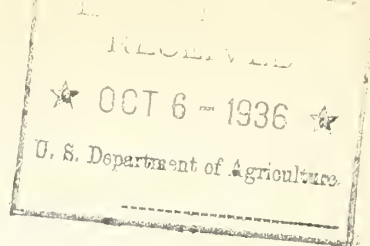


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BEAUTIFYING THE COUNTRYSIDE

A radio talk by Lulie Logan, Assistant State Home Demonstration Agent, Lexington, Kentucky, delivered in the National 4-H club radio Program, August 1, 1936, and broadcast by a network of 55 associate NBC radio stations.

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The trend of 4-H club activities in Kentucky is changing. Where club programs formerly emphasized only the economic side of 4-H projects, they now are broadened to include an active appreciation of pictures and paintings, good music and better singing, dramatics and the beauties of nature around us. Developing these trends has give the club member a desire to conserve beauty wherever it may be found and to try to recreate attractive surroundings where some of the natural beauty has been destroyed.

In Kentucky some bare and unattractive school grounds presented a challenge and an opportunity to our "up and coming" 4-H club members. In Madison county the Red House 4-H homemakers' clubs cooperated to plant the school grounds and to make them a play center for the whole community. Other 4-H and homemakers clubs working together have accomplished outstanding improvements for their communities.

During the past five years, plantings of trees, shrubs, vines and flowers have been made at more than 400 consolidated schools in Kentucky by our 4-H club members who have gone to the hills and nearby woodlands to get the necessary material. When a 4-H club member shares in a community enterprise he has a feeling of ownership and pride in the accomplishment, that makes him a better citizen.

The improvement in these public properties has, in many cases, inspired the boys and girls to make similar plantings around their own homes. With the house, fences and outbuildings all in good repair, home has a new significance for the awakened 4-H club member in Kentucky. He is conscious that a well kept lawn, shady trees, shrubs, vines and flowers all add their share in making a place of beauty which the whole family can enjoy together.

Last year at Junior Week, the annual get-together of 4-H club members at the University of Kentucky, we emphasized the conservation of native plants and wild flowers. Three hundred girls made trips with our field agent in landscaping, to see some interesting formal and informal gardens and to observe the effects gained by the proper selection, planting and care of trees and shrubbery. As a result of this inspiration and information our older 4-H girls are serving as leaders in their communities in a statewide movement to conserve the natural beauties of the communities.

The 4-H club member's interest also extends to his or her community in other ways. The members of a southeastern Kentucky county 4-H club cleared a neglected country church yard of weeds and undergrowth, straightened fallen tombstones, mended the fence and even made some necessary repairs to the church itself. What had been an eye sore, became a beauty spot in the community.

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Two years ago, Mr. J. M. Feltner, field agent in 4-H club work in Eastern Kentucky, started a tree planting program to honor the memory of the late Mr. E. O. Robinson, who gave the University of Kentucky for demonstration purposes, 15,000 acres of mountain land. As a result of Mr. Feltner's beautiful thought two thousand five-hundred trees were planted in one day with appropriate exercises by club members in fourteen mountain counties. It is planned to make this tree planting ceremony an annual memorial.

Kentucky has a wealth of native plants admirably adapted to beautifying the countryside. Kentucky 4-H club members are beginning to appreciate them and to realize that our countrysides are beautiful when they have the eyes to see.

The topography of the state provides a splendid background, and our soil, climate and rainfall are satisfactory for growing a wide variety of plants. Our highways are not straight. They carry travellers over hills and thru valleys in a series of curves that please and continuously change the panorama. In some sections the hillsides and pastures are still well supplied with beautiful old trees that belong to former ages. These and other plants are interesting throughout the entire year.

With us a harbinger of spring is the service berry. Then follow the dogwood and redbud whose glorious blooms have made our state so well known. The rhododendron, mountain laurel, and tulip poplar are never to be forgotten when once seen in their splendor. But not only in the spring of the year, with picnics and tours, are Kentucky 4-H club members made aware that our countrysides present vistas of natural beauty. In the fall, our leaders and agents with their groups tramp thru the woods to gather nuts and bitter sweet, and feast their eyes upon the changed landscape, now brilliant with the variegated foliage of oaks, maples, sweet gum, and sumach. And so it follows that 35,000 4-H club members in Kentucky are combining with their regular farm and home project work, an interest in conserving the natural beauty of their state and in making more beautiful the entire countryside, from our eastern mountains to our lowlands in the west.

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