

THE FRINGED GENTIAN

(13)

Vol. 8

October 1960

No. 4

AUTUMN

August winds up the growing season, frost sometimes occurring before the end of the month.

As the equinox approaches, we commence to realize a little wistfully that soon the flowers of the season will be gone, and the waning daylight predicts the inevitable winter.

Altho the first hint of autumn color is starting to appear, October has its compensations with these gorgeous autumnal colors of sumac, oak, maple and birches also the tamaracks flashing their gold in the swamps.

The last straggler, Witch Hazel comes into bloom during this month lasting well into December. After the large leaves have turned brilliant colors and long since fallen, almost over night the mass of yellow flowers appear.

The year ends when December trims the forest with glittering white, and snowfall and sunshine alternate.

"Here might I pause and bend in reverence
To Nature and the power of human mind".

-Wordsworth

BIRD NOTES

The wires along the waysides are again filled with swallows, apparently contemplating the day they take off for the south, yet reluctant to leave as long as their food supply lasts.

The blackbirds have gathered in great flocks, their incessant chatter is heard from the marshes and groves of trees.

The gathering into great bands by many birds is one of the features in which the fall differs from the spring movement.

Altho the southward movement of various birds started the middle of August, the migration is at its height in September. Large waves of warblers move thru the entire month as well as various sparrows.

An unusual occurrence was noted, a pair of robins were singing their spring song during August and successfully nested and raised a brood.

The Great Blue Herons and Egrets were gathering in the low lands near the Twin Cities during August and the Loons were still calling on many northern lakes.

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

(14)

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

Autumn brings a blaze of color to the Wild Flower Garden, tossing the gauntlet at Old Man Winter. Flaming leaves, purple Michaelmas daisies and bright yellow golden-rod make a brave showing before the inevitable frost.

This has been a triumphant year for the Garden. More visitors have come to see it than in any other year. The wild flowers due to a slow spring and plenty of rain have been at their best.

The Open House for our members on May 14th with guided tours through the garden was a great success. We were blessed with a lovely day and appreciative visitors. We hope to repeat this project next May. Twenty four new members have joined the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden this year.

Mrs. Raymond Beim, daughter of Mr. Clinton M. Odell who was founder of Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc., and benefactor of the garden itself has two beautiful Kasota Stone benches placed near the curator's cabin in her father's memory. They are near the bird feeders to make it possible to sit and enjoy watching the birds as well as the quiet beauty of the garden.

Our curator, Kenneth Avery was awarded a two week fellowship to the Audubon Camp August 8th to 22nd by the Minneapolis Woman's Club. The camp is located in Sarona, Wis. halfway between Spooner and Rice Lake. Mr. Avery recommends this as the perfect vacation for a nature lover. The camp sponsors courses of study with excellent instructors as well as field trips by bus, canoe and on foot. We congratulate Mr. Avery for having been selected.

The violet path has been dug up and replanted by Sam Baker who is reputed to have a very green thumb. Trillium and Trout lilies are also being separated and replanted. This augurs well for a greatly rejuvenated show of wild flowers next spring. We are lucky to have as curator and assistant curator two dedicated and interested horticulturists, Kenneth Avery and Edward Bruckelmyer.

Dorothy W. Binder

WHITE FLOWERS

It has been interesting to note the abundance of white flowering plants in bloom during the long days of summer.

What is more brilliantly white along the waysides and hill-slopes than the showy domes of Shad-bush and Pin Cherry followed by the pompons of the Mountain Ash.

A few others are - Baneberry, Bunchberry, Foam-flower, Pearly Everlasting, Water Lily, Dogwood, May Apple, Meadow Queen, New Jersey Tea, Cow Parsnip and Strawberry.

Since Midsummer is the high tide of butterflies and moths, could it be that the night flying insects and moths reserve their favor for the white flowers which glint in the darkness. Many of the white flowers are scentless therefore do not readily attract bees.

The peculiar dependence which plants have upon insects is one of the most marvelous things in nature.

Many plants depend upon certain insects to distribute their pollen and thus insure fertilization of the flowers and perpetuation of the species.

(15)

STARTING A WILD FLOWER GARDEN IS INSPIRING

Establishing a Wild Flower Garden is one of the most rewarding undertakings. More and more miniature Wild Flower Gardens are being started, yet these small gardens cannot take the place of wildflowers growing in their natural habitat in the remnants of what was once the great wilderness, where birds and animals lived in their company. This great National treasure when once destroyed cannot be replaced.

A perpetuation of all Wild Flower Gardens should be encouraged, be they small or large. People should be taught how to grow the plants in such gardens to avoid injury to the future supply, since this supply is mainly gathered in the wilds. They could learn how useless it is to try to transplant certain species into the wrong location.

Often uncultivated land that has not been burned over is taken for a start of a garden. Such an area is ideal, it being enriched by decayed vegetation which has accumulated for years so that little will need to be added.

If leaf mold has been destroyed by fire, it must be replaced. Natural conditions can be created by bringing in decayed leaves, as well as peat moss. Also the addition of a mulch of leaves in autumn for winter protection is desirable. Let these leaves remain the following spring if not too thick. No artificial fertilizer should be used.

If natural rainfall is not sufficient, a few good waterings will help.

All consideration must be given to the plants natural environment. Select only plants that best fit your area.

Altho several varieties of ferns will grow near the foundation of a building on the north side, they will do much better brought out to partial sun. Most other plants prefer to grow in the open with proper shade.

Just to mention a few to begin in a garden- Phlox divaricata, Mertensia, Jacob's Ladder, May Apple, White Baneberry, Red Baneberry, Bloodroot, Jack-in-the-Pulpit, Hepatica and several species of Trilliums. Also a few ferns, Maiden Hair Fern, Lady Fery and Evergreen Wood Fern. Add others as you become acquainted with them.

In larger gardens plants placed in natural looking clumps or massing are attractive. They also are lovely around the bases of trees or around rocks. Many do well bordering paths and along streams.

Some wild flowers can be grown appropriately inter-mingled with cultivated flowers.

Fixed rules cannot be laid down in growing wildflowers. Many species growing in shade in the south will do well in full sun in the north.

WINTER SKIES

From Indian summer thru the winter is a time to turn vision skyward for interesting constellation displays.

The leaves of trees have thinned away so that the whole sky can be seen.

The winter constellations are most interesting when the stars are piercing clear.

The Dipper hangs low and Orion the Hunter is there just above the eastern horizon, appearing in mid south before midnight.

In the west Aquila the Eagle, flies low just skimming the horizon. Overhead to the south, Pegasus the Winged Horse, (the great square) and across the sky sweeps the Milky Way, which on frosty nights glitters and fairly dances.

Many other constellations can be found at different times during the long winter nights.

(16)

DECORATIVE POTTED PLANTS

An interesting project for those who wish to raise unusual house plants as foliage plants. Why not try a pineapple?

Since Pineapples are nearly always in season, one can easily obtain one. Slice off the crown of leaves at the top of the fruit, cutting at the junction of fruit and leaf base, leaving a thin plate of the flesh. Plant this in sand, keeping it moist and it will soon produce roots. Then it should be potted in soil.

Be sure to provide plenty of pot drainage, using at least an inch of broken pots or pebbles in the bottom of the pot as well as some charcoal.

Best mixture of soil is equal parts of fibrous loam, peat moss, sand and well rotted manure. Pot the plants into progressively larger pots as they need them. Give them ample light, moist air and a minimum temperature of about 60 degrees.

TRILLIUM PLANTING

Trilliums rank among the foremost of our native woodland flowers, they have an individuality all their own.

The Large-flowered Trillium (*Trillium grandiflorum*) is one of the choicest of its family, few other flowers being more exquisite.

At least ten other species of Trilliums can be grown in wild flower gardens. A constant bloom of two months in the spring can be enjoyed.

They are easily grown and long-lived perennials. I have had many Large-flowered Trilliums in the same locality 40 years. Fall is an ideal time to plant them.

There has been a varying difference of opinion as to what depth the Large-flowered Trillium tubers or elongated rootstocks should be planted. I quote a number of well known Authors-

"Wild Flowers and How to Grow Them" by Edwin F. Steffek, recommends 6 inches.

"Wild Flowers for Your Garden" by Helen S. Hull, recommends 4 inches.

"Taming the Wildlings" by Herbert Durand, He says 6 to 8 inches.

Some even recommend 8 to 10 inches, I have best results planting them 6 inches deep, and they certainly should not be planted less than 4 inches.

All the Trilliums are American plants, but frequently they are referred to as Wake-robin. This term is transferred from Europe and from an entirely different group of plants. The European Wake-robins are plants of the Arum family while the native Trilliums belong to the Lily family.

DID YOU KNOW

That CHIVES (*Allium schoenoprasum*) were known as early in history as 3000 B.C. Like their relative the onion, chives were used all over Asia and northern Europe centuries before the beginning of the Christian Era. The mild delicate flavor of chives has remained one of the most popular of seasonings.

The clumps of tubular leaves and pompons of lavender flowers are an attractive addition to the garden. They make a decorative border or edging.

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

Martha E. Crone --- Editor