

THE FRINGED GENTIAN

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THE GOLDEN FALL

October, the time of fulfillment has again come to the wild-wood. The bloom of spring and summer is over, and the hum of insect life is heard no more.

Altho the birds have nearly all hurried to the southland, we still recall the sweet spring songs of only a few months ago. The enchantment of these precious songs stored away in memory for another year.

Autumn the most alluring season for a walk in the garden, is welcome after the heat of summer is past and insects no longer bother. A time to enjoy Nature when beauty still lingers in wild asters bloom, and falling leaves add a distinct sound to Autumn days.

Sing a song of seasons,
Something bright in all:
Flowers in the summer,
Fires in the fall.

-Robert Louis Stevenson

BIRD NOTES

The Wild Flower Garden is a Sanctuary for birds as well as wild flowers. Mid-October brings back the Purple Finches, Juncos, Cedar Waxwings, Chickadees and occasionally a Tufted Titmouse.

The Goldfinches leave the meadows and return to the feeder in large numbers. The males have now changed their bright yellow for winter plumage, -the year-round green and gray of their mates. With the Goldfinches come many Siskins, and soon the high pitched piping of the Red-breasted Nuthatch will be heard.

The late migrating birds are twittering and scratching among the dried leaves. Most insect eating birds leave for the south following the first heavy frost.

Meadow-larks, White-throated Sparrows and Song Sparrows still sing briefly, but except for call notes most birds are silent.

STRANGE AS IT MAY SEEM

In the fall when the English Sparrows feed upon the seeds of Crabgrass, they completely ignore the sunflower seeds put out for other birds.

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

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SANCTUARIES

Altho the large Wild Flower Sanctuaries serve a splendid purpose, there should be many small ones established. The benefits of the small sanctuaries are many and of great value. They can be maintained by Communities, groups of Nature enthusiasts, Garden Clubs or Schools.

They provide a haven for birds and help preserve the fast vanishing flora, and bring to many the opportunity to see and enjoy birds and plants grouped together in a limited area.

There are many methods of maintaining them and suggestions can be derived from already existing sanctuaries.

There are a number of private wild flower plantings that contain well over one hundred varieties of flowers, and other like these should be established.

WILDERNESS AREA

This bit of wilderness which has brought joy and understanding to many, surely is worthwhile preserving for generations to follow.

The quiet seclusion of this place set in a picturesque wooded area is less than ten minutes drive from the center of a busy Metropolis.

Here can be found in season all species of wild flowers native to this State, as well as many from other States introduced to test their hardiness.

Most people feel it a sacrilege to destroy anything in a spot where so much work has been done to provide a refuge for the fast vanishing wild flowers of our area.

Let us all exert our efforts to keep this place intact for the future.

PLANT SELECTION

A great many varieties of plants must be crowded into our limited space, that often the colorful effect is lost which would be gained in massing individual varieties.

Wild plants have such wide range of requirements - their soil preference, sun or shade, wet or dry, hillside, woods or marsh. There are few that tolerate the same climatic conditions. Therefore it is necessary to learn the requirements of the different plants.

A few years after a number of acres of adjacent land was added to the garden to be used as an upland or prairie garden, it started to take on a natural appearance.

The area had to be cleared of a persistent growth of sumac and quack-grass. Then many varieties of prairie plants were set out and they have since had the opportunity to spread and become firmly established. Prairie flora is very different from that found in woods and swamps and couldn't flourish in any other area.

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FALLS COLOR SYMPHONY

With the approach of fall the cool restful green of the leaves soon fades out leaving the red or yellow pigment exposed.

The leaves of the Elm, Basswood, Birch and Poplars turn yellow and quickly drop. Those of the Ginkgo and Hickory turn a bright shiny yellow and in a few days drop.

The Red Maple is one of the first to turn, some with red predominating, others yellow.

The Sugar Maple with its large leaves adds brilliance to the scene with bright yellow or scarlet.

The Oaks are the last to turn, the rich red and purple adding to the varied colors of late Autumn.

PLANTINGS

Plants of many varieties have been purchased and given a start in the garden. Many more have been transplanted from wild areas that have been disturbed or cleared for building expansion, agricultural purposes or swamp draining.

More specimens of those already established are added regularly, since mass plantings add greatly to the attractiveness of the garden. In the last twelve years 38,650 plants have been set out.

Some rare plants have been encouraged and are doing well, such as Galax, Oconee Bells, unusual Trilliums and various Orchids.

Many notable successes are evident, among them the spreading of the Blood-root and the Large-flowered Trillium, producing patches of gleaming white in the early spring. The many Hepaticas, Anemones, Azaleas, Rhododendrons, various Lady's-slippers, Spring Beauty, Violets, Floam Flower and Running Myrtle are outstanding.

The Blooming of the Azaleas and Rhododendrons was the center of attraction in spring as well as the Showy Lady's-slipper, the Minnesota State Flower.

All this abundance markedly contrasting with the preceding years when many aggressive weeds had the upper hand.

WHITE CEDAR

The White Cedar or Arbor Vitae (*Thuja occidentalis*) an evergreen much used as an ornamental tree or for hedges in this locality becomes very unsightly in the fall.

Following the ripening of the seeds in their small green cones, some of the flattened sprays with their overlapping scale-like leaves turn yellow and soon shed. After they have dropped the tree again assumes a trim appearance. Not all of the leaves are shed at anyone time since they are retained for varying periods of time.

In this area many White Cedars are winter-killed due to the lack of moisture following a dry summer and fall. It is well to water them before winter sets in. Otherwise they are perfectly hardy here and are natives of swampy areas.

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A TRIBUTE

The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc. and other individuals are planning to place a memorial plaque in the Wild Flower Garden, paying tribute to the late Mr. Clinton M. Odell for his many contributions to the garden.

In recognition of his time and effort spent in helping bring the garden to its present fine standard. He gave inspirational light to many wild flower enthusiasts.

He especially was responsible for the addition and development of the upper or Prairie Garden, for which we owe a great debt of gratitude.

NEW FERN HILL

The new fern hill, sponsored by the Minnetonka Garden Club and the Little Minnetonka Garden Club, is developing as planned.

375 more ferns were added this past season to those planted the past several years making a total 2833 ferns of many varieties.

The plants are increasing in proportion and soon this planting will be an outstanding addition to the garden. Ferns altho they have no blossoms are Nature's most beautiful creation.

This gift to the garden has been most appreciated and will bring lasting joy to the many visitors of the garden.

WALKING FERN

(Camptosorus rhizophyllus)

This fern derives its name from the fact that the long thread-like runner-tips of the fronds will pierce a clump of moss and take root and produce rosette-like plants.

It walks away from the parent plant and starts a new cycle of growth. The curious interlacing fronds finally forming a rather compact ground cover.

It hardly resembles a fern but turn the fronds over and there are the tell-tale sori or spores.

This fern seems to like granite or gneiss ledges but will also grow on limestone ledges yet nowhere in abundance.

After the snow has melted in the spring this evergreen fern is a welcome sight when all else is drab.

In the garden it does well on a clay hillside and is spreading satisfactorily.

DID YOU KNOW ---- That there are no snakes native to Hawaii.