

HOME & GARDEN

Winter landscape plan can add splendor

By PAT LEUCHTMAN
Recorder Columnist

It's winter and for the first time in a couple of years we have snow cover. Last night another 6 inches of the heavenly white stuff dropped on us from the skies.

It can make the traveling difficult, but it is welcome all the same. We need the snow because of the drought and for the protection it offers many crops during the severe winter.

At our house most of the snow gazing takes place at the kitchen-dining table, which sits in front of a big south window. We sit in the quiet of early morning over that first cup of coffee and watch the indigo night give way to the first pale light of the winter dawn. On winter weekends we sit and watch the noon-

BETWEEN THE ROWS

day brilliance of our spangled fields while we stoke up with a hearty borscht or barley soup. At tea time we watch the shadows of the barn and apple tree lengthen until evening engulfs our hillside.

People are used to planning the summer garden for effect, but it is also possible to plan a winter view.

Consider the exposure of your winter garden. Is it sunny or shady, windy or sheltered? What functions will the plantings have

to perform? A hedge designed to hide a basement bulkhead or trash can storage should be evergreen so that it can do its job all year round.

There are countless trees and shrubs that would enhance a winter landscape, but I will mention just a few.

Four deciduous trees that have a heavier growth and make a dramatic silhouette against snow or sky are the pin oak, the sugar maple, the American linden and the white birch. They are all hardy in our area.

The pin oak grows slowly, but will reach a height of 75 feet and has a regular pyramidal shape.

The sugar maple is most noted for its flaming foliage in the fall, but in the winter the orderly branches with light gray bark is very handsome.

The American linden is another tall tree and it is vase-shaped with a rounded top which makes it unusual. In the summer its greenish flowers are a great favorite with the bees.

There are isolated white birches in our pasture and the white bark is brilliant in the winter light or encased in ice as it has been so often this year. Many people prefer to plant white birches in clumps of two or three. This

The density and bulk of evergreens makes a contrast to the bare deciduous trees. Three pine trees are handsome additions to the winter landscape. The Swiss stone pine is very hardy. It grows slowly and has a narrow pyramidal shape with a slightly rounded top. Its needles are long and soft like the white pine.

The Korean pine is similar, but forms a slightly wider pyramid. It is especially good to grow because its large edible seeds are appreciated by birds and animals.

Often the Austrian pine is grown as a Christmas tree as it has that ideal shape. It has dense foliage, with long, stiff, dark green needles. It is very easy to grow.

Two shrubs make interesting accents and conversation pieces in the yard.

Siberian dogwood is notable for its color. Its deep red stems are striking to the winter snow or against a planting of evergreens. They ultimately reach a height of 6 or 7 feet and have a simple, upright growth habit.

The dark, fantastically turned and twisted branches of Harry Lauder's walking stick are sure to provoke comment. This member of the hazel family grows slowly but will also reach a height of about 7 feet and is as carefree as you could ask any shrub to be.

The winter garden is naturally simpler in design, but it can be just as pleasing to the eye as the summer garden. There is a subtle beauty in the play of light and shadow, and the contrast between the delicate tracery of bare trees and the density of evergreens. Don't write the winter garden off just because it lacks leaf and bloom.



Recorder Photo by Chuck Blake

LILAC BUSH loaded with new snow on an early morning is a common winter scene visible from many Franklin County homes.