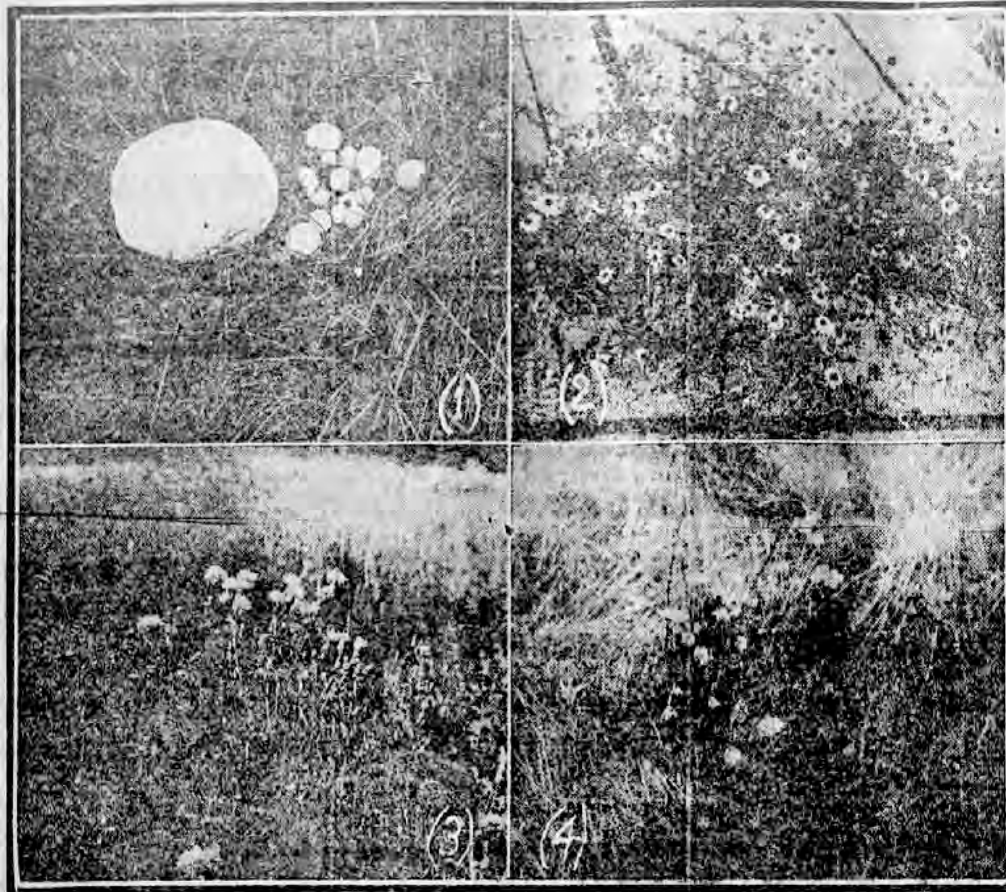


## Prickly Armor Furnishes Protection for the Thistle; Caterpillars Crawl by and Browsing Horses Shun Plant



1. Puffballs. 2. Mayweed. 3. Canada thistle. 4. Grass of Parussus.

An exhibit of the wild garden in Glenwood park will be given in the horticultural building at the coming state fair.

During the remainder of the season Miss Butler will have no regular days for conducting parties through the garden. However, those wishing to see the garden may set a time by telephone to suit convenience.

Phone—N. W. Colfax 1689.

**T**HE Scotch made no mistake in selecting the thistle for their national flower. Bristling with needle-like prickles, a type of stern independence, it does not admit of close intimacy. But we are captivated by its reddish purple blooms, fragrant as roses and brimmed with sweetness. Economical and thrifty, the thistle can wrest a living from the scantiest means; but "over canny" as it is, it sends out myriads of plummy seeds, by which it will establish itself in richer soil wherever opportunity offers. The voracious caterpillar crawls by it to plants with unarmed herbage; the thistle is browsed only by underfed donkeys. It is often decked with winged visitants of black and gold, the thistle birds or goldfinches, surrounded by drifting clouds of silvery plumes, as they light swing on the matured flower heads and eagerly break them apart to obtain their favorite food. The buds, the beautiful flower clusters, the feathery balls of fruit, and the deeply lobed leaves with ruffled margins of the thistle, all readily lend themselves to designs for ornament.

The field thistle, *Cirsium discolor*, is particularly lovely by reason of its pale pink, or sometimes white flowers, and long, drooping leaves. The bull thistle has larger heads and still more

formidable prickles; while the tall, swamp thistle is less stout and spiny. These species are not undesirable for a garden, if one has space enough to keep them at arm's length. But no good word can be said for the Canada thistle, an emigrant from Europe that multiplies apace, although allowed no rights of citizenship. It seems useless to legislate against it; for it has a running root stock that spreads while we sleep, and the seeds fly over the country to sow discomfort elsewhere. It is a pest because it is so difficult to keep within bounds. If you wish to know just how Theophilus Thistlewaite thrust three thousand thistles through the thick of his thumb (too low an estimate by far!) PLANT-BOOK clear by hand a plot of land that has been overrun by Canada thistles.

A vegetable pariah, also of foreign origin, humbly occupying waste places, is especially abundant about drains and pig styes, and is stigmatized by the rude Saxon term, "stinkweed." It is also known as dogfennel and as may weed, although it blooms throughout the summer until nipped by frost. It is as pretty as its much admired cousin, Marguerite—cultivated here, but an injury to the hay fields in the East—for it has the daisy beauties of pearly white ray flowers encompassing golden tubular flowers of the disk. The leaf, too, may be favorably compared with that of the fern. But the weed is without regard on account of its associations and fetid odor. It bears the scientific name *Maruta Cotula*, and its nearest kin are the garden and medicinal chamomiles.

One might be justified in asking the mower to stay his scythes in the meadow until the fleeting beauty of the grass of Parussus is past. It is not a grass, but it is always found among the grasses. The glossy leaves are clustered in a rosette close to the ground. The cream white flowers grow singly on

the stalk, and the deeply veined petals are marvels of perfectness in detail. Poets drew inspiration from similar species on Mount Parnassus, in the legendary days of Greece.

Happy is he who finds in brooks winding through meadows the tiny blossoms that vie with the violet and the rose in popular favor—the forget-me-not. It is not easy to forget these pale blue flowers with yellow eyes—an unequalled harmony of color. The brook forget-me-not, after three unsuccessful attempts, has been firmly established in the wild garden, where it blooms the summer long. The parent stock in Needham, Mass., grew waist high in prodigal profusion. "Oh!" said one admirer, "these flowers are just like those we see on hats!"

In pastures giant puffballs may be seen breaking through the grass. The one photographed weighed 14 ounces, but specimens weighing more than twice as many pounds are occasional. Several over four pounds in weight have been noted this season. Some of the small puffballs have a smooth surface, some are covered with tiny tubercles or spines, and some are stalked. In the puffballs the spores are enclosed instead of being exposed to the air on the surface of gills or tubes as in the umbrella and bracket forms or fungi. As far as is known, the true puffballs are edible. They are to be used for food when the inside is firm and white like cottage cheese. When mature the puffball splits regularly or irregularly, according to the species, discharging a mass of dark, powdery spores. Those fond of this delicacy are much grieved when they see a specimen that has been used as a football and kicked to pieces. If one realized that a puffball when fresh is good, palatable food, he would resist the impulse that impels him to destroy it.

ELOISE BUTLER.

—Photos by M. K. Meeker.