tested" grass, which is already a favorite with a large block of turf grass growers and is being included in many elite bluegrass mixtures, is the model turf which most will be judged in the future.

Beekeepers Meet April 22

The annual Southeastern Michigan Beekeepers seminar will be held Saturday, April 22, at the 4-H Fairgrounds, 10871 Quirk Rd., Belleville.

The day-long program is presented in cooperation with Michigan State University's cooperative extension service.

Registration is at 8:30 a.m. with coffee and doughnuts available.

Ralph Alloway of Plymouth Township, who is president of the association, will call the meeting to order at 9 a.m.

The program will include the following talks and demonstrations: assembling hive, locating an apiary, preparing for the honey flow, swarming, bee behavior, raising nucleus, new apiary law.

After the picnic-style lunch in the dining hall (persons attending are asked to bring their own with a little extra for out-of-town guests and speakers; beverages will be supplied, Terri Lynn Sallows of Adrian, the honey queen, will be introduced. Installing live bees, outlook for beekeepers and the honey extractor will be discussed.

The seminar is designed not only for the professional apiarist, but for the amateur who has one or two colonies, or for the person who has not yet acquired his first hive of bees.

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