

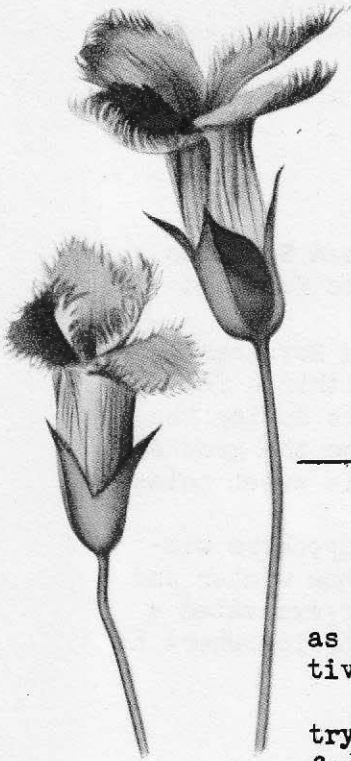
THE FRINGED GENTIAN

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WINTER MOODS

There is as much beauty of Nature in the depth of winter as in the height of summer. The tones of winter are as distinctive as those of all other seasons.

A walk in the frosty woods is an experience well worth trying. If you search you will find constantly new beauty and fresh surprises.

The picturesque wooded area in the garden is entrancingly beautiful with the tracery of the first snow on all uplifted things, and the green of pines and hemlocks sternly etched against a clear blue sky.

November ushered in the winter rather hurriedly this year, even before the close of October, the ground was covered with a blanket of snow. Now this change is a preparation for winter-life and there need be no bleak or desolate aspect.

Nature knows but two distinct changes, putting forth and withdrawing, and between these there is a constant transition.

The season of withdrawal then is a fitting interpreter for the season of silence, when Nature's voice is hushed and she is less responsive.

Shadows are lengthening and the sun drops to a majestic setting in a reddened sky, low in the southwest.

"Now for short days and early twilight" exclaimed Thoreau

ACTIVITIES

The past growing season has been a very trying one, with extended dry spells and unprecedented heat. Many plants would have been lost had it not been for the watering system, which was used extensively.

The danger of disastrous fires during the dry spell made it necessary to establish and maintain a barrier around the boundary of the garden.

More than 1000 plants were set out and are thriving.

Kodachrome pictures were again taken in the garden and added to the already large collection and are now ready for presentation.

Well over 75,000 visitors enjoyed the facilities of the garden this past season. The garden being free of mosquitoes, comfort was enjoyed at all times.

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

BIRD NOTES

Upwards of 30 species of birds can be seen hereabouts between November and March, perhaps not all in one day, but scattered according to food and change of temperature.

At least five Red-eyed Towhees stayed near the feeders thru November 18th, 1955. One colorful male became quite fearless and approached within a few feet. Well over one hundred individual birds come to the feeders during the winter. The Juncos- welcome winter guests- gather small seeds on the ground.

The Chickadee is the most vocal bird even in winter, yet his sweet notes have little strength.

It seems not to be generally known that certain of our woodpeckers wintering here excavate a cavity in a tree trunk in which to pass the winter and in the spring this cavity is abandoned. The Pileated Woodpecker excavated a well formed cavity last fall in a red oak tree near the garden office where he spent the past winter.

DID YOU KNOW

That Ruffed Grouse in the late fall grow fringes of sharp points on their feet which act as snowshoes, enabling them to run over the snowdrifts and hunt for buds, cones and berries and at night to dig their way into snowdrifts where they are well sheltered.

CARDINAL FLOWER

The Cardinal Flower (*Lobelia cardinalis*) was the winner of first place in a continent-wide poll to determine the showiest flower of North America. True spectrum red is rare in Nature and it is restricted to only one flower, the exquisite Cardinal Flower.

Altho it is native in low moist soil of meadows, marshes and ravines, it does well in gardens but does not grow as tall. A perennial plant which spreads by offsets, also seeds very readily.

Blooming from July until September, its particularly valuable at a time when bright colors are scarce.

Being a favorite of the hummingbird which it practically has to itself, since the flower has no landing petal which bees require to fertilize the bloom. None is needed by the hummingbird. They hover on fast-beating wings before the flower using their long tongue to reach into the slender tube-like corolla. Since the Cardinal Flower has no fragrance it doesn't attract the long-billed night-flying moth.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The regular annual meeting of Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc., will be held at its office, 2318 Chestnut Ave., Minneapolis, Minnesota, on Tuesday, January 3, 1956, at 2:30 p.m. (Our office is in the Burma Vita Plant)

NEW FERN GARDEN

Much credit and appreciation is due the members of the Minnetonka Garden Club for their most generous contribution to Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, to be used to establish an entirely new fern garden in the undeveloped area of the upper garden.

The making of such a garden will be a most delightful experience. An extensive program has been planned to establish many varieties of ferns, including some of the more elusive ones, which so often grow where no eyes can see them.

The area consists of a gentle slope and some low land, being splendidly adapted to accommodate many varieties of ferns.

A hill covered with feathery green of ferns is a lovely sight that has indescribable charm.

There will be ferns for shade and sun, for dry soil and moist locations. Evergreen wood ferns and Christmas fern. The large graceful Ostrich fern sometimes called Palm of the North, the dainty maidenhair and a score of others.

The preparation of the area was started this fall, but the early arrival of winter has delayed completion until spring. Trails are planned to lead among the ferns, so they can be enjoyed at close range.

This is a most fascinating undertaking and surely should help stimulate true appreciation of Nature's most beautiful creations.

PRIMROSE FAMILY

The Primrose Family is well represented in the Wild Flower Garden. Such as Shooting Star, Fringed Loosestrife, Tufted Loosestrife, Whorled Loosestrife, Dwarf Canadian Primrose and Star-Flower also the shade-loving creeping vine, Moneywort or Creeping Loosestrife, (*Lysimachia Nummularia*). This plant is used as a ground cover and will thrive where few other plants will grow.

The cultivated Cyclamen, a native of Persia belongs to this family.

KAPOK

The cotton-like material that is used principally for filling pillows, cushions, mattresses and life-preservers comes from seed-pods of a large tree called Silk-Cotton-Tree (*Ceiba pentandra*) of the Bombax family.

It is the "Kapok" of commerce. The unusually elasticity of the silky fiber prevents its permanent matting when used as a filler, being resilient, buoyant and water resisting. The seed capsules are thick and woody.

The trees grow mostly in tropical America, altho a tree that was planted near St. Petersburg, Florida in 1888 is thriving and is a beautiful sight when in bloom, being literally covered with large rose colored blossoms. There also are a number of trees growing in Waikiki.

Remember to feed the birds now when snow and ice covers all other sources of food. Provide plenty of suet for the chickadees, nuthatches and woodpeckers, this does not attract sparrows. The cardinals are very fond of peanuts.

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FACT OR FALLACY

Much confusion has been caused in the plant world, by terms commonly applied to plants, such as "wort" and "bane". Inquiries are frequently made as to their origin.

Wort- is an old term meaning flower or plant of any kind. Some well known plants in this category are Moneywort, Spiderwort, Soapwort, Bellwort, Bladderwort, Honewort, Milkwort, Mugwort, Sandwort and Umbrella-wort.

Bane- was applied to plants that were even suspected of being poisonous, such as Baneberry, Bugbane, Fleabane, Wolf'sbane and Hound'sbane.

ALBINOS AMONG PLANTS

Sometimes pure white specimens appear among plants that otherwise have blue or various other colored flowers. They are sparingly found among the Blue Lobelia, Mertensia, Blazing Star, Jacob's-ladder and Bottle Gentian. They rarely ever persist more than a few seasons, since Nature takes care of keeping the species pure.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said- "Nature works very hard, and only hits the white once in a million throws".

CHRISTMAS ROSE

The so-called Christmas Rose really isn't a rose. Its true name is Black Hellebore (*Helleborus niger*) a member of the Buttercup Family. The name is derived from the black rootstocks.

It has evergreen leaves and the flowers are white or tinged with red, turning green after fertilization.

They bloom early in the season frequently in midwinter in mild regions from December to March, thereby deriving the name of Christmas Rose. In colder climates they bloom from April to May. Seedlings take from four to five years to reach the blooming stage.

STRANGE AS IT MAY SEEM

In "Seed Dispersal" by W. A. Matheny, he states that 2,000,000 seeds are contained in a single cat-tail spike.

The Tomato (*Lycopersicon esculentum*) and Potato (*Solanum tuberosum*) belong to the same family, the Nightshade Family. Several ornamental plants belonging to this family are Chinese Lantern and Jerusalem-cherry.

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Martha E. Crone -- Editor