DESCRIPTION WILL GIVE YOU A BETTER PICTURE OF SOME OF THE INTERESTING POSSIBILITIES THAT LIE AHEAD IN ORCHID BREEDING.

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Sanders, Complete List of Orchid Hybrids, Sanders (St. Albans) Ltd., 1946.


ORNAMENTAL PANEL — "PROBLEMS IN LANDSCAPING FLORIDA HOMES"

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"LANDSCAPING THE AVERAGE FLORIDA HOME"

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My subject is preparing the plan or design for the small Florida home. There are many approaches and any kind of creative work includes some intangible elements. I will discuss some general rules of approach in landscaping a home.

It is absolutely necessary to have a plot plan to scale of the area, if possible prior to the building of the house. This is seldom the procedure as the house is usually already located on the plot. The orientation of the house is quite important. It has to do with climate control, livability, amount of fuel oil to heat or refrigerant to cool, location of warm rooms, living areas, summer shaded areas, etc. The slope of ground, topography, arrangement of same and existing trees are important.

After the bulldozers slicking and smoothing the ground, we very seldom have a plant or tree left around the new home. If it is possible to save trees, they are worth hundreds of dollars to you and are adapted to the soil and climate. We have been having a controversy in our area about whether pine trees should be saved. If pine trees are close to the house and the major roots are going to be cut, these should probably be removed. If there is any way to save the tree, if it looks like the root structure will maintain it, save the tree.

Not only the existing material on an area has to be considered, but the material immediately around your property that will be a part of the landscape effect you are going to create should be given careful consideration.

The windows, doorways from house to garden areas inside and out should also be carefully plotted, with some idea how to handle the traffic pattern. A simple and direct flow of traffic is nearly always the best solution. The homes, particularly Florida homes, designed with broad overhangs for shade, with large plate glass areas for sun, light, vision and increasing spaciousness of appearance, the inside and outside of houses are almost synonymous and should be planned together.

After developing a plot plan with these various interesting things about your landscape noted in it, some layout of areas is almost necessary. A unified area in landscape design is almost the same thing as a room in the home. When you begin designing a lawn or garden area, divide it up into specific areas for single purpose.

The entrance area is usually considered first. It is usually more reserved and formal than the other areas of the property. It is the face you present to the general public, it indicates the kind of people you are, how you
live and what your interests are. Usually the architect designs a house with the attractive and interesting architectural feature in front. Usually the doorway or entrance is a primary feature of landscape area. If you make plants more outstanding or attractive than doorway, you have incorrectly attracted attention away from the house. Plant material should be subordinated to the features of the house. Houses in Florida used to be built so flood water would not come into the house, and you had to plant hedges to hide it. The modern house fits the ground and with no ugly underside which has to be covered. The modern design trend is to leave about one-half of the foundation of a house showing, without a heavy “beard” of plant material around the house. When shrubs are four or five feet high, the house is buried. Down here our plants grow rapidly and do not stay a given size long, and we do not have many dwarf plants that will stay put. If possible choose a plant which will not overgrow the space in which you put it. A plant that is too large loses its symmetry and grace very quickly, becomes unattractive, and uninteresting. If you want a shrub that can grow and still have natural, graceful lines, let it grow naturally. Too many places have a nice, clipped hedge of material without any character, about 4' high all around the house. That is essentially the fault of those of us in the nursery industry as we have not set up educational programs to help maintenance people to know how best to keep lawns and gardens in the shape in which they were designed.

Each landscape area should be fitted to use or needs of the family or people involved. Even the children should be considered. You should fit your landscape to the situation and requirements presented to you. If the maintenance problem is too big, the landscape will be neglected, uninteresting and fail to serve its purpose.

A service area is almost a necessity around the average home. It doesn’t have to be walled in but some enclosure is needed so we can hide some of the things that are a necessity around the home. In many instances, this area would be a great deal better if paved with gravel or other materials to eliminate grass that has to be maintained. Paving can be done in many ways and often inexpensively.

The next step is to rough out several possible areas of various sizes and shapes within the private area, considering attractiveness, interest, character and adaptability to uses desired by the family. Choose the most attractive and interesting shapes and those easiest to maintain. Wriggley lines of shrubs that make extra pruning and weeding, and which make mowing difficult should be designed out of the garden if possible.

There is increased tendency to using curbing for plant beds as well as for walks and drives. Without curbing or some definition of areas, it is hard to define a bed and maintain the shape as originally designed. The curbing should be low to facilitate mowing.

When somebody asks me about grass, I dodge. There is no perfect grass. I say it flatly. I have never seen one I thought was any good. They all have problems, subject to diseases, have maintenance problems and are a great deal of trouble. Grass may be a necessity in good landscaping design, but its maintenance should be held down to as little as possible. We haven’t had much success with other ground covers in Florida, but we will have more in the future. Ivy as a ground cover is almost non-existent in Florida. We have a blue-flowered ground cover, ruellia, which does very well and liriope or society garlic makes a leafy, low compact mass. Try to use a ground cover that does not have to be fertilized, watered, weeded, and which will resist diseases. There is no objection to using gravel as a ground cover, the brown or tan color gives a good effect. Plants will grow through the gravel. Paved areas are useful in conjunction with other ground covers, and tend to minimize the maintenance job.

Privacy of living area is essential. I don’t mean a big, clipped hedge, or high fence, or concrete wall, but a sense of enclosure and background; a definition of the beginning and end of the area. An area which is definitely part of your living section, but apart from the people around you is the essence of the useful and enjoyable private area. Without the enclosure, you cannot have a landscape effect any more than you can have a room without walls.

The final decision on layout has to do with existing plants, trees and orientation of house as to location with reference to shade or sun.
Trees should be planted, for instance, to protect a shaded area when the sun is 20° high or from 3 to 5 in the afternoon, and to protect the tender plants. All these things should be thought out carefully. The more time, effort, and forethought you give to planning and the layout, the better result you will have in the end.

When you finally decide that you have worked an interesting and attractive garden that will do the things that you want to do, then stick by it.

Now we come to composition, a difficult and peculiar element of design. Composition in landscape is no different from composition in painting, dress designing, etc. Composition is made up of several things that are hard to confine to set rules. We learn about certain rules, and then see old paintings and masterpieces that defy the usual rules of composition. Line, form, and color are absolutely essential to any composition inside or outside the house. Line and form must be interesting and attractive. A lot of people feel that variety of plants make a landscape effective, but it usually ruins it. You wouldn’t paint a house 10 different colors in 10 feet, but many landscapes have 20 different plants in different colors in 20 feet. This is suitable for a botanical garden, but that is quite another pursuit from landscaping. There is no law or rule against simplicity. It is a quality of good design. There is no reason why you can’t have a group of crotons used as a mass in a simple design. Such a grouping will give a much better effect than spotting crotons in 10 different places like salt and pepper. While one or two different kinds of plant material will often give an effective display, the client feels cheated because he did not get a wide variety of plants. Repetition of similar kinds gives character to the landscape. Motif, design, and arrangement are absolutely necessary in an effective landscape design.

To summarize — a plan is absolutely necessary and not hard to do. All outdoor areas are just rooms in the yard, divided up to enable people to get the maximum from their gardens with a minimum of maintenance. The maintenance requirement of materials selected should be checked. You can’t look at several pretty girls at once, each detract from the other, and the same thing is true of plants. Other plants should be subordinated to it in interest. One feature plant should be in relation to about 40 utility plants. To have character, you must have simplicity. Simplicity is the beginning and ending of good landscaping, and simplicity without monotony is good design.

ORNAMENTAL PANEL — “SELLING THE LANDSCAPE JOB”

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Imagine the vast opportunity before us in “Selling the Landscape Job.” Let us pause to remember that less than 200 years ago George Washington, as a boy, chopped down a favorite cherry tree, later as a man he created and built one of America’s greatest gardens at Mt. Vernon and into that garden he built utility, beauty, and inspiration. It is a garden that through all these years has been cherished and enjoyed by millions of visitors and students. It has been copied and to all of us it has been an inspiration. We think some more gardens were built in China over 2000 years ago. In (646-794 A.D) Chinese gardens influenced Japanese garden design. The art of garden making was imported from Korea and China and the Japanese people made remarkable headway in gardening, because gardening became an essential part of the lives of the Japanese people. Their style of gardening prevailed down through hundreds of years, changes being made in different periods and these changes affected the lives of the people. Sometimes the changes were affected by their religion, others by the changes of fashion and architecture. Through all these years the people fully understood the importance of gardening and so it continues through all the years.

A very interesting new book printed in Tokyo 1953 entitled A THOUSAND YEARS