

A Case for conservation



Alene N. Case

Lawns, flowers, and shade trees are all important aspects of most American gardens, as the British would call them. Except for occasional bushes and hedges, we seem to ignore the spaces between the very short (grass and flowers) and the very tall (oak, maple, and spruce trees). But, if you take a walk through almost any woodland, you will notice immediately that there are many understory trees and shrubs. These are not all young trees that will one day take their place in the canopy of the forest. Many will never become taller than they are now. And yet, they provide habitat (cover and perches) and food for a wide variety of insects, birds and other animals.

As our home landscape has matured over the past seventeen years, it has acquired much more vertical texture. Some of this has been planned. We have planted blueberries, dwarf fruit trees, rhododendron, and flowering dogwood. But, much of the understory has not been planted by us. We have pruned forsythia and white lilac that were already here but not doing very well. And, we have noticed that some understory plants have simply sprouted on their own when we did not mow certain parts of the yard. One excellent example of this is a beautiful alternate-leaf dogwood that has clusters of small white flowers in the spring and dark berries in late summer and fall.

This spring let's all resolve to pay closer attention to the mid-ranges of our landscapes. When

Layers are important in our landscapes

tempted to "clear the brush," stop and ask what kinds of trees and bushes make up that brush. Then, be a little bit selective in what you cut. Many plants that grow well in this region also have beautiful stems, flowers and foliage. They often attract butterflies and birds with their flowers and fruits. And, some actually discourage browsing by deer and other mammals because of thorns or poisonous parts.

What are some of the more common understory shrubs and small trees? Most people think immediately of rhododendron since it is an evergreen and has showy clusters of flowers. But, what about its cousin the mountain laurel? It, too, has evergreen leaves and large clusters of pinkish-white flowers. Neither of these require pruning since they naturally grow slowly and gracefully. They do not do well if exposed to salt along driveways or streets. And, they need an acid soil which can easily be provided by the occasional addition of aluminum sulfate around the base of the plant. (Azaleas and blueberries like that, also.) Sassafras is one of those small trees that add elegance to any space. The leaves are quite variable in shape and turn yellow to red in the autumn. Bees are attracted to the small flowers and birds enjoy the blue fruits. Another closely related aromatic shrub is the spicebush which grows well in swampy woods. Its small yellowish flowers that cling to the stems are often the first flowers to emerge in the spring.

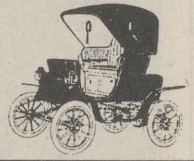
Other small trees that add interest to a landscape include the striped maple which has smooth light green bark with white vertical stripes, large three-lobed

leaves, and long drooping stalks of bright yellow flowers. Various cherries and apples such as pin cherry, crab apple, and chokecherry generally grow less than twenty feet tall, have beautiful blooms, and provide welcome food for various kinds of wildlife. Some taller trees such as hemlock and Washington hawthorn lend themselves well to being pruned into a shrub shape or hedge and create lots of useful cover for birds and other small creatures.

One of my husband's favorite understory plant is the witch hazel (from which the skin lotion is derived) which blooms in the late fall at about the time it loses its leaves. The seeds are contained in a woody capsule which ejects them to a distance of 15 feet when they are mature. (I told you some of these plants were interesting!) Another bush with small nuts is the beaked hazel (not closely related to witch hazel) which often grows in old fields and along the margins of woodland clearings. Squirrels and people share a taste for the nuts of various hazel trees. We know them as filberts.

Now, if you still aren't convinced of the value of understory plants, consider the pussy willow, holly, currant, American mountain-ash, pawpaw, or viburnum. Place any of them near bird feeders as cover and perches. Grow them around your compost pile to act as a screen. Put them closer to your vegetable garden than you could a tall tree because they will not shade it as much. Wherever you place them, prepare to be entertained by the show of flowers and foliage, by the tasty fruits, and by the creatures that now find your yard a more suitable habitat.

ONLY YESTERDAY



60 Years Ago - April 16, 1937 STAGE STAR TRACEY OKAY AFTER FALL INTO WATER

Both Mrs. W. L. Tracy of Pioneer Ave., Shavertown, and her son, Lee famous stage and screen star, have recovered from any effects of their unexpected dip in the Pacific Ocean last Sunday according to a wire received here Wednesday by Mrs. R.M. Scott of Mt. Greenwood, Mrs. Tracey's sister. Mrs. Tracey who had been visiting Lee fell into the water when the gangplank collapsed as she was leaving Lee's yacht. Lee plunged in and held her until they were assisted from the water. She was treated for immersion on board the yacht immediately.

Reconsidering the proposal to construct a home on the Kunkle lot on Main Street Shavertown, the Volunteer Fire Co. of that community this week authorized trustees to investigate that plan further. This time the committee of trustees will secure estimates on a bigger building than was included in the original plans.

50 Years Ago - April 18, 1947 HOSPITALITY SHOP ESTABLISHED AT NESBITT

The Women's Board of Nesbitt Memorial Hospital has established a Hospitality Shop on the main floor of the hospital where gifts maybe purchased by friends visiting patients. Attractively arranged and located near the main entrance, gifts maybe purchased

there for new babies, toys and books for children and suitable gifts for adults.

A series of broadcasts on early Wyoming Valley sponsored by Hoyt Library, Kingston will be broadcast over Station WILK every Friday for eight weeks from 9:15 to 9:30. The first broadcast will be tonight when Miss Frances Dorrance of Huntsville is interviewed by Betty Blair in "The Coming of the People to Wyoming Valley."

40 Years Ago - April 12, 1957 LOCAL TEACHERS HONORED AT IREM TEMPLE

Teachers and administrators of Dallas Borough-Kingston Township Schools honored Mrs. John T. Hughes, the former Florence Heitsman at dinner at Irem Temple Country Club Friday night. Mrs. Hughes retired June 1956 after having taught in Kingston Township schools since 1920. In honoring Mrs. Hughes the teachers of Dallas Borough, Kingston Township were honoring all teachers who have devoted so many years of their lives to the profession.

Toby's Creek, in flood all day Friday, following the nine inch snow storm and steady rain on Thursday, started to recede Saturday at 3:30 a.m. after flooding many basements including the furnace of St. Paul's Church in Shavertown. Several households had to be evacuated because water in the basement was high enough to extinguish the furnace.

30 Years Ago - April 13, 1967 LINEAR UNION WORKERS STILL NOT WORKING

At presstime the report was that work stoppage at Linear was gasping its last and that an agreement had been reached which

had only to be ratified at a meeting of the union Wednesday evening. Work stoppage has persisted since July 31, 1966. Office staff was reduced to a skeleton in mid-September. Out of work for almost nine months have been 350 employees. Members of the union have taken turns picketing around the clock part of the time in sub-zero weather.

The use of a simulator computer to aid in driver training may become available to Dallas students. William Baran driver instructor reported on a conference he attended and informed board members of new safety trends and methods designed to cut down deaths on the highway. Of special interest was the simulator computer which Director John LaBerge said he was familiar with and advocated purchase of same to be included in next year's school budget.

20 Years Ago - April 14, 1977 SHAVERTOWN CITIZENS PROTEST DEVELOPMENT

A group of Shavertown citizens protested construction of the proposed Sherwood Forest Development at the Wednesday night meeting of the Kingston Township Water Commission. Area residents said they feared that construction of approximately 45 homes on the Ferguson plot off Lawn Street may cause a water shortage in the near future. They also complained about the quality of water. Despite the fact there is plenty water for bathing and flushing toilets, drinking water must be obtained from outside sources due to a strong sulphur taste they said.

You could get - Chicken legs, 59¢ lb.; center cut chuck roast, \$1.09 lb.; Wisk Liquid, 32 oz. btl., \$1.19; fancy carrots, 4 pkgs./\$1.00; lettuce, 3 hds./\$1.00.

The Post makes a great gift!

Self defense program to be held April 10

Don't Be the Next Victim, a program about how to improve your personal safety both at home and out in public, will be presented April 10 at 7 p.m. at the Community Room of Back Mountain Medical Center on Upper Demunds Road, Dallas.

Speakers from Citizens Against Crime will use humor and audience participation to demonstrate how to avoid becoming a victim of crime. They will discuss topics such as safety for the stranded motorist, avoiding robbery and assault and preventing home burglaries.

The one-hour program is being sponsored by the Dallas Area Federated Women's Club and Wyoming Valley Health Care System. Admission is free, but donations towards the Women's Club Book Scholarship Fund will be accepted.

For reservations please call 552-8632 or 1-800-838-WELL.

Rhonda Seeber to perform April 12

Folk singer Rhonda Seeber will present a lively program of songs and stories for children and their families at the Hoyt Library in Kingston on April 12 at 11 a.m. Rhonda's presentation encourages audience participation and will feature songs from around the world, nursery favorites, traditional American folk songs, and witty original songs written from a child's point of view. The concert is free and open to the public in celebration of the Hoyt Library's 10th anniversary of its children's wing and National Library Week. For additional information call: 696-3065.



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