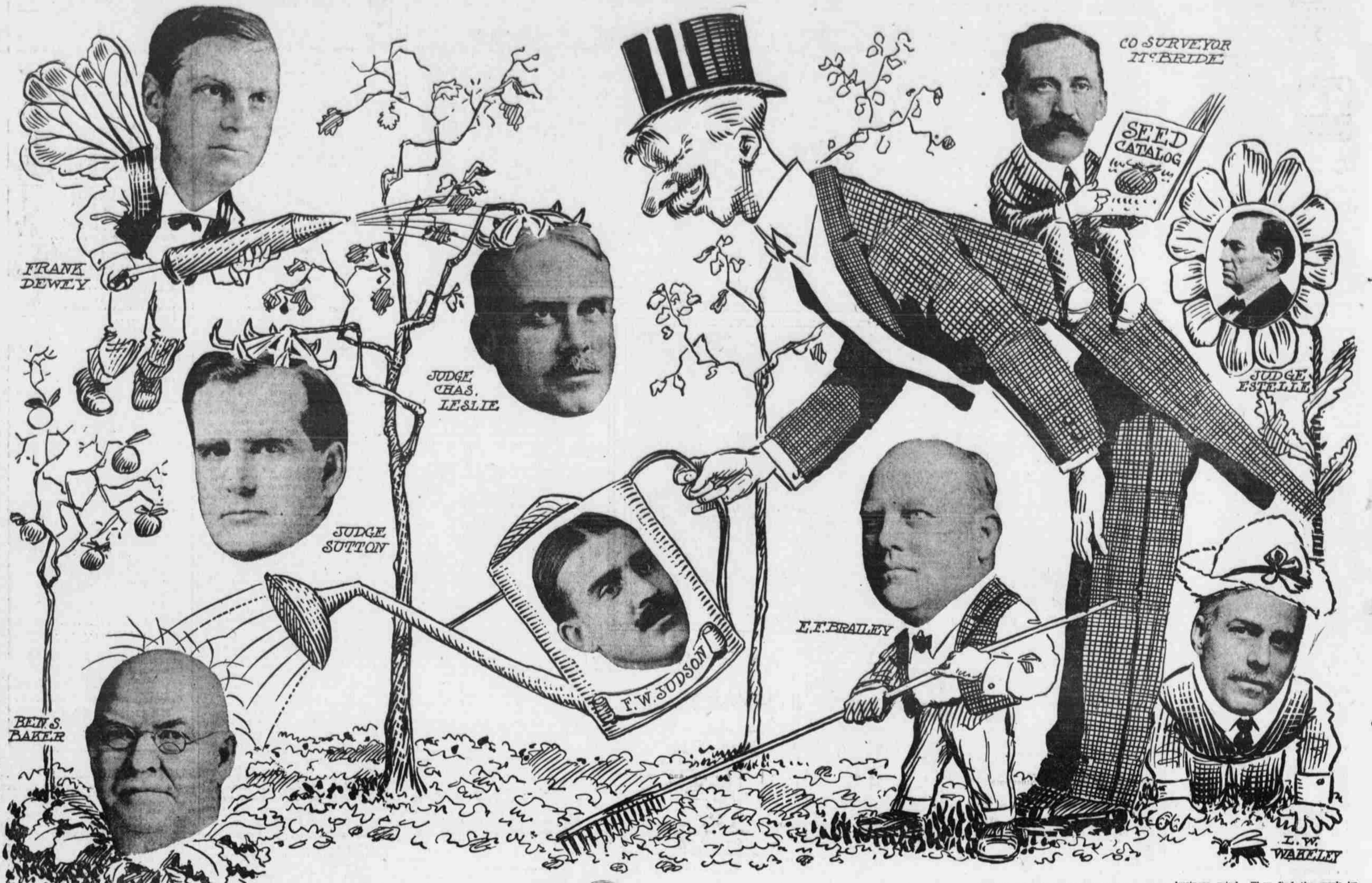


Amateur Gardening a Popular Diversion of Omaha Citizens



You may cut, pull and scatter the weeds as you will, but the root of the weeds will stay with you still.

OM MOORE never wrote those exact words, of course, but he did write in that measure of the scent of the roses. The weeds have no scent except now and again a very disagreeable one, but they are more tenacious of life than any tame plant that grows, except, possibly, the politician.

Dr. Connell, the health commissioner, is the official in charge of the weeds in Omaha, but Street Commissioner Flynn is the official executioner. They have the assistance, largely involuntary and altogether unwilling, of an army of citizens. These latter are engaged, primarily, in cultivating lawns and gardens, but a very large percentage of their time is given over to a never-ending battle with weeds, dandelions and wire grass.

As to dandelions, Judge George Day says there is one easy way to kill them beyond redemption. "After much study and wrestling with the problem, and with the pesky interloper itself," says Judge Day, "I have come to the conclusion that the sure and sure way, the sane and satisfactory method of dealing with the dandelion, so that it will not spring up anew immediately you have turned your back on its slaughtered remains, is to build a three-inch concrete monument over it. Do this wherever the dandelion butts in and you will never be troubled with them again."

Wire Grass a Vicious Growth.

In the matter of wire grass, the savants are not so certain. Charles T. Walker, the advertising man of King-Swanson, has delved exclusively into the history, habits and life of wire grass, and after much travail of mind and sacrifice of temper and finger cuticle, admits he knows of no sure remedy.

"The best way is to hire a man built close to the ground to do the detective act," says Walker. "If he is not too easily discouraged he will go carefully over the lawn and garden and carefully apply a stump puller to each branch of this natural seed of the wire trust. He may get it out that way, but he will leave the spot as bare as grass as the frog is of hair. My back aches, and my mind hurts, when I discuss this thing; but otherwise, I like gardening. It's one of the things where a person stoops to become elevated, and where dirty fingers indicate a high state of cultivation."

B. J. Scannell, of the Paxton Real Estate company, is an expert on weeds when he has a sharp sickle in hand. "The only way to garden successfully," says Scannell, "is to go after the outlaw plants sharply in every spare moment. If my garden blooms like a gorgeous flower, it is only because I get up earlier and stay up later than some people I could name. My specialties are salpiglossis, viper's bugloss and Jacob's ladders, and my handiest, most effective implement is a murderous knife. Of course, I do not use it on the elegant plants named, but as a defense against piratical intruders in a well-kept garden the knife excels the hoe very appreciably."

Many Kinds of Gardeners.

But right here the question should be asked, Are you among the amateur gardeners of Omaha? And if you are, what kind of a gardener are you?

Do you do your gardening standing up or by getting close down to the root of



gardens. He also has a few strings of "mushrooms" gathering fragrance on a sandy knoll in easy reach of the house, and is saving his pennies to buy ice for them at a later date. Mr. Thomas has a penchant for sweet corn and on July 4 a dish of succulent ears was the decorative feature at his place at table. To see Thomas wield a hoe and yank a weed at the same time indicates an early training along the right line. He insists he will have some spicy potatoes of his own raising to stock the cellar in the fall and will not borrow or lend any of that particular crop. "It requires genius to raise potatoes this kind of a season," he says, "and when I have mine raised they are going to be planted again, maybe behind lock and key. I went shy on them too often in the army to take any chances on a spud famine this winter. With a potato, an onion, colarabi and a pig shank, flanked by a mushroom, nothing can frighten me at meal time."

Some Prairie Park Experts.

"Bert" King, Omaha manager of the Dempster Mill Manufacturing company, is a scientific gardener who studies the "scale of inches" when the time comes to lay out his plots. "My recipe is work," says Mr. King, "and then some more work. Seeds are necessary to a limited degree, perhaps, but the fork, the hoe and a large proportion of elbow grease are the main ingredients of a successful garden. Overmuch sleep will spoil your patch. Keep going yourself, keep every-

training on the golf links is said to account for this facility as a bug destroyer. "If I don't catch 'em first they'll catch my flowers napping and paralyze them," says Mr. Judson. "But with the good old fashioned kind of plants and blooms I don't have as much trouble as other folks do with the more fanciful kinds. A hollyhock is much easier to get along with than a pansy, for instance, and a gentle rose of good breeding pleases me more in my hours of leisure than a fussy rhododendron. I like to revel in a riot of fragrance when my mind feels like it needed filing. The effect is softening and seems to set the soul running smooth again."

John L. Kennedy, William A. DeBord, Judge A. L. Sutton Judge Howard Kennedy, Judge Lee Estelle, County Judge Leslie are a typical group of law doctors who take delight in forgetting abstruse legal puzzles while they strive to make elegance and grace take the place of ugliness and disorder in their garden spots. In fact, it is hard to find a man with a home place who does not claim some degree of cleverness as a gardener, either with vegetables or flowers.

Business Men as Gardeners.

W. S. Wright and H. J. Hughes are two typical business men who engage in agricultural pursuits most earnestly, on city lots. Mr. Wright, a well-versed upholder of style of architecture, runs to the generously spreading alfalfa plant, on the larger areas. When he has it ready for stacking he exercises the pleasant habit of calling in a choice bunch of friends who need a little exercise and gives them an opportunity to show their ability as harvesters with rakes and pitchforks. Then he treats them to strengthening prescriptions compounded of barley and pure water. Mr. Wright does cultivate some potes in beds, though, and he is credited with having the loving touch that gets results.

Mr. Hughes confesses to being an interested experimenter with rare varieties of growth, some of which it is difficult to find elsewhere. He is never discouraged, having an inborn love for flowers and shrubs, and by continuous personal effort succeeds in winning the compliments of admiring friends.

McBride Makes Large Claim.

County Surveyor McBride lays claim to having the best garden in the state, for its size, and has a natural talent for laying out and cultivating plants. Sheriff Brailey swells up a trifle when he talks of his garden, and County Assessor Shriver and his deputy, Harry Consmann, are past masters in the art of coaxing beautiful growths from the soil.

Men like Henry W. Yates and George Joslyn take a pride in extensive cultivation of flowering plants and shrubs, and while they do not do the actual work that class of men, with large grounds and ample means, as a rule know a good deal about the various kinds of flowers and trees, from observation and study.

In even the most humble quarters of Omaha, the observer will be able to find delicious prospects of glowing color, large or small, where loving hands have planted, tended and trained bed and window boxes, and the grouping varies with almost every display. In some sections, like Prairie park, the Field club district, Fairacres, Bemis park, the upper Farnam street district and others that might be named nothing is to be seen but green lawns decked with flower beds, climbing beauties all about the houses, and shrubbery in clumps and single bushes. More and more every year the "gardening hunch" is spreading among the men whose days are given over to the business grind. They find the work improves their health, keeps them physically fit if they go at it with a vim, and brings to their minds again the almost forgotten peaceful trend of the old boyhood time.

Why Are Weeds?

Being the official weed cutter, "Tom" Flynn has gleaned some ideas about weeds that he likes to talk about. "Investigation shows the weed is, like all outlaws, a crafty proposition. Very often you will reach down to pull a weed and find that the root is snugly located far from where the branches show. Why is this? I have come to the conclusion it is for protection of the root, so that whatever happens to the shoots the parent stalk will be left. Now, why did nature make this provision, if weeds are entirely useless and detrimental to the cultivation of useful plants? In the matter of medicinal herbs, we may admit the desirability of this sort of secrecy, but we find it quite universal in the whole tribe of undesirables in the plant kingdom. And I have often wondered why these plant pests have such a strong constitution. Nothing seems to discourage them, while beautiful products of the soil in the same patch, having all sorts of care, will wither and fade away. Perhaps it is because the cultivated things get too much care and should be left alone after planting, on the principle that 'the watched pot never boils.' Weeds are worthy of study, if you only know it, and perhaps none of them are entirely useless."

Some Men Have the "Knack."

J. Y. Craig, superintendent of Forest Lawn cemetery, is an expert on flower gardening, and is one of the men having the "knack" of making things grow just about as he wants them to. He would have made a successful florist, which leads to the remark that observing people often express astonishment at the results achieved by florists. A woman who recently visited Hanscom park and was surprised to learn the simple methods adopted to start certain kinds of plants. "Why, they just had them set in some plain sand," she said, "and they were growing strong."

But there is sand, and sand. "Bank" sand with some humus in it differs very radically from river sand as a foundation for a plant bed.

"Compost holes" are maintained by many of the amateur gardeners of Omaha, wherein they dump all grass cuttings and other refuse likely to enrich the soil. This is covered with earth and allowed to decompose, when it is spread over the places where a rich soil is needed. Good results are sure to follow, according to many who practice this expedient, and at the same time they save the cost of having such stuff hauled off their lots.

Sprayers, large and small, are coming into more general use for the saving of flowers, vegetables, trees and shrubbery from the ravages of insects. One Omaha man recently tried to secure in Omaha a particular kind of sprayer that he carried by a strap over the shoulder, but had to send away for it. "All I could get in Omaha was a hand sprayer," he said, "which is hardly adequate to the work of properly treating a plot of ground where any considerable amount of plants are cultivated."

And it must be said, in order that the truth may prevail, many a man who boasts a grand garden has his wife to blame. He may accept the compliments, but his helpmate smiles happily when friends grow enthusiastic. That the garden is, is sufficient for her.