

THE TORRANCE HERALD HOME AND GARDEN

Garden Chatter

By LORING BIGELOW

In recent years more and more attention has been focused on grass culture throughout the country. A term "turfgrass" has been coined to mean all turf, lawns, and maintained grass areas that are regularly mowed. Last July a survey was taken in Los Angeles County in which conservative figures were furnished. Approximately 64,000 acres are devoted to turfgrass with an installation expense of over \$262,000,000 and an annual maintenance cost of \$90,000,000. Turfgrass culture here in Los Angeles County is "big business" and you, with your lawn, are a part of it.

It was my good fortune to attend a turfgrass field day recently. The program was planned by the University of California Agricultural Extension Service of Los Angeles County and the Turfgrass Research Advisory Committee. This meeting was arranged to pass on the latest information on turfgrass culture, the observation of several interesting turf plots, and the exchange of ideas by top men in this field.

Few people realize that UCLA has been spending much time, money, and effort in testing various types of turf for our local conditions. These test plots are located on Veterans Ave., just South of Sunset Blvd., and East of Sepulveda in West Los Angeles.

In addition to studies of various types of turf and combinations of grasses, tests are being made on proper soil preparation, compaction, diseases, and control, fumigation studies, and feeding procedures. Also of major importance are

the studies being made on irrigation of turf.

Of general interest to the homeowner and his lawn, is the result of the compaction study made upon existing plots by the use of sand. Best results are obtained when the existing turf can be cultivated and otherwise amended so that infiltration rates are high, and then gradually adding a cushion of sand which contains less than 10 per cent organic matter by volume. It was shown that compaction of the soil underneath the sand was not likely to occur since pressures applied to the surface will be dissipated as shear stresses in the sand.

In regards to plant disease control these test plots have proven that a low nitrogen level favors the development of dollar spot disease, and that there are several good fungicides which are very effective in the control of most turf diseases. Your nursery and garden supply dealer can supply them, and give you full instructions as to their use. These diseases are most noticeable from early summer to fall in certain grass varieties.

Approximately 19 different types of Bermuda grass are now being tested in combinations. These Bermudas are being introduced from all over the world, and are most satisfactory when used in combination with bent grasses. One of the most striking combinations being a type of Bermuda, U-3, and Congressional bent kept cut real close. The University feels that if a type of Bermuda can be found which retains its color good during the winter months, that its marketing possibilities in Southern California will be tremendous.

Several varieties of grasses which have been introduced to us during the past few years are not holding up under these tests, and the University has been quite surprised. Among these are Merion bluegrass, which tends to get a rust that is hard to combat; red and showings fescue, which are short lived; alta fescue, rather coarse blade; Zoysias, too slow and off color in the winter.

Don't be discouraged with your grass plot, for under normal conditions if you feed it often, and give the grass ample moisture plus proper pest control, you will be rewarded with fall into the average homeowner's bracket. Whenever you think of your lawn problems, imagine the troubles a greensman has on a country club, or the men who try to keep the lawns in a park going!

Plaster Does Insulating Job on Home

The problem of providing necessary ventilation for the home during the cold weather without uncomfortably reducing the temperature throughout the entire house is simplified in homes built of lath and plaster, according to findings by the Southern California Plastering Institute.

The Institute points out that walls sealed with a coat of plaster resist the penetration of air and hermetically seal off the separate sections of a house against changes of temperature. A comparison with other wall surfacing materials shows the air resistant properties of plaster makes it one of the most effective practical insulating materials against heat or cold and dampness, the Institute discloses.

Winter Rains Demand Care For Flooring

Fall and winter damp weather brings a greater need for regular care to protect the beauty of hardwood floors, especially in entrance halls and living room doorways, the Hardwood Flooring Council of Southern California reveals. The Council suggests daily quick sweeping with an untreated dust mop to remove any loose dust or dirt tracked into the house which might be ground into the waxed surface of the floor. Hardwood floors in the immediate area of outside entrances should be swept more frequently since their beauty plays a strong part in the first impression gained by visitors.

Privacy Can Be Attained Through Planned Use of Hedges, Screens

In planning and planting your California garden you can achieve the effect of neatness and line in design as well as privacy with the use of certain plants for hedges and screens. Outstanding for these two roles, according to the California Association of Nurserymen, are the shrubs boxwood, privet, eugenia, holly, pittosporum, and viburnum.

The boxwood (buxus) is grown in a great many countries in the world and its habit of growth differs greatly in each country. Boxwood can be used as a hedge to edge walks, grown in tubs and containers for indoor situations such as foyers and lobbies and for terraces, or allowed to ramble naturally along the base of stone walls. A moist, light soil is demanded by the boxwood with, of course, regular watering and occasional feeding, such as a top dressing of manure, sulphur or commercial fertilizer.

The kinds of the boxwood most often grown in the West are the Japanese (b. microphylla japonica), English (b. sempervirens) and the Korean (b. harlandii).

Good For Screens
One of the best uses for two types of the privet (ligustrum) shrub is the informal high screen. The Japanese (L. japonicum) and the glossy (L. lucidum) are two privet varieties often confused with each other. They grow to 12 and 25 feet, respectively, however, the Japanese may be clipped to a height of 5 feet as a formal hedge. The Japanese features leaves that are, strangely enough, glossier than the glossy with bigger and denser flower clusters. Other privets make fine hedges; all members of this family are not particular as to soil, heat or wind and will respond quickly to fertilizer and water.

As a tall screen or narrow clipped hedge the Australian bush cherry (eugenia paniculata australis) serves very well. Its foliage is glossy green and rather bushy with small, edible rose-purple fruits. A dwarf form, the variety Armstrong, grows compact and dense and makes a good informal hedge. Eugenia needs good drainage so that the necessary frequent watering does not cause waterlogging. Plant in full sun or partial shade. Eugenia will probably not do too well where temperatures fall below 22 or 24 degrees.

Holly Suited Here
Hollies make fine shrubs and screens in a garden and yard, too. The Chinese holly (ilex cornuta) reaches 10 feet, with slightly spiny leaves and big scarlet berries at Christmas time. The burford variety of

the Chinese also reaches the same height and is especially suited for Southern California climate situations. Give the hollies a rich, slightly acid soil, well-drained—in either sun or shade. However, you'll find that the growth of these shrubs is more compact and the berry crop heavier if the shrub is in the sun.

Excellent high, dense screens are formed by the pittosporums in their growth. Especially good for this use is the Queensland (P. rhombifolium) which reaches 20 to 40 feet with large yellow berries and a small white flowers amidst dark green, glossy leaves. The Japanese pittosporum (P. tobira) grows to 15 feet; its foliage is leathery green and interspersed with white flowers of orange-blossom fragrance and brownish fruit.

Has Many Species
There are more than 20 species and varieties of the viburnum available to Western gardeners. The variety viburnum tinus has coarse, rough foliage that will not mildew and the shrub itself does not require special care. Another good viburnum choice is the laurestinus (V. tinus). It reaches 10 feet, bearing dark green, glossy leaves, white or pinkish flowers and black or deep blue berries.

These families of shrubs—and a great many more—will serve the dual purpose of hedge and screen in your garden. As you make your selection at your nurseryman's get his ideas for such planting effects.

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