

WHY LANDSCAPE THE HIGHWAYS

Excerpt from Address

By

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I am not afraid that landscaping of highways will fail to receive public support. My only fear is that the demand for it will out-run the development of sound technique. We need to promulgate a system of improvement and planting which will survive the climatic conditions which jeopardize some of the roadside work done in the first enthusiasm for highway beautification.

In my opinion no highway is complete until its environs have been treated, and the time is coming when the public, quickly educated to new standards in road building, will not feel that the job is well done unless this detail is taken care of.

Eventually, the wise thing to do, I believe, will be to utilize natural growth adapted to existing conditions and able to withstand lack of moisture and the constant attention which is available in the upkeep of city parks.

The movement to landscape roadsides has had an obvious influence upon maintenance engineers. We witness everywhere a better kept right of way, frequently mowed, with debris gathered up, not to mention the note of art introduced into the construction of bridges and the location of new paving.

We have to pinch ourselves in Missouri because of the revolution we have worked in road transportation during the past 15 years. We thought that when we got out of the mud the highway problem would be solved; now, so much of life is spent in the motor car that the highway in a sense has taken the place of the home, and we must consider the social, physical and cultural factors which enter into the new picture.

The Missouri State Highway Department has placed emphasis upon roadside improvement, and its action has been approved in all sections of the State, both urban and rural. In my opinion it more than pays for itself in added use of highways, not only by our own citizens, but by tremendously augmented travel by motorists from the outside. After all, the greater the use of the highway the greater the revenue. Our road system is built and maintained out of taxes paid in large part according to the volume of travel. Time cannot be lost in landscaping. Every year means much, and if we are going to plant at all we had better do it now.