

Suggestions for Beautifying School Grounds

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In selecting a site for a schoolhouse, care should be taken to secure a plot with a gentle slope, containing rich, black loam soil that can be plowed readily. But if the building is already constructed on a site containing poor soil, it should be well manured before beginning to beautify the grounds.

Grading and Surfacing

As soon as the building is completed the surface must be cleared of all building debris, rubbish, rocks, or other materials which would interfere with plowing. Grade the top by plowing and scraping off any high bumps and filling in low places so as to leave the surface of a gentle, harmonious appearance. Carefully measure and stake off the walks leading from the public road to the building, from the school to the privies and the well, etc. Plow all the area which is to be planted to grass, shrubs, trees, and vines.

Principles in Laying Out Roads and Walks

Very short walks should usually be straight. Longer ones should have gentle, graceful curves. Make walks wide enough so that two persons can comfortably walk side by side on them. Driveways should be wide enough so that two vehicles can pass if necessary. Definite edgings should be made for walks and driveways. These may be of rocks, bricks, or concrete curbs. Place the walks and roads where they will be most convenient and usable. Make the surfaces of the most durable materials available, considering economy and funds; cinders, broken stone, gravel, sand-clay, brick, or concrete.

Starting Lawns

Grass should be started on all areas not to be used for agricultural purposes or particular parts of playgrounds where it would be objectionable. Tennis courts and basketball courts should be left free from sod. Grade the edgings near roads and walks to blend harmoniously with the grades of said roads and walks. Hand rake the surface and clear away any litter left by the plowing. Any steep slope or terrace should be sodded with blue grass sod or Bermuda grass sod, carefully placed, tamped, and pegged. If such sod is not too expensive, it may be used on much of the surfaces; but usually seeding is satisfactory and economical. Seed at the rate of about one pound of good grass seed per square rod. The grass mixture for most Southern States should include perennial rye grass. The mixture should consist of three pounds of perennial rye grass, one pound of Kentucky blue grass, one-half pound of white clover, and one-half pound of lespedeza. Mix the seeds together before sowing. Rake the grass seed in with a hand rake as soon as it is sown. Never cover it very deep. When the grass is up six inches or so, mow it with a hand blade and after the finer grasses have established themselves use the lawn mower frequently to prevent seeding. Spread top dressing of well-rotted manure on lawns every winter, and let that remain until early spring.

Planting of Shrubs

Shrubbery of a number of kinds should be chosen for planting at suitable places. Among the best kinds for Southern school grounds are the following: Native—raspberries, blackberries, roses, sumac, dogwood, buck