National Garden Week

Mrs. Jack H. Pryor, Haines City

Mr. President, Members of the Florida State Horticultural Society, and All the Rest of You:

I am very glad to speak tonight on the subject of National Garden Week, a movement yet in its infancy, and one that means so much to our community, a democratic and patriotic move. It is a movement that benefits every man, for it follows out and it fosters civic pride; it adds to individual comfort and happiness; it enriches prosperity, and it enhances the value of our property today.

I am especially glad to speak on this subject in a county that is so awake, so enthusiastic and interested along the lines of beautification. When the Commissioners in all of our counties become as keenly interested to the needs of beautification as Hillsboro, we may rest assured we will have, all over our State, beautiful highways.

I am glad and honored, Mr. President, to speak before your organization, at the Thirty-Seventh annual meeting, and to you who have been working and done much toward the development of Florida, and I dare say if your organization had its way there would be such protection of our native growth that in a very short time our State would become truly a State Beautiful, and not in spots but all over.

To help in this movement of making not only our State, but our whole country better and more beautiful, is the object of National Garden Week. It was founded by the Editors of the Garden Magazine, January 1923, trying to arouse civic interest in gardens.

By the plan adopted by the General Federation of Womens Clubs, every government, every State Agricultural College and all Superintendents of Education have been asked to co-operate, and I understand a majority of them are co-operating. There seems to be a general awakening to the needs of Beautification. It leads one to the higher plane of living; it makes better citizens of us, and adds to the looks of our country, making it more beautiful and restful to the eye.

From the success with which the National Garden Week was carried through last April, and the interest it has created all over our country it appears National Garden Week is going to prove an annual and national occasion. This is National Garden Week, April 20th to 26th, and while in most States it marks the planting of gardens, it rather marks the combination of our efforts, as flower shows over our State prove.
However, to meet the special needs of Florida, auxiliary Garden Week was observed first in November, 1923. You know before the war we all gardened to help our country, and now that the passions of war have past, we can still garden to help our country. We can show the world that men, women and children can work together harmoniously in times of peace, when the movement has as its object the betterment of our country. So that the interest gained and enthusiasm made during the war have made gardens more popular.

It appears that the old time gardens of our grandmothers are going to return to us with all their beauty. The founders of National Garden Week would have everyone know the joys of growing plants, and would have us know vegetables and flowers, so that the mistake made in Madison Square Garden, in New York, would never be made again when someone called a strawberry a radish. That really happened.

National Garden Week is rich in possibilities for us, even though the season does not exactly fit Florida conditions for planting. There are many things we can do. It gives us an opportunity to arrange a clean-up campaign. The elimination of road signs does just as much toward beautifying, as planting. Let's get rid of all the old signs, dilapidated fences, fallen down houses. Let us brighten things up with just a bit of fresh paint and white-wash. If we did that in Florida we would do much toward making our State more beautiful. It gives us an opportunity to arouse enthusiasm, so that when our Garden Week comes in November we can put on pictures at the theatre and lectures, explaining the psychological effect of gardens on our people, and the need of vegetable diet and exercise. Vegetables will furnish both of these—vegetable diet and exercise.

It gives us an opportunity to offer prizes to our school children and grown-ups, and it also gives us an opportunity to arrange planting, and to begin now to see that our public lands are beautified next Fall; to see that our factories, our jails and hospitals are beautified. Beautiful surroundings have a wonderful effect upon character, and if we give people a better example, which will pass on to our citizens of tomorrow, we know that the fate of our Florida, which rests in their hands, will be assured. I would stress that in our schools and orphanages the children be allowed to make plantings, under proper supervision, so that it may be instilled in them through life, and that we may be assured that the beautification work that we are doing now will be carried on by them. Then it is well to let children know that honest labor is honorable, and just as honorable as labor with the brain.

The hope of the Founders of National Garden Week is to make us real lovers of the beautiful. To start in, our people need to take more interest in Horticulture and nature, and they should be educated so that none will be willing to live in homes, no matter whether in humble homes or in a palatial mansion, without harmonious settings, in keeping with the style of their home, and grounds. They
hope to make us love beauty, so that we may live and appreciate the gospel of peace, contentment and beauty, which is found in fresh air and sunlight, and with the miracles wrought with a few seed and earth.

If all of us in Florida were to start trying to make life better and more beautiful, wouldn't it be a wonderful sight, and wouldn't our Florida soon become a bird of Paradise?

Let us agitate Garden Week, and let us not only take it out in talk, let us have action. Let each one of us do our bit.