

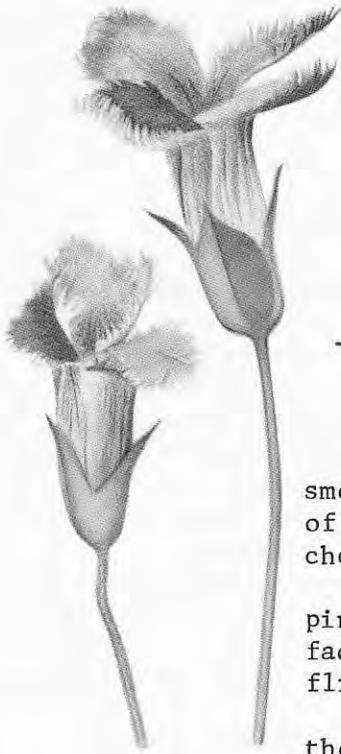
# THE FRINGED GENTIAN

(5)

Vol. 15

April 1967

No. 2



## THE BEAUTY OF SPRING

The swift unchaining of ice-locked brooks and lakes, the smell of leaf smoke, the pale green of lawns and tender shoots of early plants are all signs of spring. April days bring cheering rain to melt the snow.

The first flowers to bloom are those of trees - willows, pines, cedars, spruce, poplars, larches, alders and hazels; in fact, all trees and shrubs with flowers called catkins. They fling their pollen in a drifting cloud before the bees are about.

The insect-pollinated flowers bloom at just the season when the honeybees, bumblebees and hummingbirds come out.

In the still leafless woods the trilliums, spring beauty, bloodroot, Dutchman's-breeches and many others are blooming.

The early spring flowers bloom in the woods before the sunlight is cut off by summer's dense shade.

Spring moves up to us from the south where early bloom has been enjoyed for some weeks.

Soon the freshness of bloom has reached its peak and the early spring flowers are forgotten in the splendor of summer flowers. Many plants have become dormant and vanished completely.

"The coldness of winter has flown,  
And the languors of springtime enthral."

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## THE REVIVAL OF THE SPRING GARDEN

The hopes of the spring garden mount with the warming sun and soon the thrill of the first flowers, for it is a joy to find the firstlings blooming.

Frost lurks in the sudden chill of many an April night. The dry, windless frost is the most dangerous to plants.

By May the last fling of winter is safely behind us and the earth is warm again ready for the lavish profusion of bloom.

Much of the upper midwest had a great abundance of snow this past winter. This generous moisture should well balance the dryness of other seasons.

There have been few complaints of the deep snows, since the winter sports have had an excellent season and was enjoyed by many.

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

BLENDING WILD FLOWERS WITH CULTIVATED

Fitting wild plants into the scheme of a formal garden perhaps is not as desirable as setting an area aside for a wild flower garden.

Yet some wild flowers blend nicely with the cultivated flowers, providing the needs of various kinds are adequate.

A secluded spot, however, is preferable for a wild garden...a section of woodland, near a brook or a rocky area. A pond or a lake provide an opportunity for utilizing water plants. A marshy area can be made attractive with various sorts of vegetation. Even in a back yard where all vestige of wilderness have disappeared, a background can be established with shrubs, rocks or trees.

A few varieties can be fitted into the cultivated garden such as Large-flowered Trilliums providing they will be shaded the balance of the season. Also Mertensia, Bloodroot, Baneberry--both red berried and white--and Columbine. The foliage of these soon disappears avoiding crowding. Blue Wood Phlox is fine for filling in bare spots as well as a number of varieties of ferns.

Some of the species of native orchids that are interesting for their rarity, even if not showy, might be worth a try.

Cypripedium - the Lady's-slippers, and Epipactis, also called Goodyera, are the Rattlesnake Plantains. The choice Calypso and Arethusa. Also the Calopogon commonly called Grass Pink. The Showy Orchis and Habenaria and Spiranthes (Ladies' Tresses).

Some of these are offered by dealers and are not too difficult to grow. The secret of success is to provide as nearly as possible the conditions in which the plants grow naturally.

Some require acid soil, yet others are tolerant of different conditions.

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DID YOU KNOW

.... That the last sunset this spring in Barrows, Alaska, is May 9th and then not again until August 2nd?

.... These long sunny days are most conducive for plant growth and the birds with their nesting chores surely work overtime?

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MAPLE SAP

March in many areas is the time for the flow of maple sap to start. Cold nights and warm days are the most conducive to a good flow.

The quantity of sap depends upon the amount of food manufactured the previous year, and this in turn depends upon the leaf area of the tree and the amount of sunshine that falls upon the foliage.

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BIRD NOTES

No sooner are the margins of swamps and lakes free from ice than the redwings enliven the dead marshes. Blue Herons fish for frogs, flocks of wild ducks come on swift wings.

These early migrants come on the heels of winter. The males arrive about two weeks ahead of the dull colored females.

The largest wave of the wood warblers does not arrive until the middle of May.

The springtime songs of these returning birds are most numerous during the month of May. One must be alert to catch them all.

The song sparrow is as much a harbinger of spring as the robin and the blue-bird.

The sweet note of the white-throated sparrow is one of the most piercing in bird music.

It is a rare privilege to hear the evening song of the olive-backed thrush and the hermit thrush. They are very similar and most beautiful, sometimes called American Nightingale.

"From deep secluded recesses,  
From the fragrant cedars,  
And the ghostly pines so still,  
Came the carol of the birds."

- Walt Whitman

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TURNIPS

The turnip is one of the oldest known vegetables in the world. Originally a native of Europe, it is used today in many parts of the world.

Rutabagas are considered a variety of the Turnip. It is larger and sweeter in flavor. They grow best in northern regions.

The Oyster plant is so termed because of its whitish roots and delicate flavor. It is also called Salsify. Its cultivated form sometimes reaches a foot in length.

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ODD FACTS

The March Moon is known as the Waking Moon,  
The April Moon as the Grass Moon, and  
The May Moon as the Planting Moon.

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IN MEMORIAM

We were saddened by the passing of one of our devoted members, Mrs. Clinton (Amy) Odell on December 7th, 1966, at the age of 85.

She was known for her work and interest in the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc., an organization her late husband helped found in 1952. She was a devoted and enthusiastic member and will be greatly missed.

Memorials have been made to the "Friends of the Wild Flower Garden" by friends and family.

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A memorial was received from Mrs. Blanche Hovelson in memory of our late member, Mrs. Estella Cummings of Preston, Minnesota.

A memorial from Miss Jane D. Strebel, in memory of Mildred H. Jones.

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CONSERVATION

Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc., is an organization that is truly working for conservation of our native flowers.

No investment is too great to perpetuate the resources we have in this unique native plant Reserve.

A quiet, leisurely stroll through the garden at any time of the growing season is a rewarding experience.

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SWEET POTATO

The Sweet Potato has been cultivated as long as 5,000 years ago by the Incas in South America. However, they are grown in North America extensively today.

The Sweet Potato is a perennial vine, and the potatoes are the swollen ends of certain roots. Its flowers are like morning glories, to which it is related.

The true Yam belongs to an entirely different family, and what is generally referred to as Yams are in fact a type of Sweet Potato. The many varieties of true Yams are almost exclusively grown in tropical regions. Some of these attain a weight of more than 25 pounds.

They are the chief food of millions of people in tropical lands.

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TAPIOCA

Tapioca, familiar as an American dessert, especially when cooked as a custard, is made from the starchy large roots of Cassavas. The roots sometimes weigh from 25 to 50 pounds.