"COMMON" PLANTS IN A LOVELY GARDEN, DESIGNED AND MANAGED BY ONE WOMAN:
BY EDWARD I. FARRINGTON

ROSES and fleur-de-lis form the crowning feature of a lovely half-formal little garden developed by a woman in suburban Boston, though many other flowers and particularly the old-fashioned ones have important places. Indeed, one secluded corner is a true great-grandmother's nook filled with all the old-fashioned flowers dear to memory and tradition. There are golden-glow, dwarf sunflowers, monk's-hood, dahlias and baby's breath and many others all massed in charming confusion. Although not at all pretentious, this little garden makes an appeal to all flower lovers, mainly because it is an expression of one woman's thought and work. The foreground is given over almost entirely to the roses, which are arranged in formal beds. In the center of this garden is a pool, at one end a bird bath and at the other end a sun-dial. Flower bordered paths lead to each of these features from the center. At the rear of the rose garden a terrace has been constructed, which is banked with great masses of rhododendrons. A walk running the length of the terrace, terminating in a semi-circular seat with a little stone table beside it, is bordered with less stately though equally lovable flowers. At one end of the terrace is a pergola and an old-fashioned turnstile leading to a wild flower garden. At the other side is a long walk bordered with irises which leads to the street, where a more elaborate pergola marks the entrance.
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German iris come very early; the white varieties first and then the deep purple. From the middle of May until the second week in June these beds are a sea of wonderful color and visitors come from far and near to see them. When the whites and purples are passing the yellows, bronzes and reddish browns appear and with them come pale yellow butterflies which delight to hover over these flowers named after the Greek word, iris, meaning a rainbow. The faded blossoms are picked each morning and for a long season this iris garden is a source of unbounded delight. The irises show a great diversity of color. In some species the standards and falls are alike in color, in others they are in contrasting colors. Some standards are light blue with velvety blue falls, others rich grape purple with lower petals veined with white. Every shade of blue, lavender and purple is represented, with many variations and combinations. Among the Germanica iris is a large group with yellow standing petals and falls of purple, claret or red brown that are exceedingly beautiful in borders and also as house decorations. By using plants of German, Spanish, Japanese, English and American varieties, the blooming time can be made to cover fully two months.

Even before the iris show is over the rhododendrons are in full bloom and their gorgeous blossoms form a remarkable contrast to the iris display. The dark reds and clear whites open first and are splendid against the terrace walls. The pale lavenders and pale pinks come next, followed by the deeper pinks and the pinks speckled with brown. The rhododendrons are protected in winter by boards painted green, which are set on the north side of the plants. These in no way mar their beauty, yet afford them just the shelter desired to give them the vitality to produce their finest blossoms.

No flower makes a greater display of color than rhododendrons and azaleas, whether as a single bush, as two or three among a group of evergreens or when massed at the edge of a grove or along a driveway. They are unparalleled for color and in every way are satisfactory, for they are easy to establish, are long-lived, and their shapely leaves are evergreen. In the winter their green is a most welcome note in the white or the dull brown world.

After the rhododendrons come the roses, which bloom without ceasing until cut down by frost. Last fall the woman who has created this little garden cut twenty-seven rose blooms on Thanksgiving Day to bring into her house and make it beautiful. The roses are mostly teas and are taken up when cold weather comes. They were selected for color and include salmon pink, red, yellow, white and dark crimson, the color of the last named being deepened by the use of charcoal at the roots.
SUNDIAL marking blossoming time of flowers in the garden inspired and managed by one woman, and her Southern home.

TERRACE WALK bordered with iris and many of the dear, common flowers loved by the woman who planted this garden and by her children:

This walk terminates in a semi-circular stone seat and stone table where the children sometimes have tea and share their bread with the birds and learn of the names and ways of the flowers:

In this border are hollyhocks all pale yellow and pink, Joe Pyeweed, mulleins, bachelor buttons, pinks, heliotropes and many other garden favorites.
IRIS, RHODODENDRONS AND MANY OTHER FLOWERS form a protecting border about the rose garden with its sun-dial at one end. The roses in this corner, which are nearly all teas in shades of salmon, pink, red, yellow, white and crimson, are effectively sheltered by a background of fruit and shade trees.
BIRD-BATH IN THIS GARDEN designed and planted by a Southern woman, where bluebirds play and bathe while doing their part to make the garden beautiful.

The turnstile leads to the wild garden in which are growing flowers gathered on many a ramble in field and grove.
ONE END of the terrace showing stepping stone path leading to the children's outdoor playroom: Here the children play with their toys or have outdoor tea: They never harm the flowers, for they have helped to plant them and feel responsibility and just pride in their beauty.

WALK FROM the outer gate bordered with irises and many other familiar flowers that greet the guest or family with fragrance and color: It would seem that business cares would certainly be forgotten as one passed to the homely looking house through this beautiful avenue of color and perfume.
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The rose garden, in fact the whole garden, is filled with little feathered gardeners that sing as they vigilantly peer beneath every leaf for the destructive worms. They come in quantities because there is a bird bath and an absence of cats and dogs which would frighten them away. The children have been taught to love and to protect all feathered life, and the youngest child was delighted one day when two storm-bound birds flew into the half-open door of the glassed-in porch seeking shelter. He declared they had come to celebrate his birthday and he had reason to think so, for it was upon that important day they had sought refuge in his house. As many as a dozen bluebirds have been seen bathing in the bird bath at one time, and their coloring against the gray cement makes wonderful garden pictures. The bath is in use all through the summer months and far into the fall, when the water freezes. If the water is not changed often enough the birds stay away, but when fresh water is put into the bath they seem to know it at once and are enjoying it almost before the water carrier has reached the house again. Without birds, gardens and every part of our landscape would be devoid of much of their beauty. Birds have a place in Nature not only because of their usefulness, but for their beauty and the uplifting, exultant quality of their song.

In the beginning the pool in the middle of the garden was filled with water plants and contained turtles and frogs to give a natural effect. But the younger members of the family soon acquired a habit of falling in, clothes and all, so the motherly garden maker decided that the plants would have to go. Now the children paddle as freely in the pool as the birds splash in their bath and the water is changed often for them, too. In fact, the children as well as the birds have great freedom in this homelike garden. The children’s playhouse opens upon the terrace and the seats and stone table at one end of the terrace walk are often used by them when they have tea with their mother in the open air, and as they eat they watch their feathered friends in the garden below, share crumbs with them and learn of the flowers and growing plants which surround their garden tea room.

Looking west down the terrace path one sees a long narrow bed of old-time flowers in delicate pastel colors. At the back against the brown painted railing are hollyhocks in pale yellows and pinks, Joe Pyeweed, mulleins, bachelor buttons, pinks, heliotrope, white feverfew and many varieties of salpiglossis or painted tongue, all in soft colors. On the opposite side of the walk against the garage are sumacs, ferns and vines like ivy and clematis, which flourish in shaded spots. After the flowers have gone in the late fall the sumac and the ivy give brilliant color to the picture even after the snow flies.
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THE woman who has planted and cared for this garden loves the common plants. On the boundary wall she even allows poison ivy to grow rampant, for it is out of the way there and the children know its three-fingered leaves well, for they are quite different from those of the other ivy, which has five fingers like their own little hands. Here, too, rock ferns are to be found growing happily in moss which has been tucked into the crevasses, and even when winter snows have blanketed the garden they remain fresh and green-looking.

In the shady nook beyond the turn-stile there is a genuine surprise, for in this part of the garden, hidden from general sight, is a wild flower garden. There is a delightful bower with a wooden seat, stone ornaments and a varied collection of wild flowers gathered on many a woodland ramble and thriving now in as near their natural conditions as is possible to give them. Many ferns are there, as well as violets, willowy Solomon’s seal, graceful columbines, funny Jack-in-the-pulpit, forget-me-nots, bright marsh marigolds, spicy water-cress, lilies-of-the-valley. Last year a new fern much like the dandelion was found in the woods and given a secluded place in this home garden. Being shaded by a great Linden tree, this secluded corner makes an ideal wild spot. Much of this woman’s success with her garden lies in the fact that she has taken advantage of existing conditions and made the best of them without straining for unnatural effect.

When winter comes and it is no longer possible to work in the garden outside, window boxes all over the house are filled with little pine trees, black alder branches with their red berries, rich colored bayberries, hollys and tiny cedars. Here in the bleak winter the birds come in great numbers, seeking refuge and a free lunch. They eat the berries thankfully, but also beg for bread and suet, which are offered them from the open windows and devoured with eagerness and many a thankful song offering, while the children of the house look on. Gathering greens for the boxes seems to make the time shorter between the passing of the flowers and their return. By making notes while on summer drives, the garden maker learned the names of many plants and shrubs which are needed for winter decoration. They were well marked and gathered again when the proper time came. The glassed-in porch is adorned with evergreen trees and shrubs, with rock ferns and with autumn leaves. It is a great delight to spend an hour or so there, because it has almost a feeling of the summer woods, though beyond the glass a snow-storm may be raging. In the spring the trees are planted out against the stone wall.

Here then is a garden which is in every way a woman’s own, managed in a woman’s own way. It is charming in its simplicity and is a potent influence in the rearing of a happy family of children.