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BULK THIRD-CLASS

Guest Column —

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tural aesthetics regardless of its agricultural or industrial basis. Examples include the Hanging Gardens of Babylon—one of the wonders of the ancient world; the development of the solarium, a prototype greenhouse, by the Romans; the palace and gardens of Versailles in France; the greens and informal landscapes of the English, and our own Peace Garden, a great tourist attraction.

In a young and developing community, people are vitally involved in producing the necessities of life—food, clothing and shelter; consequently, little time is available for the finer things of life. As a society matures, more time and resources become available. With more leisure and affluence comes security. North Dakota is now at this stage of development. We no longer need to devote our total assets and energies to the basic needs, but we must also consider other aspects of living to continue growing.

Research, extension and teaching in horticulture and forestry deal with a group of plants—trees, shrubs, flowers and turf—that are functional as well as aesthetic. The farmstead shelterbelt is functional, but its natural beauty throughout the year is aesthetic.

Perhaps a major effect of the functional and aesthetic use of plants is best shown by landscape

plantings around homes, roadsides, parks, golf courses and industrial sites. Projects of renovation, coupled with the use of plants, will aid in stabilizing the rural and small town populations, because they develop a pleasing or aesthetic appearance. Larger towns have recognized the aesthetics of the use of plants by establishing forestry departments, malls, parks and pleasing ornamental plantings. Economic value of such plantings is hard to measure in conventional dollars and cents, but citizens can be proud of their environment and satisfied, stable citizens. To keep North Dakota alive we must consider the needs and desires of its people.

Personal sentiments of pleasure, of sadness or of achievement can be expressed by ornamentals. The value of ornamental plants as a therapeutic agent has been demonstrated. Enrollment in horticulture at the educational level is at its highest.

People need aesthetics to enrich their life style. Civic leaders, teachers and researchers must realize that aesthetics in the human environment are a necessary part of society. They should not completely focus on dollars and cents or bushels and pounds. No one questions the importance of financial returns, but another reality is the need for the aesthetics which can give lasting satisfaction and stability to the quality of life of North Dakota's most important resource—its people.