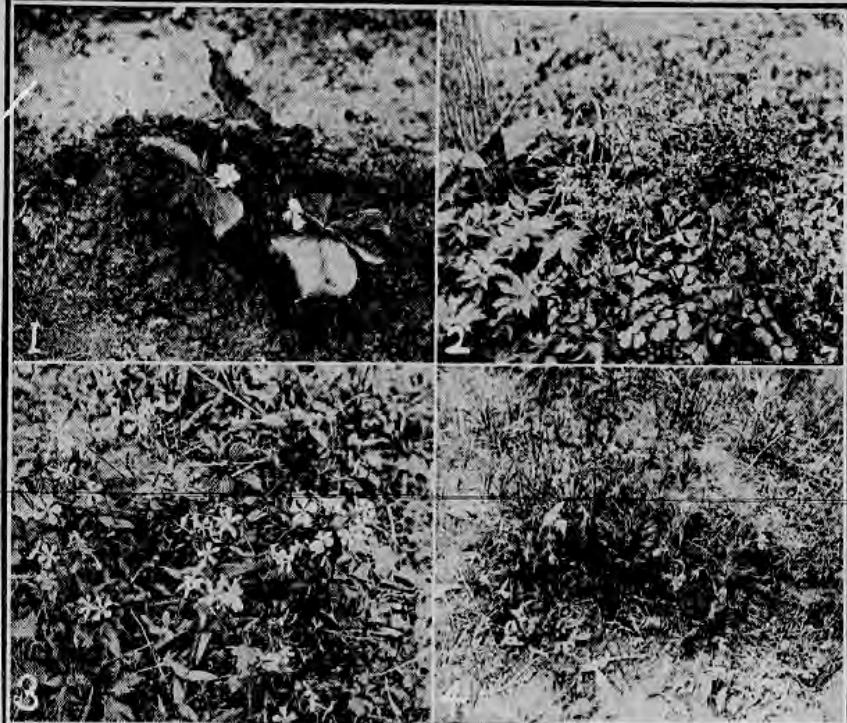


Geum, Early Meadow Rue, Lousewort, Phlox and Hoary Puccoon  
Are Described as Wild Beauties in Miss Butler's Weekly Article



—Photos by M. K. Meeker.

1. Trillium. 2. Early Meadow Rue. 3. Phlox. 4. Geum. 5. Columbine. 6. Hoary Puccoon.

**N**EARLY contemporaneous with the Pasque flower, and likewise on the prairie, grows the Avena, or three-flowered Geum. It bears a tuft of fern-like interruptedly pinnate leaves, each leaf consisting of divided leaflets arranged along the stalk like the parts of a feather, interspersed with still smaller leaflets. The plant has a single flower stalk with three branches at the top, each terminated by a rose-pinkish ball, looking like a flower bud, decorated with slender, recurved bracts. One would wait in vain, however, for these "buds" to appear otherwise. Opening their season. Opening the five closed petals you will find attached to them five creamy petals and many stamens. In the center of the flower are innumerable pistils, which finally form a lovely claret-colored ball of gossamer plumes, each serving to waft through the air the little seed-like fruit. The Geum belongs to the Rose family, the family containing the most esteemed cultivated fruits of the temperate regions, as the strawberry, peach, cherry, pear—a long list. At the head of this list should be placed the apple, which—same, wild and crab—has with in the past week gladdened the eye with its nearly rose-tinted clouds of bloom.

**Lo, the Lousewort!**

Along with the Geum will be seen in abundance another plant, the lousewort; or, if you prefer a more euphonious name, the wood betony. The former name was given by farmers, who fancied that rattle feeding upon the plant were infested with one of the Egyptian plagues. The primately divided leaves of betony are arranged in a rosette. The pale yellow flowers are bilabiate, with the laterally compressed upper lip arched over the stamens and pistil and are densely crowded in the leafy spike. This plant belongs in the Figwort family, in which the flowers

are usually two-lipped—like the snap dragon—and are ingeniously adapted to insect pollination.

Another prairie flower of brighter yellow is the hoary puccoon, popularly called Indian pink, perhaps because the roots afford a beautiful red dye much used by the Indians. Slender leaves thickly clothe the stem, which bears at the top a good-sized cluster of the brilliant flowers, tubular at the base and spreading abruptly into a flat border. Such a flower is called saucer shaped. The tube serves to enclose the stamens and hold the nectar. The puccoon shows its relationship to the heliotrope in the shape of the flower and in the way in which the flower cluster uncoils as the buds expand.

**Meadow Rue Leaf Pretty.**

It is not uncommon in Maying parties to hear the exclamation, "Oh, what a pretty fern!" as the attention is attracted to the delicate, many-branched leaf of the early meadow rue, one of the crow-foot family. The leaf stalk of the meadow rue is branched four times into three divisions, so that it bears in all eighty-one leaflets. The leaf is as pleasing as that of a fern and adds an airy fern-like grace to a bouquet. Ferns, by the way, have three characters by which they may be distinguished from other plants—a coiled leaf bud which unrolls at the base when the leaf expands, displaying a forked venation; a second peculiarity of the fern, and later some brown or yellowish dots usually on the under side in which are developed spores. Ferns have neither flowers nor seeds. While one individual of the early meadow rue has a spray of tiny pollen-bearing flowers, and another the seed-producing flowers. These separated flowers are pollinated by the wind.

A much admired genus of the crow-foot family is the columbine, which

has one representative in Minnesota. All the columbines make a brave showing from the cultivated ones of different hues to the peerless large white species, the state flower of Colorado. But our species holds its own among them all, burgeoning in red and yellow in rich relief against the background of gray rock, as it nods from boulder crevices. The columbine has both calyx and corolla and both are colored. The long spurred petals gorged with nectar for the entertainment of insect guests have given rise to the name honeysuckle which, to avoid confusion, would better be kept for the true honeysuckle in no wise related to the columbine. The foliage of the columbine is fern-like as is the meadow rue and others of the same family.

**Golden Rag Wort a Cluster.**

In the meadows may also be seen an early composite, the golden rag wort. In the composite family what seems to be a flower, at a careless glance, is in reality a flower cluster, composed of small closely crowded flowers, with buds or tubular flowers in the center that might be mistaken for stamens and pistils, and surrounded on the outside by whorls of green leaves called bracts that exactly imitate a calyx. The foliage of the rag wort is more or less cut or parted, hence the name. The Hill seminary, near the hill, carpeted in May with flower mosaics, pink, white, yellow and blue. The spring beauty forms the pink vistas of this woodland; the false rue anemone, the white; marsh marigold, rag worts and buttercups, the yellow; violets and phlox, the blue. In this flower olympus earnestly away and all alike are happy children reveling with the flowers. But one is shocked to see traces of the slimy serpent in this paradise. It has been desecrated by dumps of old tires and other rubbish, and it is rumored that it is the intention to cut a road through the place. By next summer, no doubt, it will exist only in memory. The confines of the wilderness are becoming more and more restricted under the restless march of settlement.

**Low Phlox Good for Borders.**

The low phlox (P. divaricata) of this region runs the gamut of colors from white, blue to lilac. It is readily transplanted and blossoms freely, and will flourish in sun or shade. There is no better plant, wild or cultivated, for edgings or borders, as it tones harmoniously with other flowers. The world is indebted to America for the splendid cultivated phloxes which have developed, one and all, from various native species.—ELOISE BUTLER.