

GARDEN, LAWN AND LANDSCAPE

BY J. A. EDGERTON
COLD SPRING ON THE HUDSON



CORRESPONDENCE SOLICITED

Sour soil will produce nothing of value. A little lime is the best remedy.

It is quite as important to preserve liquid manure as solid, since both are needed for a complete fertilizer.

The best lawn grass is a mixture. Kentucky blue grass is a pleasant romance, but in the world of fact is found defective at many points.

A man who can make a good garden can do almost anything else well. A man who will not make garden well is good for other things, but there is something lacking in his soul.

Do not spray white trees and shrubs in bloom. To do so not only interferes with the bees, but also prevents the full fertilization of the blossoms. Give the bees a chance, and they will help themselves and the trees at the same time.

A Chinese gardener near Fresno claims to have produced an odorless onion. His statement is borne out by many of his white neighbors who claim to have inspected the new marvel. The odorless onion should become quite a social lion.

Despite all the stories of fabulous fortunes made at gardening, a great many people do get a comfortable living, while others extract enjoyment and save money by raising their own vegetables. The sudden riches fable is written about all callings.

Grapes do well on high, stony land. A south slope is desirable. The holes in which the vines are set out should be wide and deep enough to give the roots free space. The vines should be well cultivated and when of sufficient age should be carefully pruned, the pruning being attended to in the fall.

The worst foe of mankind is laziness. Laziness permits the lawn to look ragged, the farm to grow up to briars and underbrush and the garden to become a meeting place for all weeds. The only three essentials to success in caring for garden, lawn or landscape are good taste, common sense and hard work.

By planting vines and shrubs about the walls of the vegetable garden, it can be made a thing of beauty. Avoid hard, straight lines. The graceful curves of nature are infinitely more charming than the precise, mechanical, severe regularity affected by most amateurs as well as by many professionals. True gardening cannot be made mechanical any more than true poetry or true music.

One of the crimes not yet recognized on the statute books is that of permitting the face of nature to become disfigured when a little care and attention would have made it a thing of ornament and use. An original will dress any place with a certain beauty, but a wilderness that has been allowed to grow up around a human habitation is an abomination in the sight of the Lord and everybody else.

God created the rivers and the hills, the grass and the trees, the fruits and the flowers, but placed them at the disposal of man, who must make the most of their varied and infinite possibilities. Man himself thus becomes a sort of creator. The gardener can make a world of his own, shaping fresh combinations of beauty, bringing out novel qualities in plant, flower and fruit or reshaping them, as in the case of Luther Burbank, into something wholly new.

For covering verandas and arbors many persons in this country are now raising the Japanese kudzu vine. It is hardy and grows from forty to sixty feet in a single season. The leaf is large and the flowers pretty. The vine is adapted to the southern states, as in the north it dies down in winter and does not flower so well. The large, fleshy root grows into most curious shapes. In addition to being mineral-leaved for ornament and shade, the kudzu vine has an inner bark of tough fiber which is manufactured into fine, strong cloth and a root that yields excellent starch.

He who creates a beautiful garden, lawn, park or landscape is a benefactor to his race. All who behold his work are gladdened, blessed and made better. Others are brought to cherish him, and they in turn create things of beauty to gladden other people and to create still more benefactors. Thus his influence for good, like the waves on the lake, goes out and out forever. It cannot be measured or limited in either time or place. It increases with a geometric ratio. It is impersonal, and the impersonal benefactor is the highest. The life of him who creates a garden gives out a sweet perfume like his creation.

A PASSION FOR ARTICHOKE.

That it does not pay to trust to appearances, especially in the matter of roots, is proved by the following true story:

A city family on buying a little farm in the country for summer took along a man of all work who said he was familiar with the farm in its native air. This man was faithful but near-sighted and prone to hasty conclusions.

One day he came to the house to great glee with a bunch of long and fat looking roots found while spading in the garden. These he declared with much positiveness were artichokes. The cook was suspicious, but the map of all work was so certain that the lady of the house, who had never eaten artichokes, tasted a silver of one of the roots rather gingerly. A lady friend did the same, and the cook followed suit. This was about 4 in the afternoon.

In the meantime the man of all work put the "artichokes" in soak for his dinner. He was so elated with his find that he wanted to eat them all.

The cook was the first victim. After the manner of cooks, she did not wait till the family was through dinner but investigated a piece of steak and a slice of gingerbread while attending to her other duties. This was all the silver of "artichoke" needed, and in a few minutes there was a very sick cook on the premises. Shortly after dinner, while commiserating with the cook, the mistress also became ill, and the friend was not long behind.

In the meantime the man of all work prepared for his artichoke dinner with all the gusto of a gourmand about to discuss frog legs or the first strawberries of the season. The cook's illness did not in the least disturb him, as he charged it to other causes, but when the two others followed in quick succession he was temporarily turned from his infatuation for artichoke by being hastily dispatched for a doctor.

There followed intense excitement in that particular household, and three people remembered all the horrible cases of poisoning which they had ever read—that is, until too busy with cramps and retchings to remember anything distinctly.

When the doctor arrived he pronounced the supposed "artichoke" nothing but common poke root, a rank poison.

Fortunately the three victims had taken too small a quantity to produce fatal results. Their "tasting" unquestionably saved the life of the man of all work, who has now recovered from his passion for "artichokes" and who in future will form the acquaintance of no root that does not carry a doctor's certificate as to its identity.

WHAT WOMAN HAS DONE WOMAN CAN DO.

One feminine correspondent writes that on the unused portion of a fifty foot city lot, her house and lawn occupying the front, she has raised enough garden stuff for her own family and considerable for the neighbors. This she has done with only one hour's work a day and a few cents occasionally for seeds. Fine. She not only knows how to make a garden, but how to write about it. It is dollars to doughnuts that this particular correspondent's place looks as spick and span as a new pin, that it is clean inside and out and that there is some joy and ginger in life for those who live in her vicinity.

There is no question that these things can be done by any one with sufficient common sense and energy. The trouble with most city dwellers or suburbanites who try to make garden is that they know nothing of the subject and do not try to find out, that they get any old kinds of seeds, that they stick them in at any old time, that they do not half prepare the soil, that they do not use manure and that they do not properly cultivate or keep out the weeds after the plants are started. If a merchant ran his business on the slipshod methods employed in most gardens he would go broke the first year. Gardening is a science, likewise an art. It requires intelligence and hard work, like anything else in life. With this intelligence and hard work, however, there are few occupations that give a larger return for the money and time invested—a larger return either in value or in happiness.

We hope in time to have numerous other correspondents who will tell even a better story than does this woman who spends an hour a day in her back yard, but who makes that hour count.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS AND KOHL-RABI.

There are two members of the cabbage family that are not so well known in this country as they deserve.

Brussels sprouts produce a few small heads about one to two inches in diameter. They are boiled and stewed in cream and are of fine flavor. The seed should be sown early in rows two feet apart and should be thinned to two feet apart in the row. When the heads appear the leaves should be removed to give more room, a few leaves being left at the top of the plant. In winter the plants may be preserved by setting in a pit in the cellar. Then the heads can be used as desired.

Kohlrabi grows into a head something like a cabbage, which it resembles in flavor, but still more closely resembles the turnip. The heads should be picked when about three inches in diameter, as they grow tough when larger. Seed should be sown early, and when three inches high the shoots should be transplanted to rows two feet apart and one foot apart in the row. The vegetable is sliced and boiled like turnips.

The Walking Kettles.

By FLOYD INGALLS.

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I WAS introduced to them in an unexpected way, and I did not soon recover from the intense curiosity excited by my first impressions of them.

I had gone to the old Minot house, in Dorchester, Mass., to take dinner with my aunt. We two, my aunt and I, had wandered over the house, up the huge stairway and down into the cellar. Suddenly aunt opened the door of an old pantry on the floor of the porch and said, "Child, look here!"

"What, aunt?"

"The two brass kettles."

Two enormous brass kettles met my eyes. They were turned over on the floor, and each would have held the contents of a half barrel.

"Those are the ones, my dear."

"What ones, aunt?"

"The ones that saved the two children from the old Indian straggler."

"What Indian straggler?" I asked, with intense interest.

"Oh, the one in King Philip's war. Didn't you ever hear the story?"

"No, aunt."

"Well, I'll get Uncle Zebedee to tell it to you after dinner. Come."

"But what could any one do with such kettles as these? Where did they hang them?" I continued.

"Come here, and I will show you."

She swept away, and I followed her into the dark room, which was lighted only by opening the door, and followed her. We went into the kitchen. She pointed to an enormous fireplace and said, "There, child."

"But, aunt, how did the two brass kettles save the children?" I asked again.

"Oh, they crawled about all over the floor here, there and yonder," pointing.

"Which crawled about, the kettles or the children, aunt?"

A din here fell upon the air and echoed through the great, fortress-like rooms. It was the huge bell for meals.

"Come, child, let's go. Uncle Zebedee will tell you all about it."

In a moment we were in the dining hall. How grand it all seemed! The sideboard was full of baked meats and steaming pies. Over it hung a flintlock gun or a blunderbuss. The room had been decorated for the occasion with creeps and boughs loaded with peaches that had been broken off by a September gale. There was a whitewashed beam across the room on which were great hooks and staples. The table was oak, and the chairs were of a curious old pattern. At the head of the table was a great chair, and in it sat Uncle Zebedee, a good old man, now nearly ninety years of age.

After the family were seated Uncle Zebedee was asked to say grace. He had a habit of saying "and" after ending a sentence, and this made another sentence necessary, often when he had nothing more to say. It was so even in his prayers and was very noticeable in his story telling. There usually followed an "and" when the story was done.

It was a queer structure, the old Minot house in Dorchester. It was



TWO ENORMOUS BRASS KETTLES MET ME EYES.

really a brick house incased in wood—a fort house it was called. It was built in this way to protect the dwellers against rude Indian assaults. There were many such houses in the old colonies, but one by one they grew gray with moss and vanished. The Minot house itself was burned about twenty years ago after standing about 220 years.

The old people of Dorchester and Newport must remember it. It rose solemn and stately at the foot of the high hills overlooking the sea meadows. The high tide came into the Dutch margins near if and went out again, leaving the abundant shellfish spouting in the sun. The fringed gullies "crow" amid the aftermath of the hayfields around it. The old-fashioned in the tall trees in summer time, and ospreys circled and screamed in the clear sky over all.

But the orchards! Here were the

fullness and perfection of the old New England orchards! The south winds of May scattered the apple blossoms like snow over the emerald turf and filled the air with fragrance. The earliest bluebirds came to them, and there the first robins built their nests. How charming and airy it all was in May, when the days were melting into summer, and how really beautiful and full of life were all of these venerable New England homes!

After the old house was burned I visited the place and brought away a few bricks as a souvenir of a home of heroic memories—of happy memories, too, if we except a single tragedy of the Indian war. The great orchards were gone, the old barns and their swallows. Only the well remained and a heap of burned bricks and the blackened outline of the cellar wall.

It was a house full of legends and stories—wonder stories that once led a stranger to look upon it with a kind of superstitious awe. It had its historic lore, and like all great colonial houses, its ghost lore, but the most thrilling legend associated with the old walls was known as "The Two Brass Kettles." The legend may have grown with time, but it was well based on historic facts and was often told at the ample firesides of three generations of Dorchester people.

The dinner, like Uncle Zebedee's prayer, seemed never to end. After the many courses of food there was an "and"—and pies and apples and nuts and all sorts of sweetmeats.

"Uncle Zebedee," I piped.

"Well, dearie."

"Aunt said that you would tell us the story of the two brass kettles after dinner."

"Why, dearie; yes, yes. I've been telling that story these eighty years, come October. Didn't you never hear it? I thought all little shavers knew about that. The two brass kettles—yes."

"They're in the old cupboard now. Bring them out, and I will tell you all about 'em. I shan't live to tell that story many more years. Maybe I shall never tell it again."

The servants brought out the two kettles into the kitchen where we could see them through the wide dining room door.

"Put 'em in the middle of the floor before the window," said Uncle Zebedee. "There, that will do. That is just where they were when the Indian came. You see the window?" he added.

It had a great, deep set casement. Grapevines half curtained it now on the outside, and the slanting sun shone through them, its beams glimmering on the old silver of the table.

It was past the middle of the afternoon of the shortening days of autumn.

"You have all heard of Philip's war," continued Uncle Zebedee, leaning forward from his chair on his crutch. "Everybody has. It destroyed thirteen towns of the old colony and for two years filled every heart with terror. Philip struck here, there and everywhere. No one could tell where he would strike next. The sight of an Indian lurking about in the woods or looking out of the pines and bushes usually meant a massacre."

"One Sunday in July, in 1675, the family went to meeting, leaving two small children, a boy and a girl, at home in the charge of a maid named Experience. The kitchen then was as you see it now. The window was open; the two brass kettles had been scoured on Saturday and placed bottom upward on the floor just as you see them there."

"It was a blazing July day. The hayfields were silent. There was an odor of hayricks in the air, and the bobolinks, I suppose, toppled about in the grass and red winged blackbirds piped among the wild wayside roses just as they do now. I wish that you could have seen the old hayfields in the long July afternoons, all scent and sunshine. It makes me long for my boyhood again just to think of them. But I shall never now again."

"Let me see. The two children were sitting on the floor near the two kettles. Experience was preparing dinner and had made a fire in the great brick oven, which heated the bricks, but did not heat the room."

"Well, on passing between the oven and the window she chanced to look toward the road, when she saw a sight that fixed her eyes and caused her to throw up her hands with horror, just like that."

Uncle Zebedee threw up both hands, like exclamation points, and let his crutch drop into his lap.

"Well, the maid only lost her wits for a few moments. She flew to the window and closed it and bolted the door. Then she put one of the children under one of the brass kettles and the other child under the other kettle and waited to see what would happen, and—"

Uncle Zebedee lifted his crutch, like an interrogation point, and we could easily imagine the attitude of the excited maid.

"And—where was I?"

"The children were under the two brass kettles, and the maid was standing with the fire shovel in her hand so," said aunt. "La, I've heard that story ever since I was a little girl."

"Yes, yes; I have it all now," said Uncle Zebedee. "She was standing with the fire shovel up so, when she discovered that the Indian had a gun—a gun."

"You see that old flintlock tuff over the sideboard? I used to fire it off every Fourth of July, but the last time I fired it kicked me over once. Don't you never fire it, children. It always kicked, but it never knocked me over before. I don't think I am quite as vigorous as I used to be, and—"

"What did the maid do with the gun?" asked aunt.

"The gun—yes, that was the gun, the one up there. The gun was up in the

chamber then, and she dropped the shovel and ran upstairs to find it. But it was not loaded, and the powder was in one place and the shot in another, and in her hurry and confusion she heard a pounding on the door, just like that."

Uncle Zebedee rapped on the old oak table with startling effect, and then, after a moment's confusion, continued: "She loaded the gun and went down to the foot of the stairs and looked through the latch hole of the stair door, so—and—yes, and the Indian was standing at the window—that window. His two eyes were staring with wonder on the two brass kettles. He had probably never seen a kettle like these before, and he did not know what they were."

"While he stood staring and wondering the kettles began to move. Two little hands protruded under the ball of each of them, like turtles' paws, for the kettles stood on their ears, which lifted them a little way from the floor. One of the children began to creep and to cry, moving the kettle. The other began to do the same. The cries caused the kettles to ring. Two creeping kettles! They looked like two big beetles or water turtles, and such the Indian might have thought them to be, but



A FEW DAYS AFTERWARD THE INDIAN'S BODY WAS FOUND.

they bellowed like two braced animals, and—did you ever hear a child cry under a kettle?" said Uncle Zebedee, with a curious smile.

We all confessed that we never had. "Then, child, you just get under one of those kettles and holler. You needn't be afraid. There ain't no Indians now to do you any harm. Holler loud!" I did so.

"Do you hear that?" said Uncle Zebedee. "You never heard such a sound as that before. Holler as a bell."

Another child was placed under one of the kettles and uttered a continuous cry. The sound rang all over the room.

"There!" said Uncle Zebedee. "Did any one ever hear anything like that? It rings all over the room, scary-like."

"Well, the children did not know about the Indian, and they began to creep toward the light of the window, moving the kettles like two enormous beetles and crying and making the kettles rumble and rumble all around, boom-oom-oom, just like that. The Indian's black eyes glowed like fire, and he raised his gun and fired at one of the kettles. But nothing came of it. The shot did not harm the children under the kettle. It frightened both of the children and made them cry the louder and louder and scream as though they were frantic. 'Ugh!' said the Indian. 'Him no good!'

"The kettles were all alive now, moving and echoing. He was more puzzled than before. What kind of creatures could these be with great brass back and living paws and full of unheard of noises like those? 'Ugh, ugh!' said he, just like that. The kettles kept moving and sounding, and the Indian grew more and more excited as he watched them. Suddenly he threw up his great arms and turned his back, and—Now it all goes from me again."

"He said 'Ugh!' and threw up his arms and turned his back," prompted aunt.

"And the maid opened the stair door and fired," continued Uncle Zebedee. "She drew quickly back and waited for the family to return. The children continued to cry. But they were safe, as they could not overturn the kettles and bullets could not reach them. The family came in an hour in great alarm. They had seen human blood in the road, but no Indian."

"A few days afterward the Indian's body was found in some hazel bushes by the brook. It was buried in the meadow there, and—"

"The Indian's grave," said aunt, prompting.

"Yes, I used to mow over it when I was a boy and—"

"That is all, Uncle Zebedee," said aunt. "You've got through now."

"Yes, I've got through now. I don't think that I shall ever tell that story again and—"

There was something pathetic and yet beautifully prophetic in the continuance. The slanting sun shone through the old window, and the chirping of birds was heard in the fields.

Uncle Zebedee never did tell the story again. The final conjunction of his long, peaceful life came soon after he told the tale to me. The violets and mosses cover him in the old Dorchester burying ground. The old house is gone; the two kettles, the gun and even the grey stone from the field that rudely marked the Indian's grave.

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