

# The Wisconsin Horticulturist.

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## A BIT OF WILD WOOD.

Written for the Wisconsin Horticulturist by B. S. Hoxie.

Yes, why not a bit of wild wood near every farm house? Is land so dear that the owner cannot afford it, or is there no aesthetic or utilitarian use for such a piece of extravagance and waste of land?

We frequently see articles favoring wind-breaks around farm buildings, but these are stiff rows of trees, one, two or three rows perhaps to break the force of our prevailing western winds. Now this is all right and I wish there were more of these wind-breaks in this western country, but around how many homes in the country do you ever see a bit of wild wood?

To one who looks on the wide expanse of prairie and field as the place to coin the dollars in corn and grain, there may perhaps be no beauty in living trees and climbing vines; and there are some even who see no beauty in flowers until a dear friend dies, and then sometimes they are the most lavish with floral offerings.

For my wild wood I do not ask for a large plat of ground, because I want it near the house. One-fourth of an acre, or even less, is better than nothing, and in planting this out I would have no set rule, but would put in every kind of tree, bush or shrub about as nature would plant them, for I have seen in Wisconsin more than twenty different varieties of trees and shrubs growing on less than one acre, besides almost an innumerable number of little plants. Collect all the varieties you can from your nearest wood lots and make the beginning with those varieties of larger growth, that need the sunlight and air, that can stand the storms and winds, and when these are established then do the other planting. The work, you will see, does not all want to be done in one year, and it is best that it should not be; get it started and

the birds will help with some of the wild fruit, such as cherries, raspberries, blackberries, etc. When this work is once commenced it is surprising how many varieties of trees, shrubs, wild plants and flowers you will discover in the course of a year or two in your travels in your own neighborhood, or county, and surely your friends in other parts of the state will be glad to contribute of what is growing in their vicinity.

We have, here in the west, a great many wild plants, flowers and shrubs and with these varieties there is an almost constant bloom from early spring-time until late in the autumn.

Many of these wild flowers are fast disappearing, why not rescue some of them in your wildwood?

Some one has said, "A home without children is only half a home," and to me a home without trees, plants and flowers would be a desolate home indeed.

I know of one man who has near his buildings a grove of three or four acres, mainly of evergreens with a few larch and other deciduous trees, which was planted out more than twenty years ago, and is now quite a forest, but no amount of money could buy it from the farm while he lives.

The late Geo. P. Peffer, of Pewaukee, Wisconsin, that man who so loved nature and liked to study her varying moods, had close to his house, or rather at one corner of the orchard, a small grove of evergreens, and I have often heard him speak of it as a home for the birds, and of one particular time when an untimely snow storm compelled thousands of them to seek shelter in its hidden recesses. Perhaps the bird mind warbled its thanks to the kind benefactor.

Can you think of any place where the small children would so delight to make their play-houses as under the shade of some tree which skirted this bit of wild wood? And as they grow older how they will study to improve the grounds by making mounds of stones and grottoes where ferns and climbing vines grow as nature would have them. And then the curious shapes which can be formed in time by some of these trees and wild vines will ever be a source of delight to the grown up boy and girl. You see this bit of wild wood grows in beauty every year, and perhaps the love of nature may be so inbred in the boy that he will save the money which some

of his friends spend for cigars, and maybe for liquor, and use it to add, to the attractions of the wild wood, a fountain supplied from the wind-mill tank. This will be a beauty spot and a pleasure resort for the entire neighborhood, and thus by this wild wood, lessons of nature, with love of home and love of country, will be taught quite as effectually as by burning fire crackers and the noise of gun powder.

The duties and realities of life may take young men and maidens from the old home but they will never forget the sacred memories, and the return visits will be the more frequent because of this "Bit of Wild Wood."

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## NOTES ON FLOWERS.

By Frederic Cranefield.

The hose and watering can are in great demand about this time of the year. The lawn is sprinkled, the flower beds are sprinkled and all is sprinkle, sprinkle! How grateful the grass and flowers would be if they could be watered just for once!

If a flower bed is thoroughly watered once a week more good will result than from a daily sprinkling that only serves to wet the surface to the depth of an inch or less, encouraging the growth of rootlets near the surface. The surface of all beds should be level.

Supply a quantity of water that would be sufficient to cover the bed to a depth of three inches. Do not be alarmed if the surface becomes muddy but keep on until the soil is wet about the roots of the plants. The surface should be broken as soon as it begins to get dry.

Many other points about the garden culture of flowers occur to me but nothing to my mind is of as much importance as this. Water thoroughly or not at all. The same is true of watering grass.

The black aphid is quite sure to be paying close attention to chrysanthemums at this season. The "filthy weed" is very effective in driving them away. Very fine tobacco dust sprin-