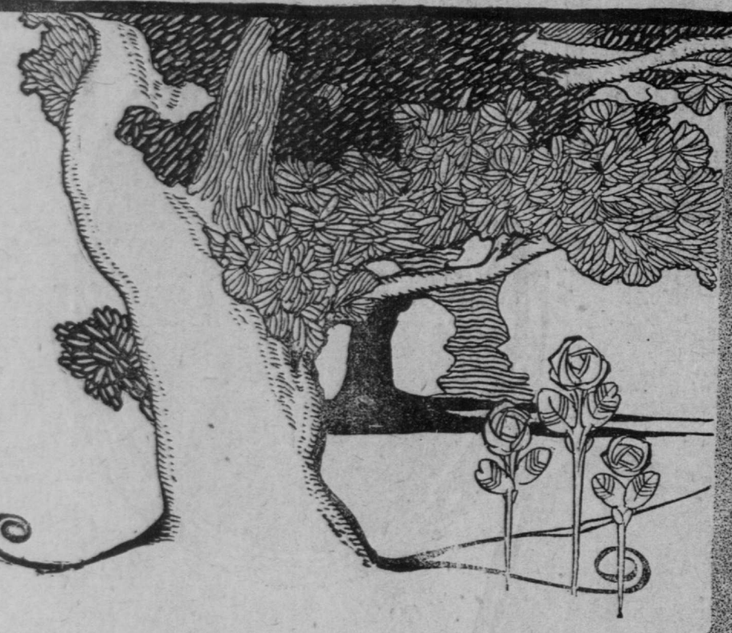
JOHN McLAREN, Superintendent of GOLDEN GATE PARK, GIVES EXPERT ADVICE on GARDEN MAKING in CALIFORNIA

CUPRESSUS NUTKAENSIS—THE ALASKAN SPECIES

COCOS PLUMOSA AS SIDEWALK TREE



WHIRLING across the boundaries into California in a passenger coach one catches frequent glimpses of beautiful country homes embosomed in grounds of bowering green, which, through the interstices of the trees seem to be waving flags of all nations in friendly welcome to the passing train. On closer investigation these flags of welcome may prove to be but spreading, floating masses of lovely bloom, planted with an eye to the most advantageous spot and carefully fostered in their growth by the skill of an efficient gardener. Flowers indigenous to the state, as well as those which have been transplanted from foreign countries to grow and blossom in generous profusion in their new environment, may be seen, among them the brilliant scarlet of the Virginia creeper, the orange colored blossoms of the trumpet vine, the white purity of the fragrant clematis, the exquisite tints of the charming sweet pea and the subtle and fragrant beauty of the familiar honeysuckle with its charming natural effects as the flowers twine around the stems and carpet the ground underneath.

To produce these delightful landscape effects a thorough knowledge of the climatic conditions of California, the nature, character and fertility of the soil, and of the type of tree and shrub best adapted to the particular locality is absolutely necessary. Many amateur gardeners striving for scenic and floral beauty make the mistake of considering eastern and western conditions somewhat similar, and are disappointed when, after all their careful planting, watering and fertilizing, their beds of flowers, plats of shrubbery or branching trees (which were to be) prove large failures. Dozens of textbooks dealing with garden lore have been written and published, but none has ever been proved quite satisfactory as stating the exact laws to be followed regarding the planting and cultivation of grounds, whether large or small, in California or its environs, as no author seems to have taken the main points of the subject as applied to this state into consideration. But now a book presenting this important subject in all its aspects has been written by John McLaren, superintendent of Golden Gate park for 36 years, a man splendidly versed in arboriculture and floriculture, of worldwide fame for his care and skill as displayed in the thousand reclaimed acres forming the largest park in the world, and to whom is conceded the right to speak soberly and authoritatively on the subject to which his life has been mainly devoted.

The book, published by A. M. Robertson, is called "Gardening in California: Landscape and Flower," and contains about 500 pages, divided into 22 chapters. Beginning with the selection of a site for the house and garden grounds, the first few chapters give a most practical and complete consideration of the plans for these grounds, the preparation of the soil, the construction of roads and walks, planting and transplanting and the making of lawns. Succeeding chapters treat in detail of the various kinds of trees, shrubs and flowers, all of which are classified under their respective headings, while still other chapters give a succinct though comprehensive description of the nature, best method of handling and general results of several varieties of palms, ferns, bamboos and grasses, with a lengthy chapter devoted to herbaceous and bedding plants. Parlor and window gardening is also dissected minutely and the back of the volume contains several pages given over to the explanation of technical gardening terms, of which, however, the book contains comparatively few. The two last chapters are extremely interesting, the first telling of the manner in which the sand dunes of the park were reclaimed and the second and final one giving a calendar of operations suitable for gardening in California, with many terse and pertinent remarks on the methods producing quick and desirable results.

Any one who has ever seen the spacious and beautifully arranged grounds of the Hotel del Monte, or has visited the magnificent country homes of certain wealthy residents of the state, some of which are celebrated for their formal Italian gardens or their sunken terraces with their delicate and enchanting glimpses of woodland, glades and placid lakes, can not fail to realize that an infinitude of skill and wealth of thought has been bestowed upon location, site, elevation, altitude and natural surroundings before the final harmonious plan was evolved. Regarding these questions, the eminent authority, John McLaren, gives the following advice:

"* * * In preparing the plan of planting care should be taken to connect the different groups of trees under one general plan and not to gather the trees and shrubs in spots or in stiff, formal lines at equal distances apart. Perhaps the best place from which to study the plan (of planting and grouping the trees and shrubs) is from the house site, the effect being judged from the points on the house site where the principal doors and windows and verandas will be. When the groups are large enough the main lawns or grass plats will, of course, be located immediately about the house, and the groups of trees, with their undergrowth of shrubs, can be massed round and about the lawns, these forming the outlines for the grassy surface. These outlines should be made as informal as the nature and size of the grounds will permit. Bold points of trees and shrubbery should project into the lawn space, and again, the grassy surface should be allowed to run deep into, as if getting lost, among the tree groups, the plan always avoiding anything formal, either in the shape of the grassy inlets or of the shrubbery groups."

In another chapter he says:

"When the grounds are as large as from three to four acres separate groups of each genus of tree should be planted. For instance, exceedingly effective groups can be formed by planting a mass consisting of three of four varieties of pines, another of eucalyptus in variety, another of spruce and fir, another of a variety of evergreen oaks, another of our native laurel, another of redwood, another of cedar and so on; and again, these may be planted so as to form combinations. Such trees as the maple and sycamore or cedar and coast redwood combine beautifully, but it must be remembered that grouping round headed trees with those which are of pyramidal habit is a mistake. Round headed trees must be combined with round heads and trees of a pyramidal habit with their own kind, for the mixing of these two shapes in the same group mars the effect and ruins the composition."

Immediately after this Mr. McLaren gives a series of nine planting plans suitable for properties of different dimensions from a 40 foot lot to a place of several acres. The key to each of these plans has every tree and shrub, or group of them, carefully numbered and named, and the plans themselves show surpassing knowledge and skill. "It is safe to predict," says a reviewer of this book, "that with practical features such as these the volume will at once place itself in and maintain the position of the standard work on landscape and flower gardening in California for all time." Another practical feature is seen in the instructions for the preparation of the ground.

"In preparing the ground," says the park superintendent, "which should be done after the house site has been selected and the outlines of the drives and walks staked, it is necessary to remember when grading or leveling always to keep the good or surface soil at the top, not burying it, as is too often done by contractors. When the ground is graded and shaped to the lines as planned it should then be plowed or trenched. Where the grounds are large use the ordinary plow followed by the subsoil plow; stir the subsoil, if possible, 24 inches deep. After plowing follow with a heavy harrow, selecting dry weather, and only when the soil is reasonably dry and not wet enough to stick to the harrow or clog the harrow teeth; then cross plow and reharrow. For small grounds trenching must be resorted to."

A detailed description of trenching follows, and the advice that if the soil is of an adhesive nature or where the subsoil is of stiff clay drainage should be resorted to, as no matter how well the soil may be cultivated or how heavily it may be manured, good results will be impossible if the soil is waterlogged. Tile draining is advised as the most satisfactory course, but if tiles can not be obtained, a foot of rough rock placed in the bottom of the drain ditch, the whole covered with sods or long straw, will answer the purpose very well.

A thing of beauty is verily a joy forever, but who would dream of this infinitude of tiresome detail and expenditure of labor? Nine-tenths of us think that flowers grow as naturally as the sun shines, but there are those who are willing to go even to these pains to have a home and garden aglow with trees and blossoms.

To one of these patient gardeners who thinks that a fresh, green lawn would be a desirable adjunct to his well planned house a few forcible hints are given anent the sowing of the proper seed. "The grass which makes the best lawn," says Mr. McLaren, "is Kentucky bluegrass. The mixing of clover or any other grass seed with Kentucky bluegrass is not recommended. When purchasing the seed see that it is perfectly clean and fresh, the quantity required being about half a pound of seed to 150 square feet of lawn. It must be sown as evenly as possible, a time for sowing being selected when there is absolutely no wind; as the seed is very light too much stress can not be laid upon this point. Immediately after sowing the ground must be raked very lightly with an iron rake. None of the seed must be moved or dragged into bunches, the object of this raking being to cover the seed not more than a quarter of an inch and to have it as evenly distributed as can be managed. If this Kentucky bluegrass can be successfully sown it makes the best lawn, the closest turf and the most velvety surface and is well worth the preliminary trouble. The other strong grass seeds, as the English rye and the orchard, are apt to run into bunches or tufts."

Much valuable advice is detailed in the rest of the chapter, especially regarding the dandelion, which the writer says on no account should be permitted to seed, because only if one flower stalk or head is allowed to ripen its seeds it will, in a short period, completely ruin a lawn. There are myriads of seeds in one of these flower tops, and when they are allowed to spread they spring up in a few days and do immense damage.

As regards the most beautiful flowering trees and shrubs, the writer speaks of a large number suitable for propagation in California, particularly acacia, of which plant there are nearly 400 species, over 100 species having been introduced into California and proved to be perfectly hardy, growing freely in any soil and standing exposure to our harshest winds, while one species at least rivals the hardiest trees in standing salt winds growing almost within touch of salt spray on the poorest land. One of the species, acacia baileyana, a very early bloomer, opens its great bundles of yellow flowers at the beginning of January. Its silvery fernlike foliage, blending with its beautiful flowers, makes it a charming object in garden or shrubbery. It grows to the height of 30 feet. The acacia species is a profuse bloomer, and can be counted upon to flourish with ordinary care.

The different varieties of maple are highly ornamental, and the sugar maple is one of the very best of our deciduous trees. The Japanese maple and its varieties make an effective shrubbery group, their deeply cut, variously tinted leaves being exquisitely beautiful, while our native species becomes a handsome tree of large proportions, with a stem often three feet or more in diameter, with branches to the height of 20 feet, its spread of limbs shading an area from 75 feet to 100 feet across. The horse chestnut and the shrub known as Turk's Cap as well as the alder, almond, arbutus, azalea, banksia, camellia and japonica all do well in California and the last named has marvelously delicate, waxlike blossoms of great purity of tint.

The celebrated silver tree also takes kindly to the California climate and soil. The seeds must be obtained from South Africa, where in the region of the cape of Good Hope it grows to a height of 30 feet. It gets its name from its leaves, which are of a soft, silvery white color and densely covered with white, silky hairs. If kept in a warm sheltered situation it becomes when in health a striking ornamentation. Especially should care be taken not to overwater the young shoots, which should be kept in a warm greenhouse after their first springing from the seed.

Just opposite in character and habit is the noble and symmetrical beech, which requires so little atention in the eastern states and in Europe, but which in California needs good shelter and a fairly good soil. Its chief requirement is plenty of moisture, as it seldom reaches its best excepting when close to a pond or water course. The purple leaved variety seems to be the favorite for this state, although it is not advisable, according to authority, to attempt propagation here.

Says Mr. McLaren: "California is justly proud of its oaks, and it is hoped that owners of fine specimens will preserve them as long as possible, remembering that it takes at least a hundred years to grow them, and that many of our grand specimen oaks were large trees when Drake and Balboa first visited the coast."

The pepper tree, mountain ash, Spanish broom, the lilac, the yew, coral bush, elm, California laurel and swamp cypress are varieties all well known in California, and are species which when planted have added greatly to the character and outlook of the landscape. Many of these may be seen in the park, but are either passed over or classed merely as "trees" or shrubs" by the casual observer, to whom all trees look alike; but to the eye trained to behold the fine and delicate markings on the leaves, the shape and conformity of the branches, the network of irregular leaf veins, all of which are nature's infallible signs to the student of forestry, the distinctions between the different growths are no less interesting than they are sure.

Of the climbing and twining shrubs perhaps the wistaria is the best known and loved. According to the author of "Gardening in California," the genus contains about five species, which delight in a light and rich soil, which causes the shrub to produce branches sometimes 100 feet in length on each side of the main stem, giving gorgeous masses of bloom in the early spring. In Japan the wistaria is the theme of song and story, the variety bearing white flowers and another bearing lilac flowers with purple wings being the best known and most popular.

The writer of this remembers an old fashioned garden where the sun used to beat down warmly at noontime and where were found many quaint, sweet smelling flowers, that some way have never seemed to bloom since. Quaint, too, and odd, were the conceits springing in our minds as we picked some familiar flower to pieces to "see how it was made." The pansy was plainly "the little old man washing his feet"; the bush of purple Canterbury bells were the veritable bells that rung when Dick Whittington was on his way to London; the passion vine, with its well defined cross, was the cross on which the Savior died and which we never passed without a shudder over that awful day when the sun was darkened, and the ferns that grew near by in a network of delicate green fronds were the "fairies' dust brushes." Life was all poesy and fanciful imagery then, and no thought of the trained skill and study necessary to keep "one's green things a-growing" was in our minds.

"Will you have a rockery here?" asked an obsequious gardener once of a wealthy patron for whom he was laying out the grounds of his newly bought mansion site. "No," said the owner peremptorily, "dig me a pond. There's nothing like water to vivify a scene."

Though roughly put, the above is true. All garden and landscape authorities coincide in this act. Special stress is laid upon it in the desirable things for California gardens. This is how our park wizard thinks of it.

"Where grounds have the required space water effects should be introduced, nothing in nature being more brilliant in its effects than water, whether in motion, tumbling in creek form, which is perhaps the most striking of all, or in repose in pond or lake.

"The size or extent of the body of water should, of course, be in proportion to the extent of the improved grounds. A glimpse of a river or creek in the background gives an ideal finish to an otherwise charming landscape, while a modest water effect in pond shape adds a beauty to the smaller garden or grounds such as nothing else can possibly give. If the surface of the pond be covered with floating water lilies and the borders planted with the semiaquatics, such as the Japanese iris or the calla lily, what more delightful and fairylike effect can be imagined? A small lake bordered with willow and pine is a wonder study, and if the night blooming cereus or lotus be somewhere near the effect one is apt to realize one's most joyous imagery of such a spot.

"In sharp contrast to the quiet and peaceful beauty afforded by the introduction of pond, river or lake effects into a landscape comes the tale of the reclamation of the sand dunes which once formed the whole of the thousand acres constituting the park area. Sand reclamation is a matter which deeply interests the dwellers in the coast counties of California, and the recalling of the manner in which the park commissioners of San Francisco overcame the difficulties of sand reclamation will not be amiss in this history of gardening. The sand is formed of small particles of granite, clean and sharp, without any vegetable matter, and it has no clay or other soil mixed with it, even in the smallest proportion. On account of the almost constant action of the wind it was formerly kept ever on the move, and in heavy gales drifted like snow, being sometimes moved in a single day to a depth of three or four feet and often being carried a distance of over a hundred.

"How to tie this moving mass of sand and to hold and bind it from drifting was the first problem of the park builders.

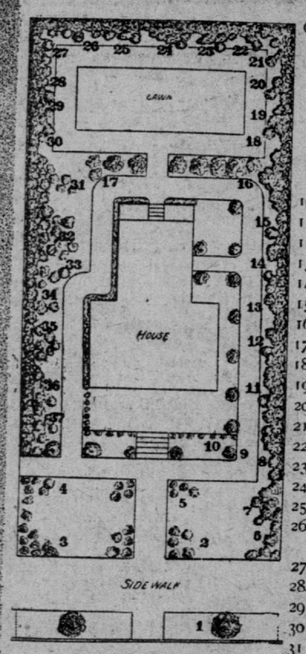
"The first experiment tried was the sowing of barley seed thickly over the entire area, harrowing and cross harrowing the sand so as to cover the seed. In due course the seed sprouted and grew to a height of several inches, covering the sand and holding it fairly well for a few months, but, on account of the barley being a shallow rooter and an annual dying out in a few months, it failed to hold the sands together after July, and the winds of August started them moving again.

"The next attempt was made with the yellow lupin, a strong growing, perennial shrub, a native of this section. This proved successful only in the protected parts of the district.

"Then the sea bent grass, a native of the maritime countries of Europe and used successfully in all the coast countries of that continent, was experimented with. This plant had been used in Denmark, but France, Holland, Italy, Spain and Great Britain had also reclaimed many thousands of acres by means of this wonderful sand binder, and it proved its worth in California when the seeds were procured from France, sown in the nursery, the plants taken up at the age of two years and removed to the sand district, where they immediately took root and by their tremendous root growth held the billowing sands together and laid the foundation of one of the most wonderful park gardens in the world."

On this 1,000 acre tract, originally a bleak waste of drifting sand, may now be found groves of superb trees, natives of both hemispheres and all the continents. Here one may see the cedars of Lebanon and of Mount Atlas, the cedars of the Himalayas, the araucarias of Chile and Brazil, the feathery, foliaged magnolia of the southern states, the elms of New England and the sequoias, cypresses and pines of our own state. In addition may be found the yews of old England and the fragrant acacias of Australia, together with groves of bamboos, masses of gayly flowering camellias and rhododendrons and stately rubber trees, while hundreds of varieties of other trees and shrubs are there, all healthy and happy in their new surroundings and speaking worlds for the genial climate of the Golden state and the kindly care, wise knowledge and loving skill bestowed upon them by John McLaren, gardener, florist, botanist and landscape engineer, and his corps of able and willing men.

Planting List



75' x 150'

PLANTING LIST

For Lot 75' x 150'

Group No.	
1	Huntingdon Elm
2	Retinospora obtusa
3	Pittosporum eugenoides
4	Escallonia rosea
5	Choisya ternata
6	Euonymus Japonica aurea
7	Coprosma Baueriana
8	Bamboo
9	Buxus sempervirens
10	Wistaria
11	Aucuba sempervirens
12	Roses
13	Viburnum tinus
14	Roses
15	Acacia armata
16	Grevillea robusta
17	Cerassus lauro-cerassus
18	Cerassus lauro-cerassus
19	Lilac
20	Lawson Cypress
21	Philadelphus
22	Poplar
23	Acacia latifolia
24	Hawthorn and Diervillea
25	Birch and Leptospermum
26	Linden and Acacia fragrans
27	Corynocarpus
28	Ligustrum and Broom
29	Cestrum
30	Portugal Laurel
31	Roses and Eugenia latifolia
32	Rhododendron Catawbiense
33	Mayterus boaria
34	Callistemon
35	Magnolia grandiflora and Hydrangea
36	Photinia arbutifolia
37	Daphne and Spiræa

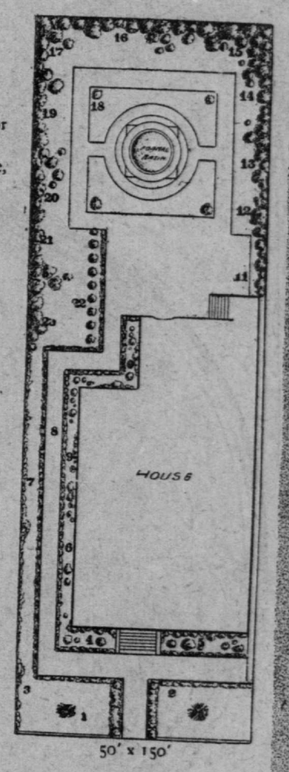
[23]

Gardening in California

PLANTING LIST

For Lot 50' x 150'

Group No.	
1	Phœnix Canariensis
2	Border of Violets or Ivy or Creeping Juniper
3	Climbing Roses, Honeysuckle, Clematis, etc
4	Choisya ternata.
5	Veronica decussata
6	Aralia Seiboldii
7	Bougainvillæa
8	Walk
9	Aucuba
10	Viburnum tinus grandiflora
11	Pittosporum.
12	Grevillea robusta
13	Euonymus and Pyrus Japonica.
14	Acacia Cultriformis and Lilac
15	Acacia mollissima
16	Escallonia rosea and Philadelphus.
17	Acacia dealbata and Spiræa
18	Thuya gigantea
19	Leptospermum lavægatum and Diervillea
20.	Bamboo
21	Coprosma Baueriana
22	Boxwood
23	Aucuba Japonica



50' x 150'

TWO OF THE DETAILED HOME GARDENING PLANS FROM MR. McLAREN'S BOOK

MOVING A PALM 35 FEET HIGH AND WEIGHING OVER 40 TONS