

THE FRINGED GENTIAN

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WINTER - STORMS

JANUARY - THE SNOW MOON

Heavy snowfalls are necessary to cover the earth in this latitude, playing a beneficent part towards vegetation. It acts like a blanket, keeping in the warmth, preventing excessive freezing of the ground. As well as protecting it against a too rapid evaporation of its moisture, and by its occasional melting contributing to the soil.

January is a period of quiet and repose. Nature is only sleeping, since its work is done for the present, while we enjoy a cheery fire of logs during the long nights.

February's cold often sinks to a low level in this area staying there for long spells adding a fresh sparkle to the earth's blanket of snow.

Yet before long its winter into spring, especially if we think of the quotation by Coleridge-

"And Winter, slumbering in the open air,
Wears on his smiling face a dream of Spring!"

AN INTERESTING VOLUME FOR WINTER READING

"NORTH WITH THE SPRING"

By Edwin Way Teale

A naturalist's record of a 17,000 mile journey with the North American spring illustrated with photographs by the author.

Reading this book makes us all want to do what the author did - go south in winter and then follow the spring northward. Nowhere else in the world is the season more varied or beautiful than in Eastern North America. It moves up the continent at the average rate of about 15 miles a day.

Starting in the vast Everglades, where the seasons overlap and spring begins for the United States, the journey continued through 23 states for 130 days, swinging back and forth behind the advancing front of spring. Day after day you drift north with the spring, from cypress swamps and delta marshes to the Mountains of New England and the boundary of Canada.

Edwin Way Teale is one of our great naturalists and writers.

File this issue with the others in your "Fringed Gentian" green cover.

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AMARYLLIS or HIPPEASTRUM

Lily-of-the-Palace

Long a favorite with indoor gardeners, one of the most colorful and easily grown. It has the largest flower it is possible to grow in the home.

There are many species of them and are quite able to withstand the special disadvantage of indoor culture.

The large bulbs should be potted in early winter in soil composed of 2 parts of loam, 1 part decayed manure and 1 part sand. Some leafmold can be added. The flowers are produced before the leaves in late winter.

Plant the bulbs with neck and top above the soil or $\frac{2}{3}$ of the bulb above the surface in pots twice the diameter of the bulb.

They succeed in the temperature of an ordinary home. As soon as the flower bud is seen emerging from the bulb, put the plant in a window where it will obtain plenty of sunlight.

Since they are heavy feeders, an application of liquid cow manure for those in pots is preferred. Sheep manure and bone meal are the next best for them.

Linnaeus, the great naturalist named the genus Amaryllis.

HERRING GULLS

The most conspicuous birds on many of the lakes from early spring to early winter are the Herring Gulls, so often referred to as Sea Gulls.

They are powerful flyers and graceful swimmers, riding high on the waves regardless how stormy it may be. Yet they are not divers or fishermen, like Loons, Cormorants, various ducks and others. They are great scavengers and keep lake surfaces clean but they do not dive.

Most of them slowly move southward in late fall or early winter, stopping to feed on golf courses and open water in large flocks. During early winter they are seen resting on the ice near open water, seemingly reluctant to leave.

A flock of several hundred were noted by your editor December 5th, about 50 miles south of Minneapolis. They had been there several weeks. On the 6th of December ice had formed over the entire lake during the previous night and they were gone.

ACID SOIL

Give plants that require acid soil an application once a year of equal parts of Aluminium Sulphate, Iron Sulphate and sulfur. Apply 1 pound to 100 square feet. Some plants that need acid soil are, Azaleas, Rhododendrons, Clintonia, Goldthread, Wintergreen, Bunchberry, Trailing Arbutus, Galax, Oconee Bells, Prince's Pine, Shinleaf, Stemless Lady's-Slippers and others. Care should be taken to keep the application away from the foliage and stems.

STRANGE AS IT MAY SEEM

A flock of sheep will eliminate Poison Ivy from an area in a season.

Bill

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POPULAR WINTER PLANTPOINSETTIA

Euphorbia -- Spurge Family

The inconspicuous true flower is green and yellow in the center of the so-called red petals which are really leaves.

It is called the Christmas Flower and was named for Joel R. Poinsett of South Carolina. He was appointed in 1825 as first United States Minister to Mexico.

It remains in bloom for a long time if placed in a warm, light and humid spot where the temperature is fairly steady. When the leaves begin to drop watering should be reduced, and when the stems are bare the plant should be stored without water in a temperature of 50 to 60 degrees F. In May the plant should be cut back to about 6 inches, repotted and given good drainage.

Sink the pot out of doors in soil up to the rim in a sunny spot after corking the hole in the bottom of the pot. They grow rapidly and should be pinched back to prevent the plant from becoming too tall. Move indoors in September before the nights become too cool.

In warm climates they grow to be shrub-like.

BOOK RECOMMENDED

"WILD FLOWERS"

By Homer D. House

The new edition of this extraordinary Wild Flower Book is now obtainable. It has been out of print for some time after selling 100,000 and had become a collectors item.

It has been in such great demand that new plates have been made and this edition printed at great expense.

Life-like illustrations of unusual beauty for the true lover of wild flowers, these lavish illustrations offer two-fold enjoyment, recognizing familiar species and identifying new ones with certainty.

The volume is 9 x 12 and about 1 3/4 inches thick, 632 pages, including 364 full-color photographs. 37 black-and-white photographs and 95 drawings also including an easily understood text.

Your editor has a copy and if you wish for more information write or call Ja. 9 4719. This volume is well worth having.

"Without doubt this is the finest comprehensive book on Wild Flowers ever published" -- Minneapolis Star

DID YOU KNOW

That the Turnip is one of the oldest known vegetables in the world. Originally a native of Europe, it today is grown in many parts of the world.

Rutabagas, often considered another variety of the turnip, is larger, more solid and sweeter in flavor.

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The regular Annual Meeting of Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc., will be held in March 1962. Further notices will be sent to the members as to time and place at a later date.

BIRD NOTES

In very severe weather the wildest birds are often compelled to come close to the house in search of food. Altho they are shy during their nesting season, they soon learn to trust those who feed them.

The cheerful presence of birds in the winter helps to keep alive in our hearts the sense of summer.

Feed the birds regularly in the winter and the benefits conferred by them in the summer is well worth the effort.

The amount of insects destroyed by them is beyond measure. The luxuriant foliage of your trees and shrubs will soon attest to that.

Among the birds here for the winter are Chickadees, Juncos, Goldfinches, Tree Sparrows, Blue Jays, Cardinals, Snow Buntings, Purple Finches, Cedar Waxwings, Grosbeaks and even an occasional Brown Creeper.

Among the Owls the Barred Owl, the Great Horned Owl and Screech Owl are more often heard than seen.

The lovely Evening Grosbeak is seen occasionally here altho they are much more numerous further north.

During March the northward movement of birds begins in spite of the bad weather that is sure to follow.

MUSHROOMS

In a few more months we will again be approaching the season for gathering wild mushrooms. One of the most interesting outdoor activities, yet one must be very cautious and not pick any of the deadly Amanita, also called Death Cup (*Amanita phalloides*).

Much confusion has resulted from the so-called "tests". They are merely myths and utterly useless, such as boiling the mushrooms with a silver spoon, silver coin or salt. It was believed if the silver turned black or tarnished the mushroom must be poisonous.

Actually, the blackening of the silver by mushrooms is wholly due to the sulfur they contain. Many mushrooms are rich in sulfur and will blacken a spoon very readily, while some of the poisonous varieties are low in sulfur and have slight effect on the silver.

Consequently many edible mushrooms are discarded because they turned the silver spoon black.

The only safe test is to know the mushroom itself.

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Martha E. Crone -- Editor