

THE FRINGED GENTIAN

(5)

Vol. 7

April 1959

No. 2

SONG OF SPRING

The winter is past, the snows are over and gone, the cold chilling blasts have blown and the earth is again warmed by the mounting sun and days are lengthening. Soon the lovely spring flowers appear on the earth and the time of the singing of birds has come. From those beginning notes of spring gradually thousands of blended songs will flow.

Where the first spring sunbeams focus, there you will find the harbinger of spring of this area, the dainty little Snow Trillium (*Trillium nivale*) sending forth its green sprouts. This is a small counter part of the Large-flowered Trillium which follows fully a month later.

All winter, life within the buds has worked silently and they are now eager to push out their three pure white petals. Bloom briefly, ripen seeds and then completely disappear for the rest of the season.

Many trees are already in bloom, to be followed by the opening glory of the leaves. Outstanding is the Red Maple (*Acer rubrum*) with its brilliant red clusters of flowers. This tree again in autumn is a flaming torch.

Each day new patterns and new color combinations appear and the picture becomes more enchanting. This is the most inspiring moment in nature. The weathered look of winter is soon erased and all is crowned with green.

"For Nature ever faithful is
To such as trust her faithfulness"

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

BIRD NOTES

The Song Sparrow is as much a harbinger of spring as the Robin and the Bluebird. His streaked breast identifies him readily when singing gaily from a perch.

Many Horned Larks and Eastern Meadow Larks were noted in the southern part of Minnesota near Fairmont the second week in March, in spite of the deep snow remaining from the recent heavy storms.

Soon the blue sky will be spread over with wings of the returning migrants from the south.

The winter visitors have departed to their northern homes even while snow and ice remain, often suffering hardships due to their haste.

Birds proclaim the coming of spring with their musical clear calls at sunrise.

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



ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Incorporated, was held Tuesday, January 6th, 1959, at the Walker Art Institute at 7:30 p.m. Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Officers elected were Mrs. Carroll Binder, President; Mr. Leonard F. Ramberg, Vice-President; and Mrs. Martha E. Crone, Secretary-Treasurer.

Elected to the Board of Directors were- Mr. Walter E. Lehnert, Mr. Russell C. Nye and Mr. Leonard C. Odell.

Renamed Directors are-

- | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Mr. Russell Bennett | Mrs. Martha Crone |
| Mr. Earle Brown | Mr. Leonard Ramberg |
| Mrs. Carroll Binder | Mr. Carl Rawson |
| Mrs. Elizabeth Carpenter | Mrs. Clarence Tolg |

Reports were given showing that all affairs are in good order and much has been accomplished.

Plans were formulated for a memorial for the late Mr. Clinton M. Odell, first president and founder of the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden Incorporated.

Contributions are still being received for this permanent memorial to be placed in the garden.

Following the meeting an illustrated lecture on wild flowers in the garden was given by the Secretary, Martha Crone.

STRANGE AS IT MAY SEEM

Many plants requiring moist leaf mold cannot be induced to grow wild in summer-dry and winter-warm climates. They are the plants that need dormant winter freezing. That is the reason that many of our northern plants do not thrive in the south.

Before areas were settled, wild flowers grew in abundance without the competition of aggressive weeds to crowd them out.

Introduced weeds are now so thick that a wild flower garden would soon become a weed patch, if weeding out of undesirables was relaxed.

Some of these weeds came to this country in ballast of sailing ships, some in packing material and many in seed collections.

Seeds have endless ways of getting around, many are blown around, some catch on clothing and hitch-hike and others are carried by birds.

The ox-eye daisy is a native of Asia and now forms blankets of blossoms in many states and has become a troublesome weed.

Some plants may be attractive and suitable in some areas but become a hard to control pest in places where it becomes a swallower of choice natives. St. John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) is one of these and must be kept out.

The days of spring pass all too swiftly, so visit the garden during May and June. The early spring flowers are most fascinating, their beauty comes and goes, and cannot remain for long.

The garden now is a pride and a pleasure and a true heritage.

(7)

PLANT A TREE

The planting of trees is one of the most practical and economical methods of helping nature.

Trees are man's greatest friends. They supply him with food and shelter, they conserve water and preserve the soil. Without trees the land becomes inhospitable and unkind, and civilization disintegrates. Trees are necessary for birds to build and sing.

With the many new homes recently built we now have a splendid opportunity to plant trees, they provide an attractive setting for the house. Your grounds are your home garden.

Evergreens form a fine protection from the wind. The Hard or Sugar Maple (*Acer saccharum*) is one of the most desirable shade tree for lawn and street planting. Its beauty, cleanliness and healthy appearance as well as the brilliant scarlet foliage in autumn makes it outstanding. As a memorial tree the maple has no superior. Being rapid growing and hardy, and thrives in any soil.

Another tree that should be planted more freely is the Bitternut Hickory (*Carya glabra*). It makes a fine ornamental tree, rapid growing and a special effort should be made to protect and propagate it. The foliage is glossy and free from insects turning golden in autumn.

There are many others to choose from depending upon the area to be planted.

"He who plants a tree
Plants a joy;
Beautiful and strong,
To whose shelter throng
Creatures blithe with song.

-Lucy Larcom

THE NORTH STAR

The Great Dipper circling in the north sky and never sinking below the horizon. Its pointer stars show the way to the north star, which is going around so slowly it seems scarcely to be moving. Its position moves up in the sky if we travel north, and if we travel south it moves downward.

The stars appear to wheel around the pole in counter clockwise direction, once around in a little less than a day.

The bright stars of Ursa Major, the Great Bear form the familiar Dipper. This group can be found at any time of the year. The two stars which form the forward side of the bowl of the dipper are Pointers, they point to the pole star (Polaris). The pole star belongs to the constellation Ursa Minor the Lesser Bear or Small Dipper. It marks the end of the handle of this dipper.

The North Star can be found by looking directly north and as high above the horizon as the number of degrees in the latitude of the place of observation. Here it is 45 degrees, or halfway from the horizon to the zenith.

When one looks at the sky frequently, he will be surprised to find the many interesting constellations, ever changing position with the advancing seasons.

(8)

ALLSPICE

Allspice (*Pimenta officinalis*) is the dried green fruit or berry of a tropical evergreen tree, growing about 40 feet high.

It belongs to the Myrtle family and is a native of the West Indies and Central America.

Its name is derived from the aroma and flavor, which resembles a combination of the fragrances of cloves, cinnamon and nutmeg.

When the berry is green it looks like a miniature globe approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ inch in diameter. When dried the berry turns a reddish-brown.

Both the whole and ground allspice berries are used extensively in the preparation of various foods, even in flavoring cheese. Fragrant sachets are made from both the whole and ground berries.

In Jamaica the whole allspice berry is considered an exotic substitute for tobacco. They say the flavor is a delight unknown to tobacco smokers.

RUFFED GROUSE

The Ruffed Grouse, also known as the Partridge makes a characteristic sound called "drumming". This drumming is made only by the cock, mostly in the spring, which is the mating season, altho it is frequently heard in the autumn.

How this drumming is done has been a question that has puzzled many. Few persons have actually seen grouse drum. Many versions have been offered.

Henry Thoreau, the naturalist, thought the sound was produced by the bird striking its wings together behind its back, and others thought it was due to beating the wings against a log.

Motion pictures now show that the cock produces the drumming sound by perching on a log and beating its wings rapidly on the air close to its body and increasing the tempo until the booming sound is produced.

DID YOU KNOW

That the season that fruit ripens is not the same for all trees. The Soft Maple, Red Maple, American Elm and Balm of Gilead dropping their seeds in the Spring.

Those ripening during the summer are Black Cherry, Pin Cherry and Juneberry.

Among the many that ripen at the time of the first frost are Basswood, Hard or Sugar Maple, Ironwood, Birch, Hackberry, Wild Plum and Black Ash. The Red Oak and Pin Oak mature in autumn of the second year, while White Oak and Burr Oak ripen in autumn of the first year. Various Nut Trees ripen in the fall.

The Honey Locust, Catalpa, Kentucky Coffee Tree and Box Elder retain their seeds well during the winter or following spring.

WHY PICK WILD FLOWERS. THEY ONLY WILT, LEAVE THEM FOR THE THOUSANDS OF OTHERS TO SEE.

Official publication of "Friends of the Wild Flower Garden", issued quarterly.

Martha E. Crone -- Editor