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Plan Homestead Carefully Before Starting Building

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second of two articles on landscaping and farm and home planning — quoting excerpts from publications written by John Harris, extension horticulturist from N. C. State College. This article deals with home planning.)

By JOHN HARRIS

Give lots of thought to picking out your homestead site. You may be living on it the rest of your life; therefore, you will want it to be right. Keep in mind that you may want to enlarge the homestead later on. Or, you may want to make changes in it within a few years. Have an eye to the future when you choose your site. Following are some factors you should consider. If possible, select a site that's

located on an all weather or hard surfaced road. Find out from the Highway Department whether there are plans to change the main road.

See about getting electricity and telephone services if they aren't immediately available. It's economical to locate near these lines but don't let this carry too much weight. A few more dollars to carry a line to a better site may be advisable when thought of in terms of a life time. Locate so you won't have poles in your front yard.

Choose a site near the center of the farm so you won't waste too much time going back and forth from fields. Of course, convenience to road and lay of land may outweigh this factor.

A good water supply is important but don't let it outweigh everything else. After all, a satisfactory well can be had on almost any desirable building site. Of course the well should be dug before the house is built to make sure there is a sufficient supply of usable water.

You can't build a convenient and attractive house without some kind of a plan. Neither can you develop a convenient and attractive homestead without a plan. You should plan your house and grounds at the same time. Otherwise, you may find yourself looking out your picture window on the chicken lot. Or you may walk extra miles because the back door doesn't open toward the barn. And don't blame your company if they come to your back door. It's your fault—you didn't plan your house and grounds right.

Think twice about what your neighbors or some future neighbor may do with that land next to you, or perhaps across the road. You don't want a filling station, or perhaps something worse, in the edge of your yard. Protect yourself as best you can by not building too close to your property line. A good way to keep good neighbors is not to be too close to them.

Keep in mind, too, that your neighbors change. Other things may outweigh them, but trees are important. It takes years to grow trees large

enough to give a house a good setting.

Select a site that's higher than the road. This makes the house look more important and, too, it gives drainage away from the house. Make sure the site has enough suitable land for the out-buildings and that they will have good surface drainage. Water from the barns should drain away from the house or well. Look into the future and include enough space for future buildings.

Look around for attractive views such as lakes, distant mountains, fields, etc. You will live in your home a long time. Pleasant views are important.

Do whatever grading is necessary before you start building. Be sure water will drain away from all buildings. Grade the barn lot so water will drain off rapidly. Don't let this water drain to the house or well.

In general, grade the lawn as little as possible. For instance, a sloping lawn may be more attractive than one made level. Grading can help prevent soil erosion around the yard, but a good sod of grass is perfect. When grading is necessary, remove the topsoil first and pile it to one side. Replace the topsoil when the grading is finished. Where bench terraces are necessary locate them near the house or road.

If you have trees, there is little grading you can do without losing them. It's dangerous to fill in around trees. Even one or two inches may be fatal. If you must fill in, provide aeration for the roots. For information on how to do this, write the U. S. Department of Agriculture for Farmers' Bulletin No. 1828.

Does it make any difference whether the granary is between the house and barn or on the other side of the barn? You decide. If it's a safe distance beyond the barn you'll make around 58,400 extra steps each year. So it goes with the other buildings. You are the one to decide on the arrangement of your buildings, because you know which ones you will need. One suggestion though—you had better plan for twice as many buildings as you think you will need. Better still, plan for enlarging them in the future.

Place your walks and drives only where they are needed, and will be used. Convenience comes first but don't forget looks. Avoid breaking up the lawn unnecessarily with walks or drives. If there is a question as to whether or not a walk or drive is needed, leave it off until the need is definitely established.

Arrange the walks and drives to lead people to the entrance you wish them to use. Plan this detail before the house is built. Your guest will likely use the same parking area and entrance which you use. Make the drive and parking convenient to both the front entrance and to the entrance to your den or every day living room. This involves the house plan as much as it does the yard plan. They should be planned together.

To Make Poor Soil Good Spade in What It Lacks



Spading is essential to good soil conditioning.

Plants can be grown without soil, but nature uses it to support plant roots, and store food and water which the roots require. Men have never found a better way to make gardens, than by using soil.

Roots require air as well as food and water. Unless air can penetrate the soil, the roots cannot function. This demands that lawns and gardens have good drainage, so water which is not held in storage by soil particles will escape and allow air to enter.

If your soil is stiff, hard to spade and cultivate, slow to allow water to drain through it, every spring something should be added to make it more porous.

Beginning gardeners are often persuaded that what is needed is a few inches of "black dirt." Even if your soil is clay, excavated for the foundation of a new home, that is the wrong solution. Forget the color of the soil and concentrate on its porosity, a quality without which any soil, black, yellow, or red, will give you trouble.

At the other extreme are soils in beach areas, of almost pure sand. These are altogether too porous, holding neither moisture nor plant food, but letting everything wash away.

Both types of soil need the same treatment which is the addition of decayed vegetable or animal material, such as sewage sludge, muck or peat dug from old bogs, well decayed manure, commercial peat moss, leaf mould or compost from a compost pile.

It is seldom advisable to mix sand with clay or clay with sand. Both are excellent to have in soil, but together they often produce a very hard combination.

Instead of sand, however limestone can be mixed with clay, with excellent results. Limestone causes the fine clay particles to combine into crumb-like aggregates which will retain moisture, while allowing air to enter freely and excess water to drain off.

Do not be afraid to use crushed limestone freely, since it will not make clay soil harmfully alkaline. The clay has a "buffer" capacity which prevents this, say the scientists.

All the materials used to improve your soil should be mixed with it thoroughly. Spade the organics into sandy soil also, they will hold moisture and store up plant food for the plants to use, instead of allowing it to wash away.

Spading alone is a fine soil conditioner, and if planned sensibly is not a difficult chore. Mark the area to be spaded as a whole and divide into sections, one for each day. Limit the day's work to an hour, until you become hardened to it.

Spread material to be spaded in evenly over the whole area. Begin by opening up a trench at one end of the day's section, throwing the soil removed in a pile nearby. Then dig an adjoining trench, with spade at right angles to its length, throwing the soil and organic matter into the first trench. Continue this until the day's work is over, resting at frequent intervals. Fill the final trench with soil removed from the first. Drive the spade straight down each time, digging the full length of its blade; and turn the "spit" of soil as you drop it. It beats any kind of plowing for a

Poultrymen Urged To Spend Time In Observing Birds

State College Answers Timely Farm Questions

QUESTION: Does it pay to increase grain feeding each week during the six-week period before a cow calves?

ANSWER: Some experiments have shown that cows fed increased amount of grain produced no more milk during the first 84 days after calving than did a similar group of cows fed only alfalfa hay and corn silage six weeks before calving. The grain feeding did, however, result in greater gains in weight. There was no difference between the two groups in the amount of udder congestion at calving.

QUESTION: What are results of overcrowding poultry?

ANSWER: It usually results in retarded growth and feathering, and often an increase in mortality. In addition, cannibalism may set in, and the increased number of birds means more droppings, thus leading to poor sanitation.

QUESTION: Just how much floor space should chickens have?

ANSWER: Research has indicated that for broiler production, there should be three-fourths of a square foot of floor for broilers, and 400 square feet of floor space per 100 birds of American breeds of layers. With lighter breeds of layers, 300 to 350 feet for 100 layers is adequate.

QUESTION: What happens if chicks get chilled when the weather changes suddenly?

ANSWER: Although young chicks possess the ability to adapt themselves to changes in temperature to a limited degree, abnormal temperatures existing for even a short time may cause a bad reaction. It may result in pronounced diarrhea which in young, rapidly-growing chicks may hurt their performance.

QUESTION: Skippers have got into my home-cured hams. What can I do about it?

ANSWER: In some cases it's possible to cut the damaged section out and preserve the remainder by freezing or canning. Don't age any cured meat further if it has become infested with insects.

Not many poultrymen take the time off each morning and evening just to stand around in the poultry houses and observe their birds. But the time spent in that way just might be the most valuable time they put in all day, says R. S. Dearstyne of the State College poultry science department.

Dearstyne says that close observation of the birds may result in detecting disease outbreaks in the early stages when there is still time to control the trouble before it spreads too widely. He says this is especially true with respiratory troubles.

In addition, during brief periods of close observation, other conditions may be determined. Are culls developing rapidly as could possibly be indicated by shedding of feathers? Are there indications of a start of cannibalism in the flock? Are the birds, properly pigmented according to their age and stage of production if layers? Is the body weight of the birds normal for their age?

Dearstyne says the answers to these questions might be found in a short session in the hen house morning and evening. He adds that poultry is an industry of details and success comes only when these details receive proper attention.

Shade Trees May Need Fertilizer

With spring now here, Tar Heel home owners need to be thinking about fertilizing their shade trees, says Edward M. Jones, State College extension forestry specialist.

He says it's important to fertilize trees that have been weakened by excavation around new homes. The application of fertilizer should be done at this season—when trees start their spring growth.

Jones says that fertilizer should be applied through holes drilled in the ground beneath the ends of the limbs where the feeder roots are located. These holes should be at a band from four to six feet wide. Apply two pounds of commercial fertilizer for each inch in diameter of the trunk. A 12-inch tree would need 24 pounds of commercial fertilizer.

Jones adds that any good grade of commercial fertilizer with an analysis of 6-8-6 or 8-8-8 is all

"Ain't" Ain't So Bad

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — It's too bad the word "ain't" isn't an approved word in the English language, says Prof. Thomas Dunn, head of the Drake University English department.

"'Am I not' is a very awkward phrase," the professor says. "'Ain't' would be much better."

After putting the fertilizer in the holes, finish filling with soil. In case there is very little rain, water the area around the tree several times. This will dissolve the fertilizer so that the tree can readily absorb it.

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