

MANY WOMEN LEARNING THE WAY "BACK TO THE FARM"



Students of the Ambler School transplanting and cultivating young fruit trees.



Jessie T. Morgan, director of the school.



The School of Horticulture for Women at Ambler is located in a historic old mansion.

Market Gardening and Flower Growing Increasing in Popularity as Feminine Professions

In an office atop a tall skyscraper, one of those piles of bricks and mortar that make canyons of downtown streets, a young woman sat at her desk. Beside her lay a batch of neatly typed letters, just transcribed from notes taken at her employer's dictation. Her work was temporarily forgotten, for her eyes wandered over the Long Island vista as it stretched in panoramic fashion between the all embracing waters of the bay and the Sound.

It wasn't the topographical vision that held her imagination, but the mental picture of a little patch of ground hugging the edge of the north shore about midway down the island where in the centre of a three acre plot there stood a tiny old fashioned farm house. Beside the cottage a stream gurgled its way to the sea. Along its borders a patch of woods grew clannishly, and near the house was a stretch of fine meadow land, where in her mind's eye the girl saw a brindle cow placidly enjoying the fresh, green pasturage.

This wasn't the first time she had seen the vision. It appeared each spring, but this year it was more insistent than ever. Try as she would she couldn't banish the picture from her mind, so one day, when the scent of apple blossoms was in the air and the pungent odor of the newly awakened fern and bracken drifted over the smoke laden city, she shook the dust of the town from her feet and started out to find the picture of her dreams.

That was five years ago, and to-day the woman is one of the most successful market gardeners on Long Island, with a big business on hand and a growing balance in the bank. The story of this young stenographer is the story of hundreds of young women who have turned their faces from the grind and toil of the city to the open country and the sunshine of God's great outdoors. "Back to the farm" is no meaningless slogan to scores of business women, for there is a large and rapidly increasing number of those who have turned their backs upon commercial pursuits and who are earning a living from the soil.

Among them is a New York woman who has demonstrated the possibilities of violet growing, and from her greenhouses up the Hudson she ships each season great quantities of violets to a special clientele in town. Down on Long Island is a woman who has shown the possibilities of horticulture on what was supposed to be worthless soil. In Kingston, Mass., is a successful woman florist and gardener, while in south Jersey another has built up a promising flower trade.

A woman near West Chester, Pa., has made a notable success as a peony grower, and a young couple, husband and wife, have achieved a reputation raising gladioli for the market. Good health was also wrested from the soil along with a good income, for it was one of those cases of a husband taken ill and with no means of support. Each day the doctor's bills and the house-keeping expenses mounted higher and higher and the future looked dark and hopeless. The doctor decreed the family should move to the country.

They did, and to-day after three years the husband has not only recovered his health but the couple are among the most successful flower growers in their State.

Not far from Atlantic City, N. J., a woman started in floriculture with a sum so small that her friends, hard headed business men, declared she was making the mistake of her life. Something within her gave her the assurance she would be successful, and to-day, from a tiny greenhouse on a small patch of ground, she has acres and numerous buildings, all dedicated to flower growing and vegetable raising.

A woman rose grower near Scranton, Pa., each season sends 20,000 roses a day to New York city. Not far from the "rose lady," as she is known, is a woman who is raising tomatoes under glass. Each year from January to June, when they command an extra price, she sends quantities of hot-house vegetables to the New York market.

Miss E. M. Osbourne of Ann Arbor, Mich., is the only woman member of the Market Growers Association in America. She earned her right to the honor by hard work, for, although she was not trained in horticulture, circumstances forced her into it. By hard work she has built up a fine trade and made a reputation for herself as one of the leading veg-

etable growers in the State. Down below the Mason and Dixon line in the apple belt is a Virginia girl who has more than 100 acres planted to apples and peaches. Other women have forest nurseries, peony farms, dahlia gardens, primrose ranches and vegetable market gardens.

In school gardening women are everywhere taking the lead. Miss Caro Miller, Supervisor of Children's Gardens in Philadelphia, is doing a fine work, and last year she induced hundreds of children to beautify their back yards with flower and vegetable patches, the product of which they sold to good advantage. In Trenton, N. J., Miss Laura E. Woodward is the director of gardening and she also trains teachers for it, which is a step in advance of other cities in this field.

Many women have gone into landscape gardening. Miss Grace Tabor of New York, one of the best known, is as busy as she can be laying out fine estates, while Miss Mary Jay and Miss Geoffrie are also fully occupied. Mrs. Florence Merriam Hill of New York is a maker of gardens and is a specialist in color arrangement. She supplements the work of her husband, who is an architect. He designs houses and Mrs. Hill lays out the grounds and makes the gardens. Miss Elizabeth Leonard of Cambridge, Mass.; Miss E. B. Clark of Philadelphia, and Miss Elizabeth Leighton Lee, the latter instructor in landscape gardening in the School of Horticulture at Ambler, Pa., are all highly successful in their line.

Besides the Massachusetts Agricultural School, the Simmons School of Boston offers a short course in gardening for women. The Lowtherpor-

Garden School of Groton, Conn., and the School of Horticulture at Ambler are the two schools in the country run exclusively for women. They are each year turning out young women to run farms, to be florists, market gardeners, proprietors or managers of fruit farms and orchards. Each field offers good positions to trained women.

Miss Jessie T. Morgan, director of the Ambler School, which was started in 1911 by the club and college women of Philadelphia, says that a woman may earn a good income from the smallest piece of ground provided she specializes in some particular branch of horticulture. Miss Morgan, who has been quite successful in making good farmers of her girls, recently made a tour of the horticultural schools of England, where women are paying especial attention to the subject, and she believes the day of the woman gardener has dawned.

"The number of professional gardeners in England is remarkable," she says, "and many of the graduates of horticultural schools I found were managing their own estates. If the women of England succeed there is more reason why American women should do so, because on account of the wastefulness in land here there is more scope for the woman gardener."

Miss Morgan, who was in New York recently attending the conference of the Woman's National Horticultural Association held at the Bronx Botanical Gardens, is enthusiastic over the opportunities for women in horticulture. This field includes the raising of flowers, vegetable gardening, the growing of fruits, nuts and nursery stock and in addition beet culture and chicken raising.

"Some persons," said Miss Morgan, "ask if women are physically adapted to such work as ploughing, spraying and the handling of heavy boxes and barrels of fruit. They are not always strong enough to do such work and it is not expected that they should be so long as they know how such things should be done and can direct the efforts of the laborers."

"Women have an instinctive love for growing things and get a keener enjoyment from cultivating them than men. We have all seen how the busy housewife will coax and pet a few plants and make them grow despite the most unfavorable conditions, so it stands to reason if a woman really loves the work and gives all her time to it in greenhouses under the most favorable circumstances there is no reason why she should not succeed."

Miss Morgan can point to many interesting facts about the growth of horticulture commercially during the last twenty years which should be highly interesting to the prospective gardener. For example, there has been an increase of 95 per cent. in the sale of flowers during that period. And despite the fact that prices have declined something like 10 per cent. there has come about a more general use and enjoyment of plants and cut flowers among the middle classes where formerly they were only the luxury of the rich.

Women are said to have a better trained eye in selecting various shades of color and finer judgment in making harmonious color arrangements in floral designs for the trade than men. In the growing of flowers and vegetables under glass women have

Numerous Schools Now Offer Courses to Girls in Profitable Branches of Horticulture and Floriculture

achieved great success. They have, it is suggested, a more delicate touch than the men and are able to make the smallest cuttings with ease. In one of the largest commercial greenhouses in Germany, Miss Morgan said, the cuttings were all made by women.

Gardening under glass has reached large proportions in some sections of the country and is still increasing. In the growing of vegetables out of doors the increase has been 10 per cent. in the last decade. Among the factors responsible for better prices are the more discriminating methods of growing and marketing them. The increase in the price of meat also has increased the demand. Apple growing has increased of late in the East despite the large quantity of fruit shipped from the Pacific slope, and there are wonderful possibilities for women in raising them.

"One of the most profitable phases of up to date gardening," says Miss Morgan, "is the hamper service by parcel post, which is yet in its infancy. Flowers, fruit and vegetables can now be shipped to a special clientele in nearby cities at a good profit. This is one of the advantages of the parcel post system, and it opens up a capital field for women. Feminine taste can be exercised in preparing the produce for the market and it can be shipped speedily to its destination.

"Such wonderful possibilities present themselves for sending green goods to hamper that the popularity of the method is bound to grow. Mr. and Mrs. H. B. Fullerton, in charge of the Long Island Experiment Station, by the way are admirable examples of husband and wife, who are successful partners in farming, have proved that fresh fruit and vegetables can be shipped in hamper directly to a customer at prices less than the latter had to pay and for most of the produce has been in the hamper receiving.

"Take the trade in flowers, for example. It is possible to have a rotation of flowers, so there will be blossoms one sort or another from April to November. What sort of work could be more charming than this, to deliver fresh bunches of flowers and to deliver them to their destination without their suffering any deterioration or what more attractive than a hamper trade of flowers, fruit and vegetables. Surely there is no phase of horticulture or indeed any occupation for women more interesting or profitable than that offers better prospects than that.

Miss Morgan points out that in business women are nearly always paid less than men, but she says an attractive hamper of flowers, fruit and vegetables, raised and packed by a woman, will bring as good a price as though packed by a man. Then if in addition to raising fruits and vegetables, a woman includes a hamper outfit that can be purchased for from \$10 to \$50 another source of income is secured.

"If," she suggests, "when peaches, sweet corn and similar vegetables cease to bring good prices they can be canned. It will not only be the market from being glutted with lower priced, but a profitable trade in canned goods can be built up."

"On every farm is a large quantity of fruit that annually goes to waste because it becomes too ripe to ship. If from this a high grade of fruit, sweet cider can be put up, apples, peaches, peach butter, jam, jelly, preserves, cherries, berries and preserves can be prepared and a little judicious advertising included in a fine line of ready-made tomatoes can be secured.

"Last year at Ambler more than 1,200 jars of jelly, canned fruit, jam and canned vegetables were prepared, the preserving department would otherwise have gone bankrupt. This is quite in a woman's line, and little foresight in farming and a small piece of ground will produce anywhere from \$200 up to \$500 a year and above the returns from the soil source.

"The success of women in farming is no longer an experiment. It is a point to many brilliant examples of formerly clerks, school teachers, stenographers, lawyers and women of leisure who are now earning competence, many on the road to fortune by reason of their contact with the soil. If a woman will but use the common sense requirements demanded by the best gardeners, she will give prompt attention to the end of the business there is no reason why she may not earn a comfortable living on even a few acres of land."



Transplanting young flower plants in the greenhouse.



Taking a lesson in tree trimming.



Girl students making cuttings of last summer's favorite roses.



Teacher giving a demonstration in the field.