

trian collection point, and corridors serving as focal points for the entire downtown area would make the mall a community center.

A traffic and pedestrian circulation and parking study for downtown Sunnyvale was made during the design phase for the Taaffe Mall. This study co-

ordinated city activities with entrances and facilities on the mall.

Murphy Street, which parallels the Taaffe Mall, was the subject of a street beautification study.

Recommendations were made for enhancement of pedestrian areas and redesign of street parking patterns.



## plants in action—changing blight to beauty, teaching ecology

THE SEVENTIES will be remembered as the decade in which urban and rural areas did an about-face—when they woke from torpor and neglect, and got busy trying to repair and protect the landscape.

It was about time, too, and everybody knew it. Although there were gaps of understanding between young and old, black and white, women and men, right and left, everybody seemed to agree on one thing in the seventies: the need for a balanced, beautiful environment; for healthier, handsomer cities and countrysides.

This about-face was heralded by a set of four commemorative postage stamps issued in the fall of 1970. All across the land they proclaimed, "Save Our Soil," "Save Our Water," "Save Our Air," and "Save Our Cities."

In previous decades we had just about decided we did not need natural beauty. We were so enthralled by the works of man in steel, concrete, and glass that plants became something very unsophisticated indeed. They could be of interest only to farmers and eccentric little old ladies.

But that line of thinking did not turn out too well, as we all know. Something inside us began to be dissatisfied with bleak stretches of road, cities which looked like asphalt deserts, and countrysides decorated with weeds and litter.

So we went to work. By "we" I mean

everyone—the young people working on people's parks or city beautification projects; members of civic clubs, garden clubs, roadside councils, and chambers of commerce. All of us began putting plants into action to fight the blight, ugliness, waste, pollution, and the ecological imbalance which were threatening to engulf our planet.

"We" also includes the mayors, governors, and Federal administrators who put both money and clout behind the large, ambitious projects. Included, too, are Congress and the President who passed and signed into law the National Environmental Policy Act in 1969 and the Environmental Quality Improvement Act in 1970.

I am also thinking of the organized nationwide groups, often partially funded by business, such as the Environmental Improvement Program (EIP). Sponsored by the National Council of State Garden Clubs and Sears, Roebuck and Company, EIP is perhaps the best example of a comprehensive program aimed at encouraging people in their own communities to improve the quality of the environment.

Awards are offered at the district, State, and national level as an incentive

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Above, Alamo (Ga.) Garden Club members plant daylilies in City Park, as part of a Georgia Electric Membership Corp. program. Below, University of Georgia students participate in spring cleanup in Athens, Ga. Cleanup was sponsored by a bank.



to garden clubs to work on projects such as creating vest pocket parks, playlots, or roadside rests.

Sears is backing the program with well over \$100,000.

Although all federated garden clubs in good standing are eligible to enter projects in the EIP competition, high school, intermediate, and junior gardeners are encouraged to participate and often do. In fact, the program encourages involvement of as many community groups as possible in projects which will restore quality and order to the environment.

The program has been extended over a 2-year period, from January 1971 to January 1973. But a great deal has already been accomplished. Let's take a closer look at some of the outstanding projects which have been carried out by ordinary citizens in all walks of life. The following large- and small-scale efforts were aimed mainly at transforming blight into beauty with the help of plants.

In Centerville, Tenn., members of the garden club and a church are turning a city dump into a park and recreation area. They began by filling more than 60 trucks with old stoves and refrigerators, cans, and trash of all kinds. The garden club ladies even operated the big machines which were used to clear the dump!

They then planted more than 13,000 white pine trees, and covered the rocks with moss, ferns, and lichens. Wild flowers were planted so that every wild flower in the State will soon be represented in the park.

In Sumter, S.C., a council of eight garden clubs transformed 38 blighted areas into mini-parks—a cooperative venture which has drawn on the help of other groups in Sumter and is by no means finished yet.

Each club selected a spot in a depressed area which had been turned into an eyesore by litter and neglect. Neighbors and other interested citizens helped club members clean up these lots and plant flowers, shrubs, and trees.

Benches and litter containers were placed in each mini-park.

Celosia—a plant which resembles the comb of a gamecock—was planted in each park because "Gamecock" was the nickname of General Thomas Sumter for whom the county itself was named.

The clubs received cooperation and moral support from civic organizations, city and county officials, and the local newspaper. Plans are already in the works for continuing and expanding the project. In fact, the idea has already spread to neighboring towns.

In Montclair, N.J., a similar cooperative effort resulted in creation of a vest pocket park in the downtown shopping area. Members of the garden club persuaded a bank to let its littered vacant lot be transformed into an oasis of beauty.

The land was cleared by a group of civic-minded young people. Scale drawings of the lot were donated by the Parks and Recreation Department, and plants were given by local florists.

Garden club members supervised the planting, as well as spearheading and coordinating the entire effort. Before it was all over, they had arranged to have a fountain, spotlights, benches, and trash containers provided by various community groups.

They have noticed, incidentally, that a park which was built with so much community cooperation has been maintained with great care and pride by all those who visit and enjoy it. Litter seems no problem here.

While some citizens were tackling small-scale problems of ugliness, members of the garden club in Greene, a small upstate New York village, made beautification of the entire community the focus of their efforts. Many of the trees in Greene had been felled by disease and the construction of sewage and water lines, which also ruined the town's main street.

To repair the damage, the garden club launched "Project Pride." The entire community was mobilized to clean up and to plant trees and shrubs. Merchants and civic-minded citizens contributed time, money, and muscle.

Trees were planted around the

library, school, ballpark, church, along the parkway, and in the yards of many private homes. Ground covers, annuals, and bulbs were planted everywhere.

Projects like the preceding are designed to bring beauty to ugly or barren places. But plants have also been put to work to educate while they beautify. The following projects were carried out with the idea of teaching both young and old something about plants and planting as well as achieving a broader understanding of the natural environment.

One of the most sophisticated efforts in this direction was undertaken in Evansville, Ind. There, 18 members of the local garden club created an Outdoor Learning Environment Center on 20 acres of land adjacent to the campus of Indiana State University.

With the help of university officials, they cleared the land to make trails, labeled trees, and made a research map of the land which is being preserved in its natural state. The property includes a lake and many plants native to that part of the country.

The result is a natural outdoor museum which can be used by students, teachers, and all nature lovers. It is of interest to the scientific investigator and amateur naturalist alike.

Another ambitious educational project was launched in Freeport, Ill., by the Civic Garden Club. Although their primary aim was to restore trees which had been destroyed by storms and disease, garden club members decided to combine this with a plan to teach all school children in Freeport something about conservation.

During one week last April, 3,500 students were transported by bus to sites which had been chosen for planting trees and shrubs. These included three city parks, the municipal golf course, and schools.

Each child was permitted to plant his own tree, which was marked with his name, and he was responsible for taking care of it until it was established.

All plantings were supervised by garden club members, park personnel, and school administrators. Throughout the

project the club worked closely with the personnel of the board of education and the park district.

A total of 2,000 seedlings were planted in this way on school property, and 3,500 larger trees were planted on park property. In all, more than 9,000 trees and shrubs were planted, while the children learned a great deal about their responsibility to nature and the mechanics of reforestation.

The dollar cost of this project was negligible. Most of the plant materials, labor, and services were donated free of charge.

In Lincoln, Nebr., education was aimed at adults in the community. The garden club there launched a citywide project of beautification. Homeowners were encouraged to landscape and beautify their yards by competing for the awards.

Public areas were beautified with the help of 4-H boys and girls who planted trees and shrubs. Businessmen and industrial managers were encouraged to clean up and landscape their grounds and the shopping centers around them. Both public areas and private yards were planted with thousands of tulip bulbs.

Meanwhile, a landscape designing course was offered to homeowners to teach them proper planting methods. They learned, among other things, what to plant, how to plant it, and how to maintain their gardens. Hundreds took advantage of this course, which covered a period of weeks. Since it is a continuous project, still more citizens will continue to participate in years to come.

Finally, in Winter Park, Fla., members of the garden club formed a high school gardeners group as part of a 5-year plan to educate the young people and beautify their city.

Landscape plans were drawn and plots assigned to the students who then worked out their own planting plans with the help of a landscape architect. The county agent provided advice on soil conditions and improvement.

At least 150 oak trees and 1,000 slash pines were among the trees and

shrubs added to Winter Park's landscape, while the high school students received valuable experience in landscaping and planting.

Beautification, recreation, and education—all have been accomplished with plants by relatively small groups of determined people across the country. But one other target of plants in action deserves mention here, and that is preservation.

Savannah, Ga., is perhaps the best known example of historic preservation. Citizens from all walks of life have pooled their time, energy, and resources to rescue the city from the ravages of time and neglect.

Plants have played an important role in restoring the city's unique squares to their rightful place as beautiful centerpieces in the historic town plan. Some enterprising Savannahians have even turned a crumbling old cemetery into a lovely park.

Other large cities are now doing what they can to salvage and preserve all that is old and beautiful within their boundaries. But preservation is by no means limited to big cities.

On the outskirts of Taos, N. Mex., for example, lies the little village of Talpa, rich in Spanish-American history. In it are ancient farms and chapels, including one which is among the few remaining unrestored chapels in New Mexico. Talpa has a prehistoric Indian tower, archeological sites dating back to Indian occupation, and other relics of the past.

The Talpa Garden Club was organized in the late sixties by a group of concerned citizens who wanted to restore and preserve the ancient village. By registering its 50 buildings and having the entire village declared a national historic landmark, they hope to save it for future generations.

In the meantime they are creating a plaza near one of the most historic chapels. Flagstone walks, stone walls, a cactus garden, and flowering crab-apples and juniper have replaced the dirt, weeds, and rocks that were there. A watering system was installed to maintain the plantings.

In short, you find plants in action everywhere in the seventies. They offer all of us a chance to pitch in and help accomplish something useful or beautiful. And yet, much of the difficult, significant work will continue to be done by trained specialists.

According to one authority, ". . . environmental management is going to be the fastest growing area of industry, public services, and the economy for at least the next decade and probably much longer."

Landscape architects will continue to play an important part in putting plants into action. One expert estimates that by 1980 we will need 6,000 more landscape architects—a total of 14,500.

We will also need new kinds of professionals. At least 17 new environmental specialties have already been identified, and more will emerge. Besides, the "oldtimers"—like landscape architects—will have to keep broadening their outlook and their training.

Landscape architects, for example, used to make their living beautifying the already beautiful estates of millionaires. But during the depression years of the 1930's, there was a quiet revolution in landscape architecture which moved its practitioners right into the middle of the workaday world. They rolled up their sleeves and began taking on public jobs such as slum clearance projects, State parks, children's playgrounds, and roadside development.

Today I am the dean of a school of environmental design which trains landscape architects to deal with the real problems of the seventies. They are learning to work with others in a team effort and to understand the political arena in which our public work is conducted.

But right now we do not have enough environmental specialists to keep up with the demand and need. That is why I think the Landscape Design Study Course program has been so useful.

The aim of this nationwide program is to create a civilian army of environmental watchdogs capable of exerting a constructive influence on local, State, and national affairs. Begun in 1958, the

program is sponsored by the National Council of State Garden Clubs which makes it available to its membership of 375,000.

More than 2,000 garden club members had completed the 2-year program in June 1970, and had earned the certificate designating them as landscape design critics. Another 24,000 persons had taken at least one of the four courses by the middle of last year.

This small but well-informed group of people has already made itself felt by speaking out in favor of highway beautification, wilderness areas, national seashores, historic preservation, and other environmental improvements in every State.

Graduates of the program serve capably on park commissions, zoning boards, and other groups with responsibilities for the health and beauty of the landscape, both urban and rural.

For example, Mrs. Charles Yarn of Atlanta was appointed by the governor of Georgia to serve on the Citizen's Environmental Design Commission. Mrs. Gerald J. Pierce of Utica, N.Y.,

serves on the Mayor's Committee for City Park Planning and Beautification. And in Fort Worth, Tex., Mrs. Howard Kittel serves on the Texas Park and Recreation Board.

We have always recognized the beauty of trees, shrubs, and flowers, but perhaps the seventies brought us a new awareness of the *power* of plants in action: their power to change and improve the quality of our lives.

If there is a lesson here, perhaps it can be stated this way: never underestimate the power of a plant or the power of the men and women who are determined to put plants into action on behalf of people and the earth they inhabit.

*For further reading:*

U.S. Department of Agriculture, *Forestry Activities: A Guide for Youth Group Leaders*. Program Aide 457, Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, 1970. 20¢

\_\_\_\_\_, *Teaching Conservation Through Outdoor Education Areas*. Program Aid 837, Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402, 1970. 35¢



## garden clubs and everyone else pitch in to landscape a school

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THANKS to the Bearden Ecology Student Team (BEST) and the best efforts of the community, the modern Bearden High School building in Knoxville, Tenn., lies on beautifully landscaped grounds. Students, parents, teachers, garden clubs, civic groups, and businesses all worked together on this "do-it-ourselves" project.

Bearden High School's landscaping success story is proof that determined amateurs can achieve excellent results for a reasonable cost. Professional guidance is invaluable, but inexperienced people can plant successfully with help from practiced gardeners.

Landscaping a school is an ambitious project, but at Bearden High it turned out to be easier than it looked. Although the original plan called for spreading the work over 3 years, donations of money and trees and shrubs came so quickly that the planting project was nearly finished in one year. Garden clubs, individuals, and local businesses were eager to help. The gifts of trees, shrubs, plants, and fertilizer were worth about \$850, and the cash contributions amounted to nearly \$1,000.

It all began in a spring board meeting of the Parent Teacher Student