

The Flower Garden

*By Elsa Rehmann**

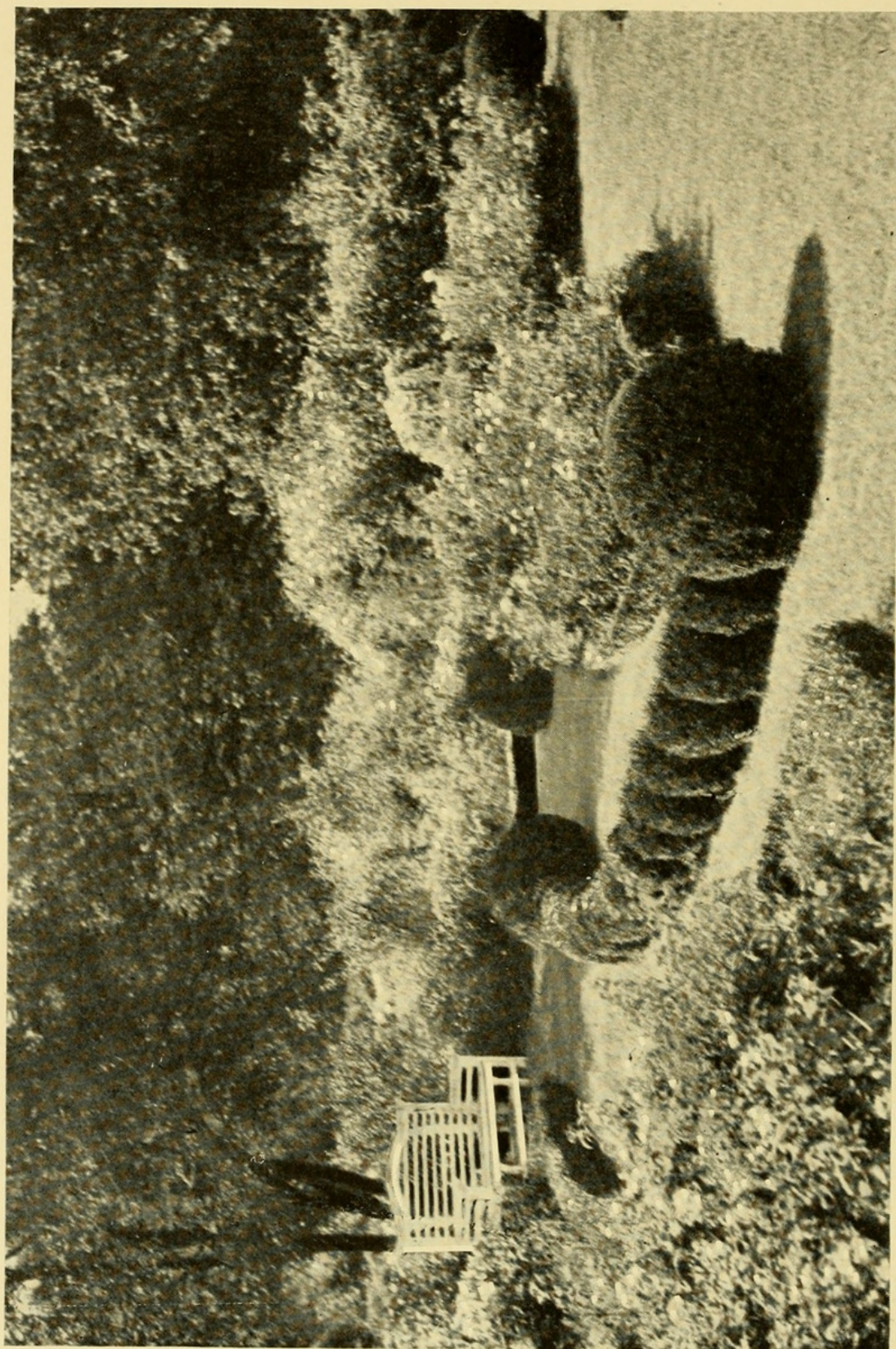


FLOWER garden is transitory, evanescent. Its moods are varying with the sunlight and the shadows. The changing seasons bring forth always something different with its cycle of flowers. They are like a pageant of fairies, intertwining their beautiful forms on edge of pool and lawn, of stream and pavement, along wall and lattice, interweaving their colors in harmonious rhythms.

The lure of the garden depends not only on its flowers; architectural details, enclosure, design, all have important parts to play. It is not in their separate parts but in their interrelated action toward garden effectiveness that their complete worth lies in the art of garden making.

In the arrangement of flowers the design has an important part. Take a big formal design, it demands broad treatment in its flower arrangement, the flowers are planted in big masses which will display the bigness of the design. In one summer garden, I know, Shasta Daisies were used in big solid masses all around its oblong shape. There were many other flowers in the borders but the other colors formed but a background for the white of the Daisies which emphasized the design. Take on the other hand a design made up of several parts, one will be the main garden where the succession of bloom is carefully carried through the seasons while the lesser parts of the design can be reserved for special effects, seasonal events, unusual color notes. Such a garden I saw one June near Philadelphia. The main garden was full of Columbine, *Iris* and Lupines, mainly white and blue with touches of cream and

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WHITE GARDEN EDGED WITH
BOX, GARDEN OF
MRS. FREDERICK FRELINGHUYSEN
ELBERON, NEW JERSEY

pink. It was backed up by shrubbery and trees which hid two side paths. In one Oriental Poppies were blooming, the other was an evergreen path mostly conifers but at the farther end a lavender Rhododendron formed a wonderful background for a flame colored Azalea.

Take a straight path, for instance. The planting must be so distributed that the entire length of the borders appear in bloom all the time, the entire border must be one harmony of color. Take on the other hand a curving path that meanders first wide, then narrow between flower borders. The charm of the curving path is the surprises ahead for only short sections are seen at any one time. So the plants may vary in height, low and matlike in one part, tall and erect in the next; startling in color in one part, subdued and mild in the next; one part may be in full bloom, the next may depend on the green and gray green of foliage for its interest.

In formal gardens, if the inner beds are low, it will enlarge the garden and bring it into full view; if the inner beds are high it will dwarf the garden (which may be just what you want) and make the side paths more secluded and more intimate. If the design is circular, the circular effect may be emphasized by planting the flowers in irregular concentric circles.

The enclosure plays an important part in garden composition. Wall and lattice form the fine architectural background for vines. Our gardens would be but poor without the Roses and *Clematis*, *Wistaria* and Grape vines, Virginia Creeper and *Actinidia*, Honeysuckle and *Jasminum*, Bittersweet and Trumpet vine, which interplanted make an interwoven pattern of leaf and blossom as a background for the flowers.

Vine covered walls and hedges only define the outlines of a garden, high shrubbery and trees are needed as well to enclose it. Such enclosures give the garden its needed privacy, give it interesting skylines and exclude all outside objects which might divert attention from it.

In naturalistic gardens shrubbery and trees form the only background, for the flowers are closely related to them.

They often complement the flowers in carrying out special color notes. The examples of *Forsythia* with daffodils and lilacs with purple *Iris* are familiar. I saw one of the white Bridlewreaths in back of lemon and cream *Iris pumila*, the dwarf *Iris*, in a lovely delicate combination of yellow and white for May and again the lilac Butterfly Flower with lavender and purple Phlox made a charming rhythm early in September.

Crocuses in long slender drifts in front of early Cherries, Poet's Narcissus in front of *Amelanchier* with its delicate white flower clusters, deep yellow Daffodils in front of white Magnolias, soft rose tulips in front of the Crabapple, *Pyrus floribunda*, whose pendant branches hang heavy with rose flowers, each is a masterpiece of flower and tree in spring loveliness.

Perennials are the permanent plants in the borders, they make up the major part of the garden, they play the heavy parts in the garden drama. Can you imagine a garden without its *Iris* and Columbine, its Peony and Larkspur, its Hollyhock and *Phlox*?

It is the perennial which gives the garden its stable and constant flower arrangement. It is the annual which is the experimental element in the garden. It is the annual which devises new color effects in minor details, that gives the garden new interests without disturbing its old perennial vigor. Creamy yellow Snapdragons will soften the deep purple of *Veronica*, steel blue *Salvia* will be wonderful against dark red Dahlias, French Marigolds with Chrysanthemums of the same bronzy tone is a real wonder touch for October. Annuals, too, successfully supercede with late bloom the spring bulb garden. Twice I have seen Zinnias used in this way with great effect, once in a large naturalistic garden where the colors were used in masses, first yellow, then orange, then deep red, another time mixed seeds were scattered through a small dooryard border in a particolored pattern.

Bulbs are especially valuable for spring effects. Bulbs like Crocuses, Grape Hyacinths and Daffodils are most valuable for naturalizing and much more naturalizing could be done

with very little effort even in small places. Hyacinths, early and late Tulips, Fritallarias, Camassias and *Eremurus* are better in the garden where they will receive attention. *Fritallaria* is an old garden favorite and its red variety, the Crown Imperial, looks very well with a deep red early Tulip. *Eremurus* I saw for the first time in a great naturalistic garden where the dark green of trees brought out the effectiveness of their great spikes. They are out of scale in a small garden. Of all the bulbs the late Tulips, the Darwin and Cottage types are the most marvellous to me. They brought me a new appreciation of color values, color range, color delicacy. Is there anything more exquisite than the soft buff and golden bronze of Clio or the heliotrope of Dream or the purple of Jubilee?

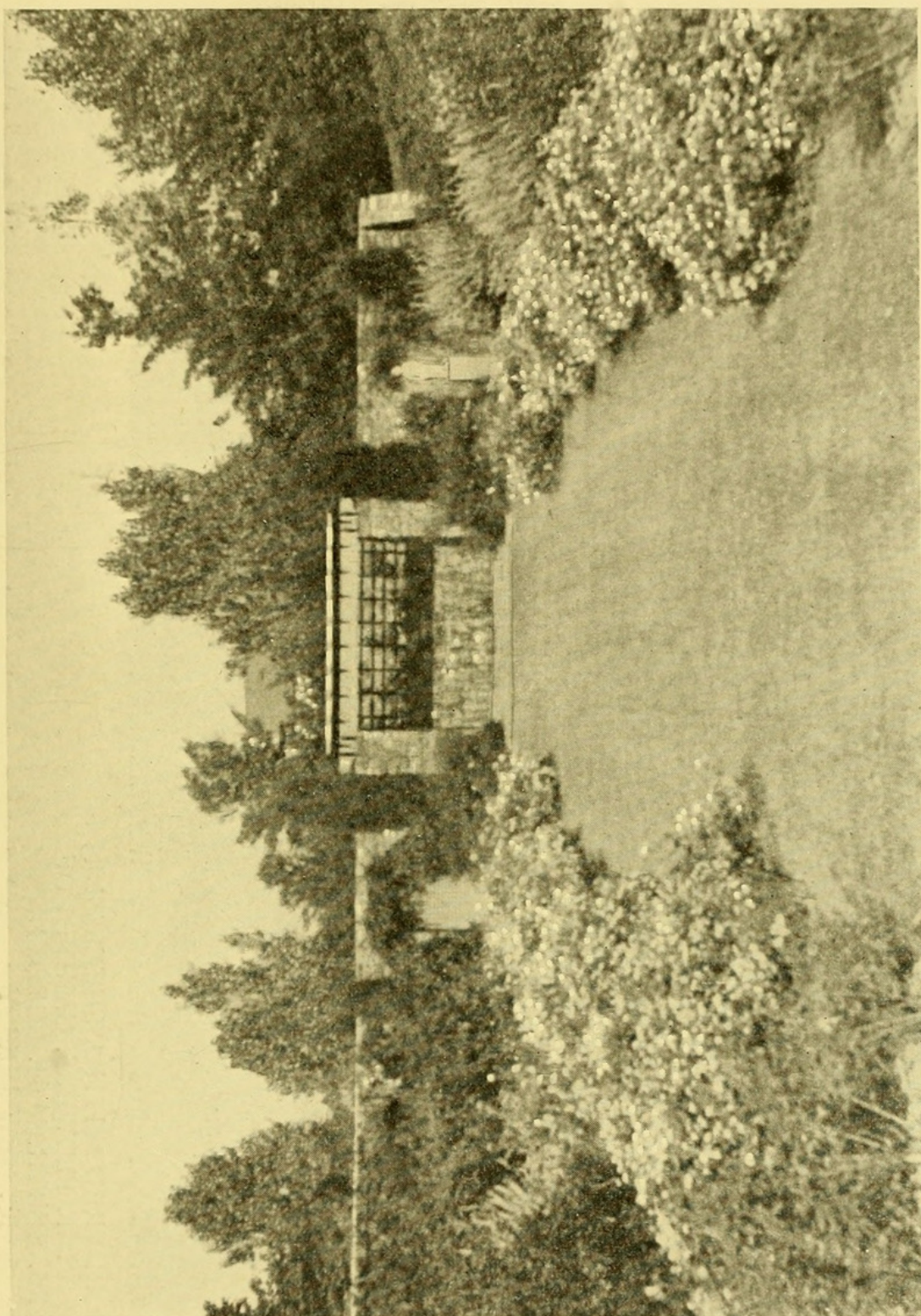
Bedders have been so much abused in gardens and especially in the older type of public park that I might advise being on the safe side and not using them at all. The haebaceous border has fortunately superceded the bedding plants. Most gardens do very nicely without them. There are places, however, when a uniformity of effect or color is desired where bedding plants have a legitimate place but in such places it must be the bedder brought up to date and skillfully used. I have seen Tulips, Canterbury Bells, Heliotrope and Chrysanthemums used as successive bedders in the central beds of a big formal design. Near Philadelphia I saw Cinerarias used as bedders in June. Polyantha Roses, the dwarf baby ramblers, make very good bedders and come in very good soft shades. Single colors can be used, but far more interesting are the beds where several shades are combined. In the newer bedding methods, the plants are not laid out with rule and measure, in stiff rows but are scattered irregularly through the borders.

Potted plants are very useful in the garden. They can be plunged into the ground to heighten the color effectiveness of special parts of the border much in the way annuals are used. Miss Jekyll uses blue Hydrangeas in this way in her blue and gray border and she uses pink Hydrangeas with pink and white

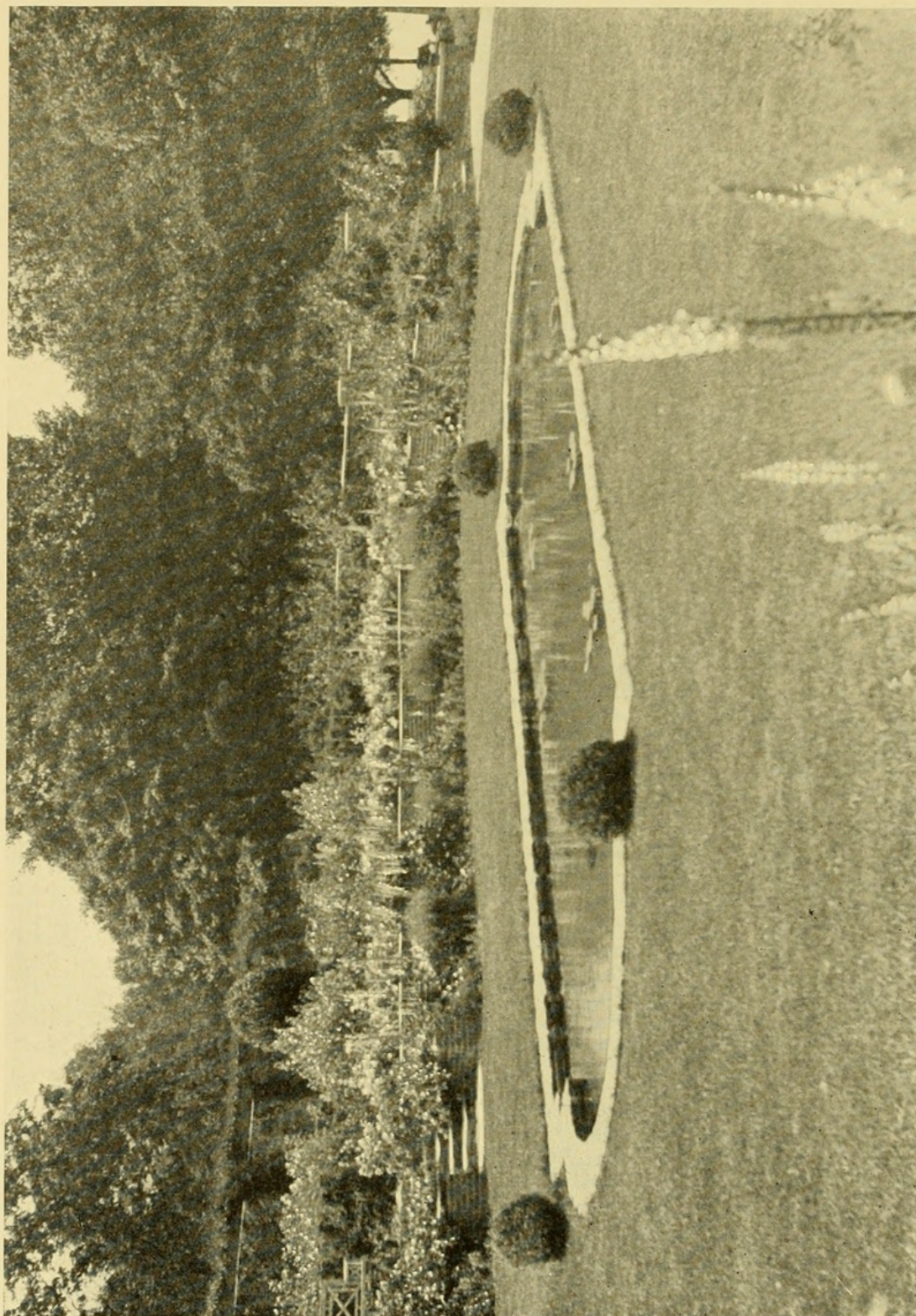
Snapdragons, white Dahlias and white Asters. I have seen in old-fashioned gardens, pots of Sweet Verbena and Rose Geranium plunged into the ground amid other plants for a bit of fragrance. Then, potted plants can be used in the way the Italians love to use them, either in rows along terrace walls, on steps and in courtyards or as important parts in the garden design. They will emphasize the design, make telling accents and their vases and pottery have a way of making the garden habitable as they do a room.

I have an aversion for standard Roses and Heliotrope or other standards which depend on a white stake for support. Whenever I have a dislike for a certain plant I always begin to look for an appropriate place for it because from experience I find that it is really not an aversion for the plant itself but for the improper use to which it is put. I am quite certain that standard Roses and Heliotrope have their appropriate place for very formal stiff effects in very small ultra formal designs or perhaps in the happy tangle of an old fashioned garden.

Roses must be mentioned among garden flowers. Hybrid Perpetuals and Hybrid Teas are best when they have special gardens or at least special beds. Small rose gardens often make delightful little introductions to larger herbaceous gardens. Polyantha Roses I have mentioned as bedders, they make excellent edgings for rose beds and can be often used to good advantage as a long blooming element in a small flower border. Rose climbers come in such wonderful shades now; there will be more and more wonderful effects when they are combined with flowers. Carmine Pillar roses with blue Anchusas, pink ramblers with white Foxgloves are but two familiar examples. And think of all the lovely yellow ones we are now getting, Gardenia, Gold Finch and Shower of Gold. Then there are the Bush Roses to make charming effects with flowers, white Madam Pantier with larkspurs, Persian yellow rose with tall lilac blue *Iris pallida dalmatica*, Harrison's Yellow Rose with the Yellow Day Lily, even the old Dog rose is charming tumbling amid mixed Sweet William.



A GARDEN OF ANNUALS
MRS. CHARLES M. CHAPIN
BERNARDSVILLE, NEW JERSEY



BORDERED WITH A SUCCESSION
OF PINK FLOWERS, GARDEN OF
MRS. BERTRAM H. BORDEN
OCEANIC, NEW JERSEY

Trees and shrubs enter the garden not only as backgrounds but often they are used as accents. Cedars and Arbor Vitae make columnar effects, Dogwoods spread their horizontal branches over seats, standard Wistaria and Lilacs have their place in accentuating the design and sometimes, but rarely, even such oddities as Weeping Cherries are appropriate for special effects in small gardens. Of course Box bushes must not be omitted. They are the finest of specimens. I like best the unclipped bushes. A near rival to it, but lacking its fragrance, is the Japanese Holly, *Ilex crenata*.

The effect of bloom in the garden depends on the way in which the flowers are planted. To plant in straight rows, in solid regular blocks gives the garden a stiffness, a regularity which defies all nature's graceful laws. Irregular clumps and longish drifts blend the flower groups together and weave one color into another. These drifts are like the flying streamers of a dancer, sometimes long, sometimes shorter, sometimes alone, sometimes intermingled with streamers of other colors and shades. Two or three kinds of flowers will be often intermingled as if you had mixed them in a bag and let them spill on the ground irregularly. We do this literally with bulbs. Handful after handful, hundreds upon hundreds, are thrown on the ground as a sower scatters grass seed on a still day and planted where they fall unless they are out of bounds. Hollyhocks, Dahlias, Heleniums and the larger plants are planted in irregular groups of three or five, sometimes seven in a group, while *Iris*, *Phlox*, larkspur, lend themselves to planting in drifts. There are plants like Columbines and *Gladiolus* which can be scattered through the border in quantity in a way the English call "dribbling in the plants," other plants like *Gypsophila* are best planted singly at intervals through the border, others like Yuccas and the Plume Poppy, *Bocconia cordata*, that are best singly or in groups of three on either side of path, or steps, or gateway.

As the flowers depend much upon the design so the distribution of bloom depends also upon the design. Either the whole garden must seem in bloom all the time, which demands a

distribution of flowers in such a way that every section of the garden has something blooming or certain related parts of the design must be emphasized by the bloom. In June, one year, I visited a garden I had planted and while I have clear recollection of various bloom, of Lupines, Spiraeas, *Nepeta* and masses of pink Oriental Poppies in the outer borders, yet the interest of the garden was concentrated on the central beds with the uniform but irregular planting of white *Clematis recta* wreathing its pendant flower laden stems between erect spikes of delicate blue *Anchusa*. Later in July the Larkspurs are blooming through the outer borders of the garden in a rhythmic sequence of white to deepest purple. The inner borders are then showing masses of Madonna Lilies as a foreground.

It is these big effects which carry out the design and unify it. Sometimes such major effects may be all that is wanted in a garden. I know one, a terrace garden, where orange Azaleas bloom in May, pink Peonies in June, Madonna Lilies in July, pink and white *Lilium speciosum* in August and deep blue Asters in the fall. These monthly effects carry out a succession of bloom, they vary in color and flower habit but the uniformity of each effect gives the borders a bigness, a breadth of feeling which carries out in a wonderful way the architect's idea for the terrace.

In a smaller way the planter who reserves Oriental Poppies for a big showing all by themselves for a secluded path has a similar feeling for big harmonious effects. Nature does the same when she reserves the delicate spikes of Snake-root for July bloom and plants them quite alone in big masses in front of the gray ledges in mountainous woods.

However, it requires a nice feeling to work out with these major effects a series of minor ones. For such minor effects there can be many different flowers used in many small clumps. It is these supplementary plants which enliven many a garden with interesting color contrasts and color harmonies. Take, for instance, a mass of yellow and purple Darwin tulips. They will make a charming color harmony, but fringe them with a few plants of Golden Tuft, and lilac creeping *Phlox* and in

duplicating the colors you have added a hundred fold to its interest. In the same way, a mass of deep red Zinnias will carry along the effect of deep red Chrysanthemum in a wonderful way. Pink *Phlox* is well enough in its way but mix with it a few pink *Lilium speciosum* and some pink Snapdragons or pink *Gladiolus* and you have achieved a marvel of color. On the other hand, combine larkspurs and Shasta Daisies and you have a familiar contrast of deep blue and strong white but add to these a fringe of *Heuchera sanguinea* with their delicate bells of coral and the effect immediately becomes soft and enchanting. Or take the flaring orange of Tritomas, the Red Hot Poker plant, it is a disturbing element in many a garden but really quite wonderful with lilac *Clematis* and white Asters.

This striving for effects for each month or season resolves itself into a sequence of effects in which the flowers of one effect merge into and overlap the flowers of another, until they are woven into a wonderfully wrought succession of bloom from the time the Snowdrops and Crocuses break apart the winter-hardened sod until the chrysanthemums fade amid the autumn glow in November. To attain the proper balance between the flowers of the various seasons is the difficult part of the succession of bloom.

The difficulty of keeping the garden always blooming is sometimes effaced by emphasizing the bloom of one season at the expense of another. This will not spoil a garden, it will add to it by varying the effect. Sometimes the garden will be in abundant bloom, sometimes a milder interest will be carried along by intermittent bloom here and there. In this relation it must not be overlooked that many plants like Iris, Paeonies and Chrysanthemums have effective foliage which makes them interesting when they are not in bloom. Foliage varies, too, in color, the wooly gray of Snow-in-summer, the glaucous gray of Sedums, the grayish tone of pinks, the blue of the spiny stems of Globe Thistle are interesting at all times.

The difficulty of keeping the garden always blooming is sometimes effaced by the happy opportunity to omit the bloom

entirely for certain months. I know a town garden for a family who close the house in June and do not open it again until September. There are a series of effects in the autumn with Japanese Anemones, Asters and Chrysanthemums, in the winter small evergreen shrubs give the garden winter interest, and in the spring Crocuses, Daffodils and Fritillarias lead up to a May climax in Darwin Tulips. This garden suggested to me a host of possibilities for spring and fall gardens for those who go to resorts and country homes in summer. For summer homes this order can be reversed and a garden with only two months of bloom to care for will be lavish with flowers.

In large places these seasonal effects can be divided into several gardens. One may be for very early bulbs, another for late Tulips and spring flowering ground covers, another for *Iris* and Lupines, a fourth for July and August bloom, still another for Asters.

Special colors may be reserved for separate parts of the garden area, white flowers along cool shady paths, red flowers against evergreens, orange flowers in sheltered nooks. This idea can be developed into special color gardens. One may be all white, white Crocuses, white Hyacinths, the white Tulip *La Candeur*, white *Iris*, white *Thalictrum*, white *Phlox*, white Asters, white Snapdragons that will carry along a full succession. It must be remembered in using white flowers that the effect is not pure white for the foliage of the flowers, the enclosing hedges and trees, the Box edgings for grass paths will make the garden green and white. Pinks borders are full of possibilities for pink has a wonderful range of shades. Yellow, too, has a wide range of tones from the faintest cream to rich golden yellow, bronze and orange. One of the most exquisite gardens I have seen was limited to orange flowers. The border was in front of a gray green house and solidly backed up by cedars. In May it was aglow with scarlet orange Tulips, in June with Oriental Poppies, in July with orange Butterfly Weed, in August with Tiger Lilies and Orange Tritomas that last well into the fall. All these plants are difficult to plant in the mixed border but their very brilliance made them a marvel-

lous choice for flower succession. Especially fine was it, one July, when for a brief period Butterfly Weed, Lilies and Tritomas were all out together.

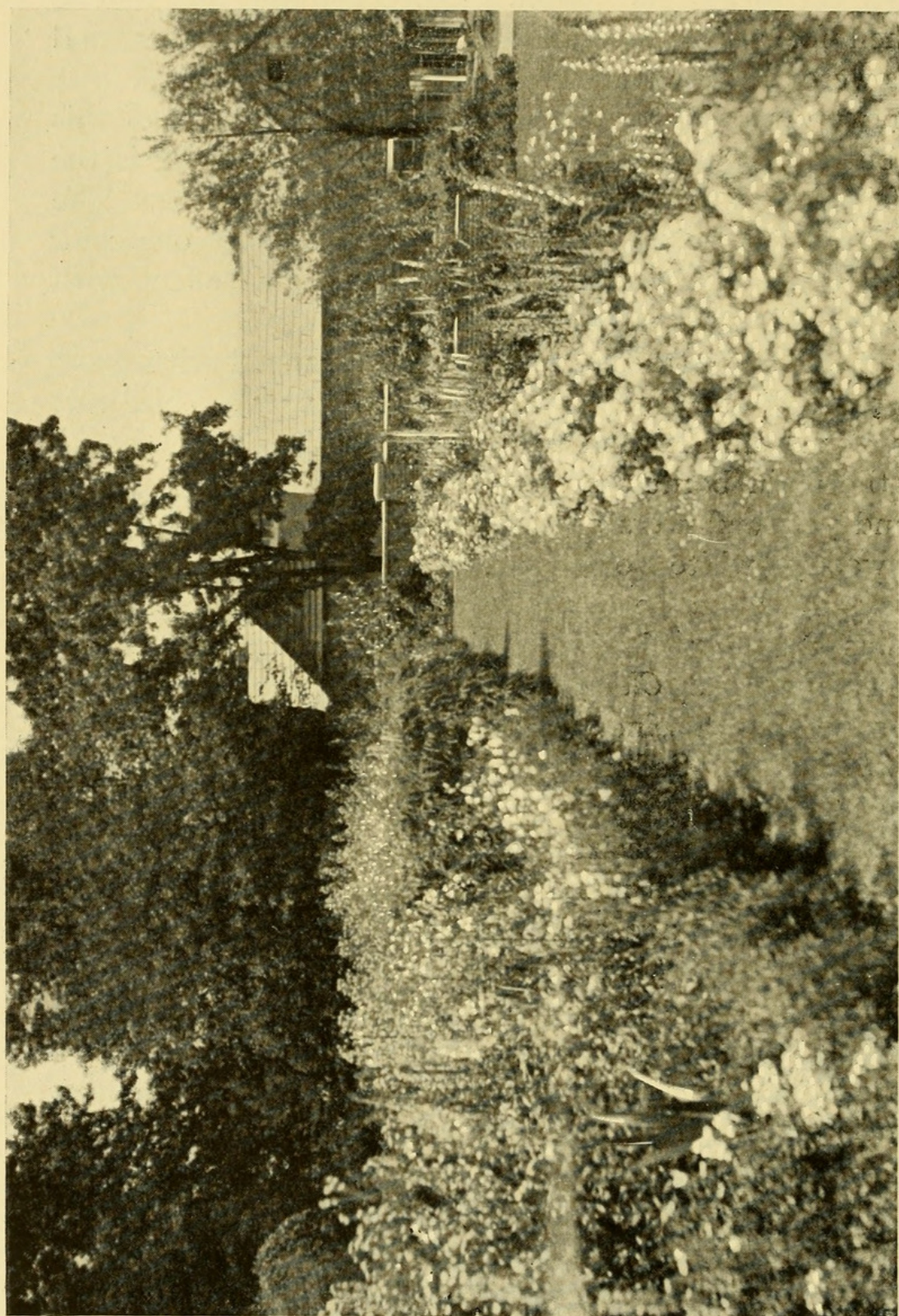
Keeping to this one striking color was the making of this garden, but a rigid adherence to this rule of one color is the pitfall of beginners who are interested in color gardens. The one color garden generally means a predominance of one color which will carry out a uniform and harmonious effect with bits of other colors to enhance its effect.

A series of color gardens can often be arranged with great effect as parts of one big design. In one I know a white garden acts as an introduction to a garden of bright color. In another the main borders are pink, while in one side garden purple and yellow flowers are blooming around a pool and in another woodsy white flowers are planted amid ferns under tall trees. In the same way the shady front of a summer cottage has a border of white Lilies, Maidenhair ferns, Japanese Anemones and *Clematis* while just around the corner under a sunny south window group there is a pink border of Peonies, *Phlox* and Sedums with Hollyhocks peeping in at the windows.

Color will often emphasize the design of the garden. Delicate blue and white will make a charming centre for a garden of strong yellows, orange and reds and a pink centre will be lovely for a garden of blue, yellow and white.

Most interesting are the color sequences carried out in the same garden. Each color is used in distinct masses and then partly interplanted with the next so that each color will melt into its neighbor until they are blended and wrought into a subtle harmony.

This may be easiest explained by the use of one kind of flower. I worked out such a sequence in Irises. The garden was roughly horse shoe in shape. At the entrance the rose pink of "Her Majesty" and the rose lilac of "Queen of May" began the color sequence. Next came the clear white of "Innocence," then the white "Delicatissima" and "Madam Chereau" which is white with frills of delicate blue, then came



INTERPLANTING OF PINK FLOWERS
IN NARROW BORDER, GARDEN OF
MRS. BERTRAM H. BORDEN
OCEANIC, NEW JERSEY

the lavender blue *pallida dalmatica*, then the purple of Othello and Purple King, next a yellow one with lilac frills, then creamy *flavescens* and the clear yellow *aurea* then the coppery crimson and maroon of the exquisite *Jacquiniana*. For such a sequence to be successful the different kinds must be used in sufficient quantity to be telling, twenty to thirty of a kind. For a small garden it is better to use either one telling and interesting variety by itself or several that will harmonize.

For color sequences each color section must provide that color for each season. Take a sequence of pink, white, blue, orange, yellow, and purple. In May, pink ground *Phlox*, Bleeding Heart, white *Iberis* and *Arabis*, Forget-me-nots, Blue Flax and the lovely blue *Polemonium reptans*, Golden Tuft and yellow *Doronicums*, lilac *Phlox* and purple Rock Cress will carry out the sequence, while in September pink and white *Lilium speciosum*, steel blue autumn *Salvias*, orange and yellow Marigolds, and purple Asters will carry along the same color sequence.

It is when one color merges into another that the wonderful effects are often attained of which each garden is so proud. In March the delicate purple *Iris reticulata* is blooming with white crocuses, in May *Iris pumila* is flowering with the yellow Daffodil Emperor; later pink Tulips stand before the early florentine Iris, in June white Lupines, golden yellow Iris and purple *Nepeta* are out together, in July Japanese *Iris* form a background for Water Lilies, in September autumn Crocuses form ground covers for shell pink Anemones and white Anemones are planted with pinkish Asters, in October the lavender flowers of *Cobaea scandens* are wreathed in the changing colors of the grape vine. In such rhythmic harmonies and subtle contrasts is the master hand distinguished in flower arrangement.



POOL KEPT GREEN AND WHITE
UNDER SHADE OF TALL TREES.
MRS. M. W. DODGE
MT. KISCO, NEW YORK



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