

Chapter 23

LANDSCAPING THE PLOT

It is assumed that when the location of the house on the plot was under discussion, some thought was given at that time to the location of lawns, gardens and recreation areas. Now that the house is finished, you can go ahead and work out the detailed plans for this sort of work and complete the projects.

PLANNING LAWNS, GARDENS, PLAY AREAS

The first step in landscaping your plot is to take a sheet of paper ruled off into squares and draw your plot on it to scale. After this, draw in your house in its proper location and also walks, driveways, trees and other important features such as rock formations, etc. Now you will be able to see at a glance exactly what you have and how much of the plot is left for landscaping purposes.

The average family will be interested in having a lawn, a flower garden, perhaps a vegetable garden, and sufficient space left over for play and recreation purposes.

What you will have to do is divide up what is left of your plot so that you will get the maximum number of items that you want and at the same time not have the lawn or garden so small that it detracts from rather than adds to your home.

The first point to bring up is the front lawn because this is a very important feature in making your house attractive. The front lawn should be large enough to provide a well balanced setting for the house, but it should not be so large that keeping it up is going to be a headache. Do not make your lawn too big, because if you do, you

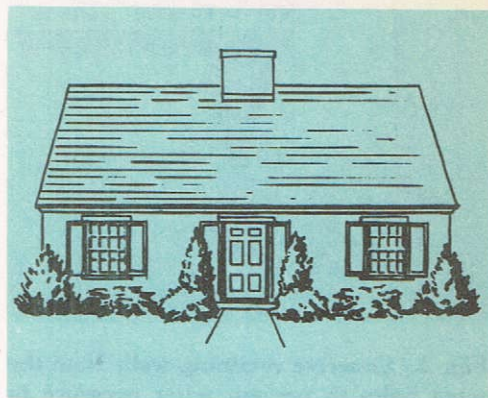


Fig. 1. Adequate landscaping is important if your house is to look its best.

may find that most of your weekends in the summer are going to be taken up in cutting grass. This does not mean that you should not have a decent-size lawn—a house without some lawn is hardly a house at all—but it does mean that you should limit the size of the lawn so that it will be a pleasure to look at and take care of rather than merely a horrible chore.

The best rule to follow in planning a front lawn is to have it as broad and open as possible. Do not cut the lawn up with walks and drives, if it is possi-

ble to avoid them. A small but unbroken expanse of lawn in front of your house will be much more effective than one twice the size that is divided into several small sections.

Small lawns around in back of the house are also very desirable and can be made extremely pleasant if they are protected by a screening of shrubs or trees.

The size and location of the flower gardens will have to be decided on too. Vegetable gardens for the most part are located in back of the house and they should not be too large unless you do not mind the work attached to keeping up a large vegetable garden.

Flower gardens can be either formal or informal. Formal gardens are usually placed in more or less secluded spots, but informal gardens can be blended right in with the general landscaping picture. If there is an outcropping of rocks on your site, this area can be made to serve very nicely as a rock garden.

The size of the recreation area is more or less a matter of taste, but if you are looking forward to a lot of outdoor recreation, you should make the plot big enough for games, badminton courts, outdoor suppers, etc. For example, if you plan to have a badminton court, you will need a space 30' by 60'. The same area is required for croquet. If you plan on other features of outdoor living, such as an outdoor fireplace, terrace, and so on, keep these in mind when you plan the size of your recreation area.

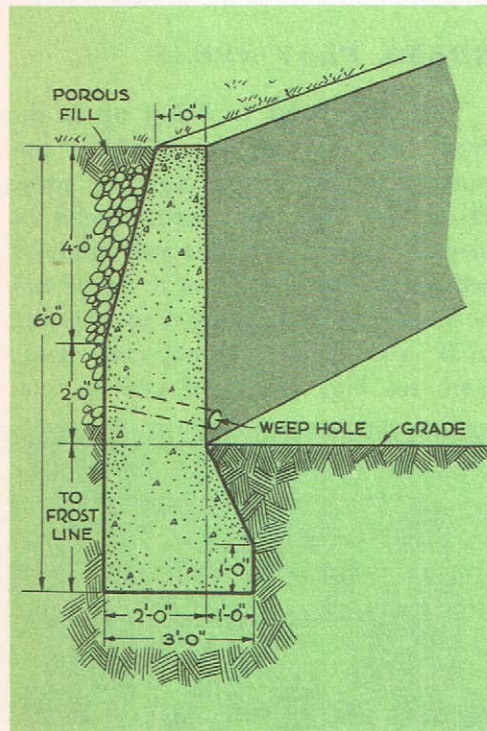


Fig. 2. Concrete retaining wall. Note the weep holes to prevent water pressure in back of the wall from cracking the masonry.

The first step in landscaping is to grade the subsoil. Fill in all depressions as well as any holes made during the construction work. Trenches for the sewer line and water pipes should be carefully filled with subsoil and not with any of the debris left over from the construction work. If these trenches are not well filled with soil, the topsoil over them will settle and cause you a good deal of trouble later on. The subsoil should slope gently away from the house so that water will drain away

rather than flow down along the foundation wall and possibly into the basement. If any retaining walls are required, they should be installed at this time. Fig. 2 shows a type of wall constructed out of poured concrete. Note the weep holes along the base that allow the water in back of the wall to drain on through rather than building up back pressure, which in time would crack the wall. Remove all roots and debris from the subsoil, as buried wood will attract termites.

MAKING A LAWN

The first step in making a good lawn is to prepare the subsoil, which should not be done while it is wet. It should be graded down from the house with gentle flowing lines. Do not make the lawn absolutely flat if there are natural slopes to the site. If you run into any deep depressions and they cannot very well be filled in, drain tile should be put down so that water accumulating at these points can be carried off. Avoid steep slopes, however; these will make cutting the grass extremely difficult. Be sure that the subsoil is packed solidly. After this, the topsoil can be put on. If you kept the topsoil separate from the subsoil when the excavation work was done for the basement and foundations, you can probably use it for your lawn. It should be free of weeds, roots and stones. You should have about 6 inches of topsoil for an adequate seed bed. If you do not have a sufficient amount of topsoil or if you

do not have any at all, you will have to buy some. Be sure that you know what you are getting and paying for. Some home-owners have paid for topsoil and then found after it was delivered that it was not much better than the subsoil that they already had. Ask around and get the name of a dealer who will supply you with really good topsoil.

Before you go any further, you should have the soil tested so that you will know what and how much fertilizer must be added to it to make it suitable for grass. You can get small soil-testing kits and make the test yourself, or you can send a sample of your soil to the county agent or the state department of agriculture and they will make the test for you.

The topsoil should be spaded to a depth of 4 inches. After this, it should be pulverized and then raked and packed down until it forms a smooth bed. Next, a good lawn fertilizer should

be applied. The time of year that the grass seed is planted will depend on what part of the country you live in. As a rule, in northern and eastern portions of the country the seed should be planted in the fall while in southern states the seed is planted in the spring. Fall-sown grass is able to compete with weeds very well because it gets an early start in the spring, but it must be sown early enough in the fall to allow it to make a good beginning before winter.

The best way to plant the seeds so that you will be sure of getting a uniform coverage over the entire seed bed

is to sow one-half the amount of seed to be used in parallel strips and then sow the remaining seeds at right angles to the first half.

After the seeds have been sown, rake lightly and then go over the lawn with a roller. Finally, the lawn should be watered lightly and kept damp until the seeds have become rooted into the soil. The grass should not be cut until it is three or four inches tall.

If there are any bare spots in the lawn when the grass begins to grow, loosen up the soil and reseed. Weeds should be removed as they appear.

TREES

The chances are that your plot will either have no trees at all, in which case your problem will be where and how many trees to plant, or it will contain too many trees, in which case your problem will be to pick out the trees that are to remain and those that must come down. It is, of course, a lot cheaper to take a tree out than to put a big one in.

You should give a good deal of thought to the location of the trees around your house and the type of trees to use because they can make a vast amount of difference in the over-all picture that your home presents.

Trees are used to provide a background or frame to the house, to provide shade for various sections of the house, and also as screens and wind-breaks. Naturally, some types of trees are better for these jobs than others.

For the purpose of landscaping, trees are divided into two groups, evergreens and deciduous. Evergreen trees keep their leaves or needles on all year around, while deciduous trees shed their leaves in the fall.

One of the great mistakes many people make in using trees around their home for one purpose or another, is that they forget that trees are going to grow. In many cases, trees intended for shade purposes have been put too close to the house so that by the time they reach their full growth, it becomes necessary to take them down. Another common mistake is to plant too many trees close together because at the early stage of their growth, one tree did not appear to be capable of doing the job by itself. Before you select a tree for any purpose, find out what its width and height will be at maturity.

Some types of trees grow faster than others and this may be an important point in selecting one particular tree when you are in a hurry to get shade or a screen. Among the fast-growing trees are poplars and box elders. These trees will grow much more rapidly than hardwoods such as oak, maple and hickory, but on the other hand, they do not live as long and you might find that in thirty years or so all your shade and screening trees were dying off. Some trees are not satisfactory in certain areas because of the prevalence of certain insects and diseases.

When trees are used around the house to provide shade during the summer months, deciduous trees should be chosen. Their leaves will provide shade in the summer and when they drop off in the fall, it will allow the winter sun's warmth to reach the house. Shade trees are not required on the south side of the house. Evergreens should not be used for shade trees and they should not be placed less than 100 feet from the house. Of course, this applies only to the large evergreens and not to the smaller varieties used for shrubs. Except when used for the purpose of shade, trees around the house should be grouped so that the tallest ones are farthest away. When the job of landscaping has been finished, this will produce a gentle slope through the trees and shrubs, across the lawn and a slight rise at the shrubs around the foundation walls.

Trees used for screens or windbreaks can be either evergreens or deciduous.

When you are deciding on what sort of trees to plant around your house, do not forget about fruit trees such as apple, peach and pear.

Planting Trees

When trees are delivered from a nursery, they come prepared for planting. Your first job will be to dig a hole sufficiently large so that the roots can be spread out in their natural position. Three or four inches of pulverized topsoil should be placed at the bottom of the hole. Trim off any broken or dead roots and then place the tree in the hole. Fill topsoil in under the roots and bring it up to the proper height. The soil around the roots should be lightly packed into place. When the hole is about two-thirds full of soil, pour in slowly as much water as the soil will absorb. Now put in the remaining soil.

It is very important to provide the newly planted tree with adequate support until the roots have taken a good hold in the ground. This is especially important with evergreens because unless they are securely fastened down, they may be blown over by winter winds. Guy wires are the most effective means of supporting the young trees, but the wires should not come in contact with the bark of the tree. Sections of old garden hose can be used around the wires to insulate them from the tree. During dry weather, the newly planted tree should be watered at frequent intervals. Be sure that the ground around the tree is thoroughly soaked and not just dampened on the surface.

SHRUBS

Shrubs of varying sizes can be used for foundation planting, for screening and for many other landscaping purposes. They can be either evergreen or deciduous and very often the two types can be mixed together favorably.

Foundation Planting

The shrubs that are set around the base of the house serve two very useful purposes. First of all, they hide the foundation wall and, second, they help to tie the house to the lawn. The shrubs used in this location should be dwarf stock as these will not grow so high that they will have to be cut back to keep them from covering up windows. Do not place shrubs around the basement windows; they will cut out the circulation of air to the basement as well as blocking the light. Shrubs should not be placed too close to the foundation wall; if they are, they will provide an entrance for termites in spite of the termite shield between the foundation wall and the house sill. A good rule to follow is to keep the shrubs at least one foot away from the foundation. Do not make the mistake of completely covering the entire foundation wall with shrubs as this will create the unreal appearance that the house is supported by shrubbery instead of by a solid masonry foundation. Place the shrubs so that sections of the foundation wall can be seen.

Another point you should keep in mind is that shrubs, like trees, will

grow and, therefore, their position and spacing should be made on the basis of how large they will be when they have reached maturity rather than how large they are at planting.

Around the foundations, a few deciduous shrubs mixed in with the evergreens produce a highly pleasing effect.

Groups; Screening; Hedges

This type of planting is used to soften the straight lines in walks or drives or at the junction of walks and drives.

Screen planting can be used either to insure privacy or to hide an unpleasant view. If you want all-year-round screening, evergreens should be used and they should be high enough to do the job.

These can be used as screens or to divide sections of the plot into separate pieces. For example, if you have a portion of your plot set aside for recreation, you might use a hedge between this and the lawn or backyard.

Selecting Shrubs

The first point to consider in selecting a particular shrub for a job is the height of the shrub at maturity. With the exception of hedges, shrubs with the proper natural height are more desirable than those that must be cut back at frequent intervals. If you use shrubs of different natural heights for the same job, the smaller ones should be placed in front of the higher ones.

Another point to watch out for is to be sure to use a sufficient number of evergreens—especially in foundation planting. Deciduous trees are fine in the spring, summer and early fall, but after that they lose their leaves and will not do much in the way of concealing the foundation wall. Also, bright evergreens around the house are a very cheerful sight during the winter months.

Planting Shrubs

You can purchase the shrubs you will require from a local nursery, but many home-owners prefer to go out into the countryside and dig up their own. Native shrubs usually do very

well if transplanted properly, and as they are natural to the locality, they give the house the appearance of belonging on the site.

Before the shrub is planted, all broken and dead roots should be cut off. The hole should be large enough so that the roots can spread out in their natural state and the bottom of the hole should be covered with rich topsoil. Place the plant in the hole and then work topsoil around the roots in the same fashion as was done for trees. Keep packing the soil down as it is added and then, when the hole is filled, pour a bucket of water slowly around the roots. Now add enough topsoil to complete the filling.

GARDEN WALLS AND FENCES

A definite part of landscaping is the construction of walls and fences. Walls can be made out of either natural stone, concrete masonry-blocks or bricks. The wall can serve as decorative effect alone or it can be used for screening purposes and to insure privacy.

All three types of wall will require a solid concrete footing poured below the frost line. This footing should be half again as wide as the wall and the same depth as the wall is wide. A brick or concrete block wall has to be only 8" thick, but one made of natural stone should be at least 16" thick if it is to be solid. The stone can be laid up dry or with mortar, but building a dry stone wall requires a good deal of skill and time if it is to be firm.

If there is going to be a gate in the wall, provision should be made for hanging this from the masonry rather

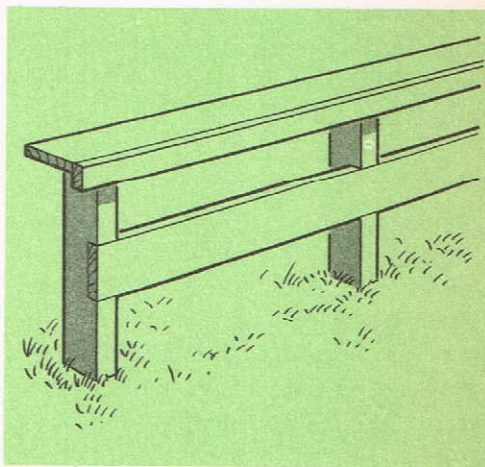


Fig. 3. An attractive and easily constructed wood fence.

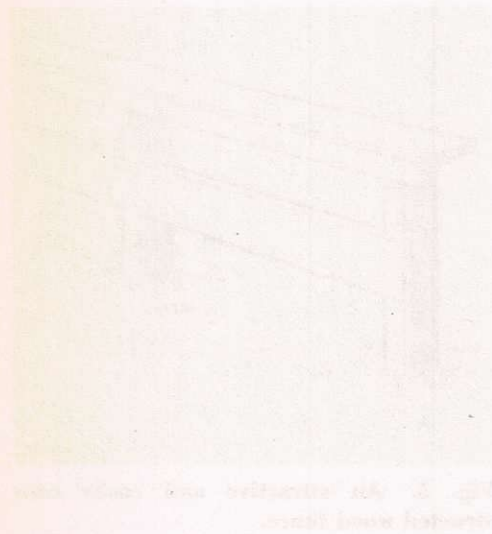
than from a wood frame. A wood frame in contact with the masonry may rot out quickly and be a constant source of annoyance.

Bolts for the gate hinges can be set in the mortar joints during the construction of the wall.

Brick and concrete block walls should be capped with 3 inches or so of cement mortar at the top.

Moreover, this cap should be slightly rounded in order to allow rain water to drain off.

A white fence is an attractive item. See Fig. 3. This one is both simple and easy to make and, what is more, it will not require the same amount of time and work to paint as does a picket fence. The uprights for this fence are made with 2" x 4"s treated with a wood preservative so that they will resist decay and insects. The cross-pieces are 1" x 3" or 1" x 4" with a cap made out of the same materials running along the top at right angles to the piece directly below.



MATERIALS LIST FOR BASIC HOUSE ON CONCRETE SLAB

<i>Material</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>
Ready-mixed cement	23 cu. yds.	
2" x 8"	27	14'
	31	12'
2" x 6"	65	16'6"
2" x 4"	136	16'
1" x 6"	28	16'
1" x 4"	10	8'
1" x 2"	10	16'
1" x 3" No. 2 Common grade	192'	
Sheathing	2,582 board ft.	1" x 8"
Asphalt shingles	12 squares	
Beveled siding	1,326 board ft.	1/2" x 6"
Exterior trim	220'	1" x 3"
Building paper	5 rolls	500 sq. ft. each
Pine base	300'	1" x 4"
Base molding	300'	
Roll insulation with vaporproof paper	1,600 sq. ft.	3"
3/4" plywood	10	4' x 8'
Closet door trim	110'	1" x 3"
Shelving	100'	1" x 6"
Flush door with frame and trim	1	3' 0" x 6'8" x 1 3/4"
4-light fir door with frame and trim	1	2' 8" x 6'8" x 1 3/4"
2-light fir door with frame and trim	1	2'10" x 6'8" x 1 3/4"
2-panel door with trim, jambs and stops	6	2' 6" x 6'8" x 1 3/8"
	1	2' 0" x 6'8" x 1 3/8"
Stationary sash with frame and trim	1	4'2 3/8" x 6'5 1/4"
Casement sash with frame and trim	3	3'2 3/16" x 3'1 3/4"
	4	4'2 3/8" x 3'1 3/4"
	1	4'2 3/8" x 1'6"
Chimney blocks	64	7 3/4" x 3 3/4" x 12 3/4"
	64	7 3/4" x 3 3/4" x 14 3/4"
Flue-tile	9 sections	8 1/2" x 13" x 2'
Copper flashing	2	12" x 12"
	1	4' x 4'

Plasterboard, 2,200 sq. ft.	$\frac{3}{4}$ " galvanized pipe, 10'
Chimney thimble	$\frac{1}{2}$ " galvanized pipe, 50'
Clean-out door	Kitchen sink
Cement mortar, 2 cu. ft.	Bathtub with shower and fittings
Nails: 16d, 50 lbs.; 8d, 2 kegs; finish, 20 lbs.; 4d, 72 lbs; 5d, 12 lbs	Lavatory with fittings
30lb asphalt felt, 5 rolls	Water closet with flush tank
Louvers, 2	30-gal. hot-water heater
Hinges: brass, 9; interior, 21; cabinet, 33	Entrance cable, 16'
Mortice locks, 10	Service head
Latches, 7	Sill plate
Medicine cabinet	Switch box
Towel racks, 2	Grounding bushing
Soap dish and toothbrush holder	4" or 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ " outlet boxes, 30
Paint: exterior, 24 gal.; water-thinned, 11 gal.; floor enamel, 3 gal.; interior enamel, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ gal.	2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " switch boxes, 29
4" x 4" sanitary T branch	Cable connectors and bushings, 100
4" x 4" Y branch	Ceiling fixtures, 7
4" clean-out plug	Ceiling fixtures with pull chain, 2
4" x 4" sanitary T branch with 2" tapping	Wall fixtures, 2
4" sanitary T with 2" tapping, 2	Outside fixture
5' sections 4" cast-iron soil pipe, 8	Single switches, 6
Increaser	Double switches, 2
4" closet bend	3-way switches, 2
Drain traps, 4	Convenience outlets with plates, 14
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " drain T, 6	Special outlets with plates, 3
Elbows: 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", 5; $\frac{1}{2}$ ", 14	Switch plates, 12
T fittings, 7	Metal hangers, 9
2" galvanized pipe, 11'	Door bells and buttons, 2
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ " galvanized pipe, 30'	No. 14 3-wire, 50'
	No. 14 2-wire, 350'
	No. 12 2-wire, 50'
	No. 6 ground cable, 10'
	Space-heater with flue pipe, rated at 80,000 BTU

PRICES FOR COMPLETE MATERIALS

East Coast	\$2916.31
Middle West	\$2919.42
Rocky Mountains	\$3102.91
West Coast	\$2554.00

MATERIALS LIST FOR ADDITIONS TO THE BASIC HOUSE**Basement: 7' High**

<i>Material</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>
2" x 10"	8	16'
	26	14'
	34	12'
2" x 6"	8	16'
1" x 6"	466 board ft.	
1" x 3"	192'	
Hardwood flooring	935'	1" x 3"
Linoleum	182 sq. ft.	
Flight box stairs		
Mixed cement, 9 cu. yds.; or 900 concrete blocks and 1.1 cu. yds. mortar	Main bearing partition: 425 concrete blocks, .5 cu. yds. mortar; or 6 2" x 10" 18' long, 2 4" x 6" 14' long	

Attic, Gables and Dormers

<i>Material</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>
2" x 6"	4	6'
	3	8'
2" x 4"	74	16'
1" x 6"	808 board ft.	
Base trim	152'	1" x 3"
Interior doors with trim, jambs and stops	2	2'6" x 6'8"
	5	2'0" x 6'8"
Casement sash with frame and trim	4	4'2 ³ / ₈ " x 3'1 ³ / ₄ "
	1	3'6 ³ / ₁₆ " x 3'6 ¹ / ₄ "

Insulation, 1086 sq. ft.	Elbows: 1 ¹ / ₂ ", 2; 1/2", 3
Wallboard, 986 sq. ft.	1 ¹ / ₂ " galvanized pipe, 20'
Roofing materials, 50 sq. ft.	1" galvanized pipe, 30'
3/8" plywood, 435 sq. ft.	1/2" galvanized pipe, 20'
Linoleum, 435 sq. ft.	Metal shower stall
Flight box stairs with open start step	Lavatory
Gutters, 75'	Water closet
Traps, 2	Medicine cabinet
Closet bend	Towel racks, 2
Sanitary T; 1 ¹ / ₂ ", 2; 1/2", 3	Toothbrush holder and soap dish

Convenience outlets with plates, 8	Square outlet boxes, 12
Ceiling fixtures, 3	Switch plates, 4
Ceiling fixtures with pull chain, 3	Metal hangers, 6
Wall fixture	Fibre bushings, 60
Single switches, 3	No. 14 2-wire, 200'
3-way switch	Lbs nails: 5d, 8; 8d, 12; 8d casing, 7; 8d finish, 7; 10d, 10; 16d, 5; 20d, 4
Octagonal outlet boxes, 6	

Garage and Breezeway

<i>Material</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>
Mixed cement	42 cu. yds.	
4" x 4"	4	6'5"
2" x 8"	13	20'
	26	12'
2" x 6"	5	12'
	12	8'
	2	18'
2" x 4"	56	6'5"
	32	16'
1" x 6"	4	16'
1" x 6"	1,668 board ft.	
Copper flashing	36'	12"
Fir door	1	3'0" x 6'8"
Overhead doors	2	8'0" x 7'0"
Casement sash with frame and trim	1	3'3" x 3'4 1/8"
Siding, 450 sq. ft.	Ceiling fixture: interior, 1; exterior, 1	
Roofing material, 760 sq. ft.	Fibre bushings, 6	
Double switch	No. 14 2-wire, 50'	
Octagonal outlet boxes, 2	Lbs nails: 8d, 22; 8d casing, 5; 8d finish, 4; 10d, 24; 16d, 6; 20d, 6	
Rectangular outlet boxes, 2		

Chimney, 2-Flue (3-Flue)

<i>Material</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Dimensions</i>
Flue-tile	7 sections	12" x 12" x 2'
	7 sections	12" x 8" x 2'
	(32 sections)	(12" x 8" x 2')
Common bricks, 1,000 (1,500)	Mortar, 14 cu. ft. (21 cu. ft.)	

Fireplace**Common bricks, 1,000****Firebricks, 90****Fireclay, 30 lbs.****Hearth assembly****Mixed cement, 2 cu. ft.****Damper****Angleiron, 42"****Angleiron, 36"**