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SWISS SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC.)

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Swiss Chalet, Hamilton : Sunday, 31st May, 1970, 12.30 p.m.

HEDY'S CORNER:

Not only does an expert on Swiss vegetables give us advise in this column, but in this issue it gives me great pleasure to introduce a talented landscape gardener. If there are some aspects of a general nature about which you would like to know more, write a letter to the Editor of "Helvetia" and it will be passed on to our expert.

The Modern Garden

The slogan "back to nature" presents my theme of gardening advise in a nutshell. Observing nature, in our specific case New Zealand bush, we are struck by its natural and overwhelmingly repetitive rhythm of colour, texture and form, untouched by human hands. This work of nature has character; nothing is over-accentuated or untidy, but bears the imprint of nature's laws.

What connection has this with the modern garden? Above all: what meaning has a garden in our life?

Many gardens show evidence of a strictly practical function: the drive and path leading to garage and front door; there is some lawn, but the shrubs dotted about follow no logical idea why they have been planted on a particular spot. As for behind the house, the destined place for outdoor living, it is best not to look.

The modern garden has only one thing in common with the above-described one: the practical angle. This is, however, softened and beautified and it serves the demands of modern living. Such a garden has much more in common with architecture than with botany. Plants are evaluated on their shape and texture properties. These construction materials and their placing are the decisive key. The materials chosen depend on individual taste and finance, but above all the choice of plant variety must be limited.

I suggest: go and have a good look at some bush. The eye does not get bewildered by a thousand different species of plants, and they do grow dotted in repetitive groups, nor are flowers amassed in plots.

Thus, in a modern garden, one also repeats certain plant ideas to achieve character. One underlines special beauty, such as a garden sculpture or a finely-shaped tree. Of course the choice of plants may be greater than that which grows in the bush, and generally there need not be any restriction to the imagination.

"You can do everything, if you can DO it", a garden architect at the landscaping school once said to me. —H.S.