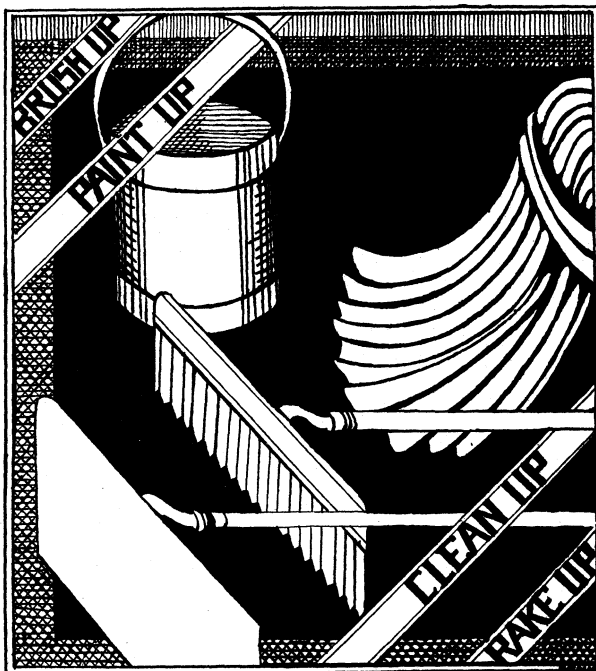


CLEAN UP AND REPAIR OF The Home and Community



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C. ELTON JONES, C. V. PHAGAN

**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK
IN
AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS
STATE OF OKLAHOMA**

D. P. TRENT, Director

OKLAHOMA AGRICULTURAL AND
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CLEAN UP AND REPAIR

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An orderly farm house in good repair with surroundings that are attractive and well kept will add to the comfort, convenience and happiness of each member of the family, and will make that home an asset to the community. The improvement of the home and surroundings is a family activity with father, mother and children making the plans and taking a definite part in carrying them out. After improvements have been made around the home, then the whole community may well join together in plans for cleaning up and improving the school and church buildings and grounds, the cemetery and other places as a means of improving the appearance of the community as a whole and increasing the pride of the people in their own homes and their own communities.

Present economic conditions will not permit many of us to make expenditures for new improvements, but this doesn't mean that there are not a lot of things which we can do at little or no expense and which will increase the comfort and convenience and improve the appearance of our homes and communities, and thus add to the satisfaction and happiness which we can get out of life. When the warm days of spring come and the soil gets mellow and spongy, and the buds begin to open and the grass to peep through the ground, there is a natural yearning in the hearts of most of us to get out and work with the soil and to watch things grow. Let's take advantage of this inclination and make it an occasion for doing everything possible to improve our surroundings. Every member of the family should have a part in making the plans and in carrying them out. There are a lot of things which can be done, such as repairing roofs, fixing screens, replacing broken panes of glass, nailing loose boards, repairing yard fences, grading yards, laying out walks, planting lawns, planting trees and shrubs, planting flowers, destroying rubbish about the place, disposing of discarded machinery, cleaning out fence rows, repairing wells, repairing garden fences and a lot of other things which cost little or nothing but which will add much to the appearance of the place. The children will take an interest in these things and possibly they, more than anyone else, will get joy and happiness out of the improvements made. Aren't they entitled to the most comfortable, and most convenient and most attractive home surroundings which you can make of the place?

Tenants may feel that it is not worth while to improve the places which are owned by some one else, and may feel that the landlord is not interested in what they do, but if they will do these simple inexpensive things and show an interest in their places, it is probable that the landlord will appreciate their efforts and will lend a hand in making further improvements. They may find it possible and desirable to buy the place which they are now renting. Under any circumstances it is worth while to do these inexpensive things to improve the places where they live. Let's all join in the movement and do what we can as individuals and as groups to improve the rural homes and rural surroundings. Let's make the month of April a special occasion for making these improvements.

THE HOUSE

The influence of the home is the strongest force in the life of an individual—child or adult. Habits and ideals developed during childhood largely determine the interest of adult life.

These clean up suggestions have been prepared to help families in planning and carrying out practical, inexpensive improvements in and about the home.

One's first impression of the kind of family that lives in a house is gained from the conditions of the porches and immediate dooryard. Because of lack of storage space provided in many homes, it is necessary to utilize some of the porch space for storage, resulting in a crowded and unsightly appearance.

The neat arrangement of supplies kept on the porch not only adds to the appearance of the home, but keeps the equipment in better condition. Many of the usable tools left on the porch could be cared for in the barn or other outbuildings.

Lasting results from work done on the interior of a house depend largely on its having a water tight roof. Leaks in the roof are disastrous to interior finish. In a great majority of cases the stopping of such leaks is only a matter of a few sound shingles and a few minutes or a few hours time.

Foundations should be leveled up if possible in order that doors may swing freely. While it is highly desirable that all floors should be level, this is not absolutely essential to the making of a livable house. A room with one corner of the floor an inch or two lower than another can still be made attractive.

Time spent with a hammer and nails fastening down loose boards pays dividends in service and appearance. A loose corner of a board, while not yet unsightly, will allow the weather to enter and soon begins to deteriorate.

Door knobs, locks and loose hinges on doors and windows may be repaired with only the cost of time and effort. The thrifty homemaker makes small repairs before greater damage requires expense or merely "getting along" with broken equipment.

A box for various sizes of nails, tacks, screws and bolts will be found helpful in the upkeep of the house.

One of the most unsightly and uncomfortable features of a run down house is a broken window. Light, ventilation and heat are impaired by poor window panes.

Broken panes, well repaired with tape or heavy building paper, will last quite a while. Odd shaped pieces of glass may be purchased at a reduced price and cut to fit the window.

Clean, polished windows improve a home as much from the outside as from the inside. If paint or other spots are on the glass, they should be removed either by gently scraping to prevent scratching or by rubbing off with turpentine or gasoline.

One of the quickest and most satisfactory methods of window washing is to add about two tablespoonfuls of kerosene to a quart of warm water and apply to the window with a soft cloth. Rub dry and polish with crushed newspaper. Rubbing with paper gives the glass a good polish.

Window and door screens are easily punctured, so they should be cared for properly when in use and repaired as soon as a worn place appears.

Heavy mosquito netting at the windows and doors is quite satisfactory for temporary use. Lath or strip of heavy building paper or cardboard around the turned under edges improves the lasting qualities.

Window shades need repair if they are to look neat on the windows. The roller may be adjusted at the ends so it will roll easily, and when the lower end of the curtain becomes wrinkled and torn, it should be cut off, rehemmed and a new stick made for the hem.

Good shades may be made of heavy canvas, muslin or toweling and placed on the rod containing the spring of a worn out curtain.

If curtains are to be used at the windows, they should be easily washed and kept clean.

Materials such as scrim, muslin, cheesecloth and dimity are laundered in the same way as cotton dress material. The bluing should not be too deep if the material is thin. Thin starch (about three teaspoonfuls of starch to one quart of water) gives the best results for curtains.

The curtains should be ironed in straight lines, keeping the selvage straight and even. If curtains are ironed crosswise instead of lengthwise, they may be too short when finished.

Tie-backs help to keep the curtains from getting soiled against the window or screen, and admit more light and fresh air.

During a general clean-up it is always well to select a bright, dry day to move the furniture and rugs out on the porch or grass. The sunshine and air will be a great help in a thorough cleaning.

The floors and woodwork should be cleaned with warm, soapy water, rinsed with clear, warm water and dried before the furnishings are moved back into the house.

If the walls are painted, they too may be cleaned as the woodwork, but if papered, should be cleaned well with a stiff brush, then wiped down with a cloth.

Repair work is easily done on the walls when the rooms are empty. Heavy, plain building paper makes a neat wall covering. If whitewash is to be used on the walls, the formula given on page --- of this circular may be used with good results.

A piece of wood or old metal makes a good shoe scraper. Shoe scrapers are especially desirable for the back porch, but are useful at the front steps also. The shoe scrapers is a real labor saver for the housewife and is an aid in increasing the cleanliness of the home. Its use should be encouraged by all members of the family.

THE PREMISES

The family that is not interested in making the home a more attractive place in which to live is an exception to the thousands of families that are putting forth effort towards such improvement. An attractive farmstead is something that cannot be purchased. It can only be obtained through proper planning, planting and maintenance.

Disposal of rubbish. Wornout machinery which has piled up in the yard immediately about the house or in the driveway should be disposed of permanently. That which may have any value for repairs or parts should be placed in a shed or arranged orderly in the rear of the barnyard. Systematic wrecking of old machinery and storage of bolts, nuts and other useful parts so obtained should be a part of the routine of every farm. The cleaning of all fence rows so that they will not serve as a breeding place for insects and disease is a program that should be done now. The paper and weeds should be burned. All leaves and vegetable matter should be piled in some inconspicuous corner, allowed to decay and used as organic matter in enriching the shrub and flower borders that will be made in the future. Tin cans should be hauled away. Rose bushes and other ragged shrubs growing out in the center of the yard should be taken up and heeled in out in the vegetable garden until the ground around the edge of the yard has been prepared for them to be transplanted. All fancy shaped beds which are in the yard in front of the house should be spaded up and grass allowed to cover over the entire yard. The clothes line should be moved to the rear. It should run east and west and be made up of two or three short lengths, rather than one long wire extending the full length of the lawn. This will save space as well as time. The fire wood should be stacked orderly in the rear of the smoke house or garage so that it will be convenient to the kitchen and at the same time out of sight. The grindstone should be placed in the tool shed or in the barnyard.

Foundation, Steps, Walks. A foundation is provided so that the house will not settle unevenly causing the doors to stick and sag. Where native stone is available this can be used to good advantage for underpinning. Lattice panels made out of lath are desirable for placing under the porch. If there are no porches or covered entrances at the front and rear door, these should be provided. These will not only add greatly to the appearance of the house, but serve to keep the rain from beating into the house.

Whenever possible, there should be a platform so that it will not be necessary to step directly from the house on to the ground. Two steps should be provided for every foot difference in elevation between the level of the house and the ground. Native stone will serve for landing at the bottom of the steps as well as for the walk connecting with the driveway or highway. These stones should be large enough to be comfortable to walk on. Holes should be dug and these stones laid so that their surface will be flush with the ground. The stones should be 28 inches apart from center to center.

Lattice work on the porch or entrance will add greatly to the appearance of the house. Flower boxes placed at the windows or on the porch and filled with wandering jew, foliage, petunias or house plants, will work wonders to make the house appear more homelike. A pot or box of hardy flowers and vines requires so little care and adds so much to the beauty and hominess of a place that every homemaker should make an effort to have at least one for the porch during the summer.

Grading and Sodding. No home offers the maximum in comfort and pleasure to the members of the family until the yard has been sodded to keep the dust from blowing in during the dry windy weather, as well as, the mud being carried in during wet seasons. If sod has never been established, the ground should be broken with a plow. If there are large trees on the ground, it will be better to spade it so that their roots will not be injured. If the surface of the ground is not such that the drainage is away from the house in all directions, it will be necessary to do some filling and possibly some cutting. Whenever possible, the cut should balance the fill. That is the soil near the highway may be removed and used to fill in near the house. In grading, the area around the house should be almost level and slope gently out to the road. After the grade has been established, several loads of well rotted manure should be scattered evenly over the entire yard. Screen it with a sand screen or one made of chicken wire. Manure should be well worked into the soil before the bermuda roots are planted. The roots should be planted in April in furrows 18 inches apart and one bunch every 12 inches in the furrow. They should be covered with a rake. If a small roller is available, the entire yard should be rolled at this point to make sure of its being perfectly level. Native grass can be used where Bermuda is not desired.

On farmsteads which are subject to water which flows over them from higher grounds, grading is not complete until a hillside ditch or preferably a terrace has been constructed to intercept such water. In addition to the convenience of not having this water to contend with, such protection is in most sections of the state essential to satisfactory yard development and plantings.

Fencing. Fences, regardless of what they are made, are a necessity for an attractive comfortable home. Log or split rail fences, when substantially built, with logs or rails close enough together, will keep out the livestock, and at the same time really be attractive. Paling fences for the rear and sides of the yard are desirable, but when placed in front of the house, obstruct the view of the lawn. While barbed wire fencing enclosing the yard would serve to keep out the stock, it would be more of an eyesore than a thing of beauty. If at all possible, chicken tight fences should be made to keep out the chickens. Chickens and flowers just don't work well together. Native lumber may be creosoted and used for posts. Detailed instructions for this work will be found in Farmers' Bulletin

Number 744, "The Preservative Treatment of Farm Timbers," which may be obtained from your extension agents. Fences should never be attached to the dwelling. One should be able to walk entirely around the house on grass or walks. Gates which swing freely not only last longer, but offer a substantial saving in both time and temper. Time spent in rehanging gates or straightening and bracing gate posts pays big dividends.

Trees. An attractive setting for the home, whether it exists naturally or has been made through the planting of trees, shrubs, vines and flowers adds contentment to the family life. Trees should be planted not for their beauty alone, but for protection from heat and cold. Long-lived trees, native to the region such as elm, hackberry, sycamore, maple and oak, should be planted in late fall, during the winter or very early spring. They should be planted in groups of uneven numbers, 1, 3 or 5, and not lined up in rows. Trees six to eight feet high are a good size for transplanting. The Chinese elm, although it is not native, withstands the drouth better than any other tree and is one of the most rapid growing. Trees should be planted for windbreaks and shelter belts on the farm, as well as for shade.

Shrubs. Shrubs should not be planted for their flowers alone, but for some useful purpose such as screening off the outbuildings, wood yard, chicken yard or even cultivated land in the adjoining field.

On selecting shrubs for foundation planting, the purpose of which is to tie the house to the ground, those with small leaves and twigs such as honeysuckle, Chickasaw plum, buck bush, (coralberry) and spiraea, which do not grow very high, are among the most desirable.

For border planting the larger shrubs and small trees are useful. Sumac, black alder, red haw, red buck, flowering dogwood, elderberry, wild rose, flowering currant, make interesting naturalistic effects when planted in groups around the sides and rear of the yard. Evergreen, privet and honeysuckle, as well as cedars will make the landscape attractive during the winter months. Such bright flowering shrubs as Japanese quince and golden bell planted with bridal wreath deserve a place in everyones yard. Lilac, mock orange and snowball are other large shrubs which have fragrant flowers and grow to a good size.

Vines. Vines will do more in a shorter length of time to cover bare walls and to provide shade and flowers on the porch than any other form of plant materials. They also will serve to prevent washing on steep slopes and banks where no other form of plants can grow.

Some of the best woody vines are:

Virginia creeper

Trumpet vine

English Ivy—Evergreen

Boston Ivy

Halls Honeysuckle—Evergreen

Wisteria

Bittersweet.

The annual vines are:

Balloon vine

Balsam apple

Cardinal climber

Cypress vine

Hyacinth bean

Morning glory

Annuals. The annual, a plant which grows from seed and flowers in one year, plays the most important part in making the home attractive within a short time. The soil should be thoroughly prepared and well rotted manure added to help hold the moisture. Larkspur and bachelor buttons should be planted in the fall. The castor bean makes an excellent screen. It should not be planted where there are children as the seeds are slightly poisonous. It should not be planted until the soil is warm. The annual larkspur is a blue annual which grows from seed and combines unusually well with hollyhock and canterbury bells. The petunia is a free bloomer, and splendid for use as an edger for the borders, and also for use in window boxes. The corn flower or bachelor button is a blue hardy annual which reseeds itself and blooms from late spring until fall. It does best when planted in the fall. The zinnia offers a wide range of colors from red

through the various shades of orange to white. There are different sizes from giants to the tiny pompons. The verbenia is one of the best ground covers. They often hold their leaves and bloom all through fall.

Other reliable annuals are nasturtium, moss, phlox poppy, salvia, snap dragon and ragged robin.

Perennials. Perennials are plants which live from year to year. They should be planted in masses in front of the shrub borders, preferably in the fall of the year. Some of them need to be taken up and divided after several years.

The most adaptable ones for Oklahoma are:

Hollyhock	Shasta Daisy
Iris	Foxglove
Chrysanthemum	Perennial Sweet Pea
Hibiscus	Canterbury Bells
Delphinium	Gaillardia.

Outbuildings. Outbuildings, too, should have their share of attention. A sound roof, as with the house, is essential. In large sections of Oklahoma, repairs may be made with boards made from native timber. If re-roofing completely, use galvanized iron roofing. This is lasting and fire-proof, and if properly grounded, protects against lightening. Grounding a roof for protection against lightening is neither difficult nor expensive. Directions for doing so may be found in Farmers' Bulletin No. 1512.

Paint and whitewash. Few improvements pay such dividends both in appearance and permanency as paint and whitewash. Cheap paint is a poor investment. The time spent in applying paint is more valuable than the paint itself.

Good ready mixed paint can be obtained from any paint or building supply house. If you prefer mixing your own paints, detailed instructions may be obtained from Farmers' Bulletin Number 145, "Painting on the Farm."

For rough lumber or other surfaces not suited to paint, whitewash is recommended. This improves appearance, protects the surface, and if properly made and applied, will last for several years. Above all it is inexpensive.

The following formulas have proven satisfactory.

Factory Whitewash: (Interior) For walls, ceilings, posts, etc.

(1) Sixty two pounds (1 bushel) quicklime; slake with 15 gallons water; keep barrel covered until steam ceases to rise; stir occasionally to prevent scorching.

(2) Two and one-half pounds rye flower; beat in one-half gallon of cold water; add two gallons of boiling water.

(3) Two and one-half pounds common rock salt; dissolved in two and one-half gallons of hot water.

Mix (2) and (3), then pour into (1) and stir until all is well mixed.

Waterproof Whitewash: (Exterior) For buildings, fences, etc.

(1) Sixty-two pounds (1 bushel) quicklime; slack with 12 gallons of hot water.

(2) Two pounds common table salt; one pound sulphate of zinc; dissolve in two gallons of boiling water.

(3) Two gallons skimmed milk.

Pour (2) into (1), then add the milk (3) and mix thoroughly.

A formula which is suitable for either interior or exterior use and which has given most excellent results follows. Although it is slightly more trouble to make and use than those given above, its use is recommended wherever possible to obtain the ingredients at reasonable cost.

Government Formula: Slake half a bushel of quick or lump lime with boiling water keeping it covered during the process. Strain it and add a peck of salt dissolved in warm water; three pounds ground rice put in boiling water and boiled to a thin paste; half a pound of powdered Spanish whiting and a pound of clear blue, dissolved in warm water; mix these well to-

gether and let the mixture stand for several days. **Keep the wash thus prepared in a kettle or portable furnace; and when used put it on as hot as possible with painter's whitewash brush.**

Note: Alum added to a lime whitewash increases its adhesive quality. An ounce to the gallon is sufficient.

Flour paste answers the same purpose but a preservative such as zinc sulphate should be added.

Molasses renders the lime more soluble and causes it to more deeply penetrate the wood or plaster; a pint of molasses to 5 gallons of whitewash is sufficient.

Silicate of soda solution (about 35 degrees Baume) in the proportion of 1 to 10 of whitewash produces a fire-resistive cement.

A pound of cheap bar soap dissolved in a gallon of boiling water and added to 5 gallons of thick whitewash will impart a gloss like that of oil paint.

Remodel Toilet. One of the most neglected features of a large percentage of Oklahoma farm homes today is the disposal of human wastes. Some form of sanitary toilet is essential. This need not be expensive. In most cases the toilet in use at present can be remodeled to give satisfaction. Such a toilet should have a fly proof and well ventilated vault for the disposal of waste. Plans for this work are contained in extension circular number 289, "Farm Home Sanitation" which may be obtained from your home demonstration or county agent.

Water Supply. Great care should be taken in making the water supply safe from any possible contamination. Failure to provide adequate protection for the well may result in the spread of some common disease such as typhoid fever, dysentery, or diarrhea. These disease germs often find their way into the well through curbings and coverings that are faulty in construction.

The following precautions should be taken in safeguarding the well water supply.

1. See that the casing or curbing is made of impervious material to a depth of at least 6 or 8 feet so that no seepage water can pass through it.

2. Have a water tight covering or platform for the well. If a pump is used, a water tight seal should be provided between pump base and platform.

3. Dig out the top soil around the sides of the well and refill with a good quality of pebbled clap. Make the ground slope away from the well so as to provide good drainage.

4. Livestock, poultry, etc., should be fenced away from the well.

After the above precautions are taken, it is recommended that a sample of the well water be analyzed for possible contamination from some unknown source. The Oklahoma State Department of Public Health will make such tests free of charge for residents of the state. Samples should be mailed to State Health Laboratory, 401 East Second Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Samples should be carefully taken to insure that the water is not contaminated in taking the sample. A bottle which will hold approximately four ounces is the right size. Wash the bottle carefully and put both bottle and cork in a pan of cold water; bring to a boil for at least 30 minutes in order that all germs may be killed. In filling, pump directly from the well into the bottle or, in case a bucket is used, dip the bottle into the water. Care should be taken to keep the outside of the bottle clean until after the water sample is inside. Always pump out several buckets of water before taking the sample. Cork the bottle tightly, pack carefully to prevent breakage, and mail to the State Health Laboratory.

A home that is well kept is a source of pride and pleasure to the family and the community. Comfort and beauty in the home are possible even though the income may be small. Your home can show that by using home labor and the materials at hand, homes can be made convenient and attractive and home life happier.