

A 'Little Weather' You Can Do Something About

The old adage that "every-one talks about the weather, but nobody does anything about it" no longer rings so true.

At any rate, when you're talking about "little weather"—technically known as microclimate—it's the weather that immediately surrounds every house and yard. Today, microclimates can be controlled through our own efforts, even though in limited fashion.

In the new Ortho garden book, *Weather-Wise Gardening*, you can find a variety of techniques to modify your immediate weather, including how to harness the sun, wind, and water to make the weather warmer or cooler, more windy or less, humid or dry.

Surprisingly, what you do to your microclimate outside your home will have a definite effect inside your home.

"Tests by agricultural stations of state universities show that what you do to the climate outside the house has a definite effect upon the climate within it," the book points out.

Consider trees, for example, as a climate control factor.

When you plant deciduous trees to shade the west wall and roof of your house, you

can reduce the heat inside the house by 20 to 40 degrees, help eliminate "attic furnace" and give you protection from the hot glare of the sun.

The trees act as natural air conditioners, improving your living outdoors and indoors.

In fact, trees can help you conserve energy and money.

"Shelter planting outdoors can reduce operating expenses of heating and air conditioning units by up to one-third or more, no small consideration in times of energy shortages and rising costs," states *Weather-Wise Gardening*.

There are various other ways to make your own climate cooler. Vines, planted ground cover, even the lawn will help you create coolness.

The lawn not only effectively reduces heat, it's also an element in noise and dust control. When you combine shrubbery with your lawn, you can effectively combat noise and dust. A recent study shows that the dust count on one side of a planted area was reduced by 75 per cent in just this way. Sow grass in small squares on a walk or driveway, and you counteract heat stored and radiated by the paved areas.

A garden pool is a good ex-

ample of how you can harness water to create your own cooler climate. In addition to the bracing effect of a pond psychologically, it actually has the same kind of effect as the ocean on the scorching, dry land mass adjacent to it.

As *Weather-Wise Gardening* says:

"The pond adds water vapor to the air, which can then be cooled by evaporation of the moisture particles which affect your plants, your body, or any other surfaces they touch."

Color can be a factor for cooling or heating. Lighter col-

ors reflect more than darker ones which tend to absorb the sun's heat. In one test, tomato plants grown against a dark wall produced a leafier plant.

When you want to make your "little weather" warmer, the more paved area around your home, the more untilled ground, or rock or masonry surfaces, the warmer your immediate weather. Windbreaks, natural and artificial, have a warming effect.

In their role as wind-breakers, trees are especially effective. Multiple rows of trees will give you far more protection than just a single row. If you want to curb the wind nearer the ground, plant

shrubs.

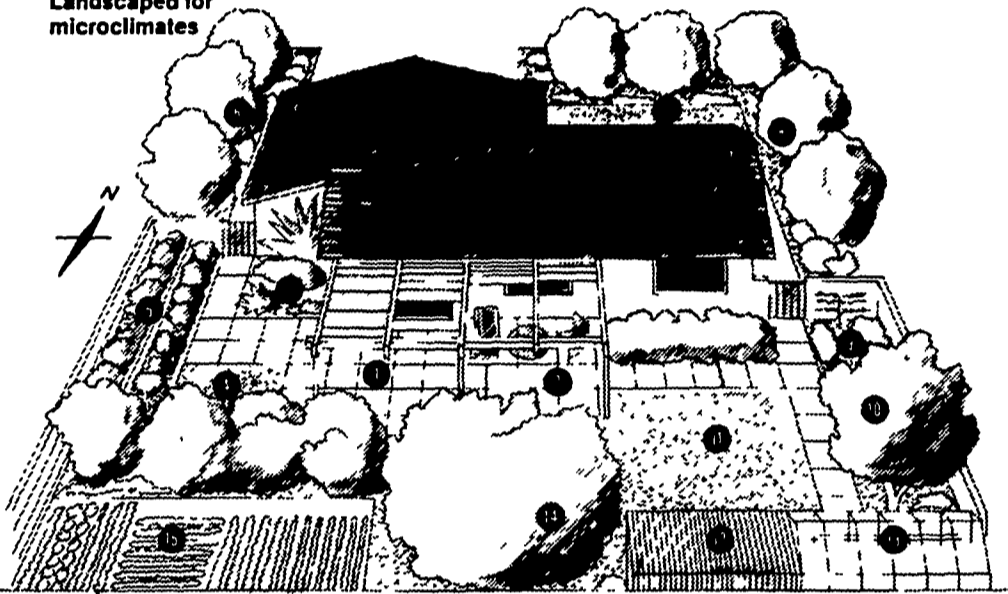
Any windbreaks generally should be located on the North or West side of the house. That cold wind that bothers us most comes from either the North or West.

Windbreaks can help you enjoy your garden more. Hedges, covered patios, lath enclosures are just some of the techniques you can use to control the wind and climate.

Remember, as *Weather-Wise Gardening* says:

"Microclimates, the little weathers clustered about every house and yard, are the only ones over which we can exert any control through our own individual efforts. We can bend them toward our needs by thoughtful orientation of structure and plantings, by increasing or lessening radiation, and numerous other methods of exploiting their potentials."

Landscaped for microclimates



1. & 2. Controlled shade zones (1. is warmer, receives afternoon sun), 3. Sun pocket—receiving noon and afternoon sun, 4. Pond—good place for shade and moisture-loving plants, 5. Morning and mid-day sun zone—wall provides some protection, 6. Full shade zone, 7. Morning sun zone, 8. Full shade zone—trees and house provide protection, 9. Partial sun zone for late afternoon radiation 10. Variable shade zone below a tree, 11. Full sun zone, 12. Controlled shade zone provided by lath house, 13. Greenhouse—absolute climate control, 14. Variable shade zone below a tree, and 15. Full sun zone for vegetables and other sun-loving plants

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Even Husking Bee Started With Indians

Colonial farmers adopted not only many agricultural practices from the Indians concerning corn, but they borrowed at least one social custom, too.

Indian corn culture had already differentiated between regular corn crops and the more succulent sweet corn varieties believed developed by the Iroquois Indians.

Recipes for succotash and hasty pudding, also called loblolly, were also borrowed from the Indians. One facet of the corn diet the colonists didn't adopt was the addition of dog meat. They preferred the more customary salt beef, salt pork or chicken.

While the borrowing of many of these practices from the Indians are well recognized, lesser known is the belief that even the husking bee originated with the Indians. This combination of work and frivolity was popular on early farms.

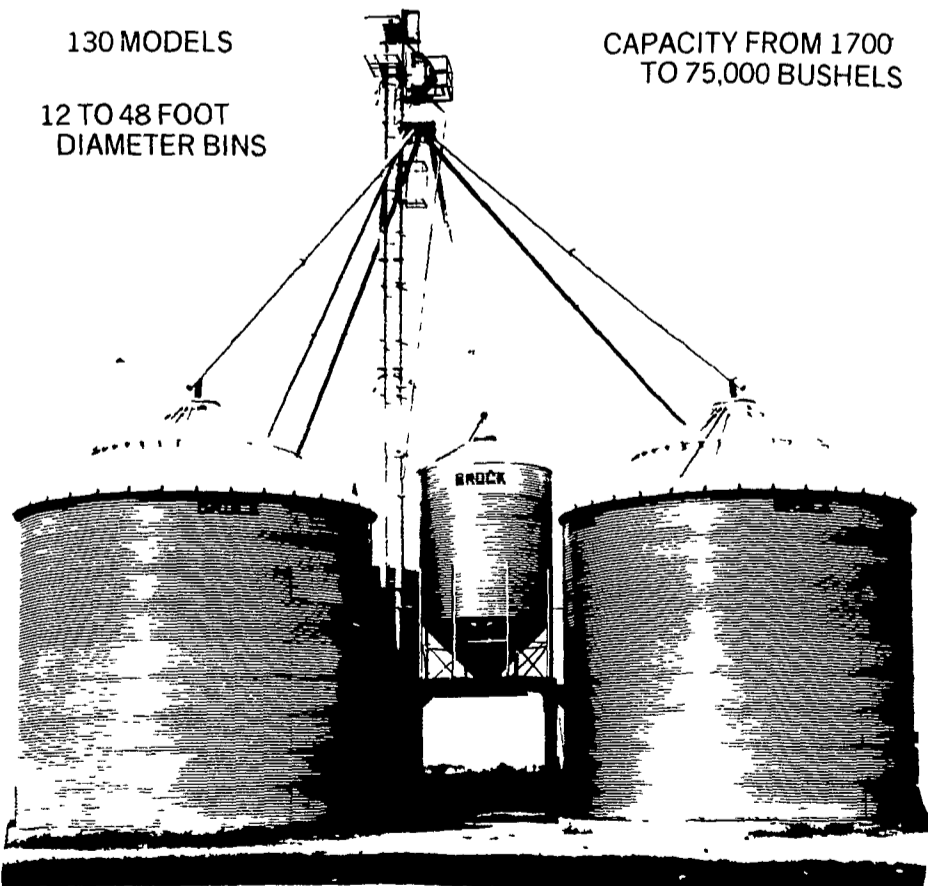
One custom that developed dictated any man who husked an ear of corn laden with red kernels could claim a kiss from any girl at the bee. A form of this practice was part of the culture of the Iroquois.

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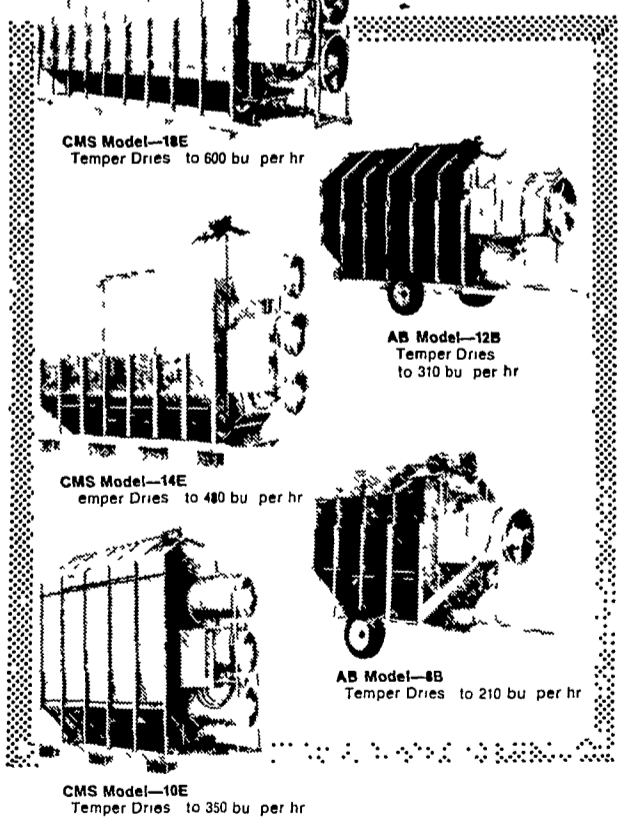


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