

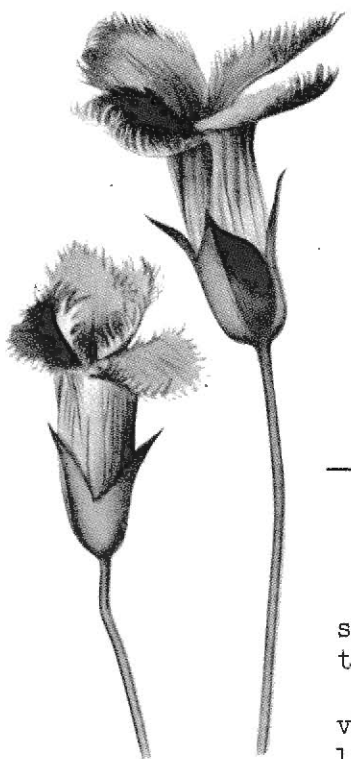
THE FRINGED GENTIAN

(1)

Vol. 7

January 1959

No. 1



WINTER IN THE GARDEN

While the snow flies and the garden sleeps its winter-sleep, plans are already underway for its spring awaking and the new season of an active program of planting.

The miracle of falling snow transforms the garden into a virtual fairy land. The trees stretching their snow laden leafless branches toward a sky laden with dark clouds appear etched against this back ground as in a painting.

Usually a cold early winter is followed by a balmy March and early spring. This sounds very encouraging considering the cold December just past.

Extremely hard winters are among the instruments of natural selection in eliminating the least efficient plants and so raising the general average.

February is still uninterrupted winter in this latitude, often containing, the worst of it, and March is usually more wintry than spring-like, yet toward the end of the month the progress of plants quickens, as winter relaxes its grasp.

Would you have joy in winter-time, think but of the new green and fragrance that comes in spring.

IN WINTER

"Far pleasanter are summer paths
To wander thru, I know
But it is fair to look upon,
A woodland deep in snow."

-M. L. Allis

ACTIVITY IN MARCH

March is the time of year between winter and spring. The winter has barely disappeared when catkins start to appear on many shrubs and trees. The Alders with their long catkins sending out clouds of yellow pollen. The Common Hazel-nut and Beaked Hazel-nut with its smaller catkins also shake out pollen.

In the swamps the Pussy Willow with the large white catkins which soon elongate and send out yellow stamens that turn the pussies to gold.

The catkins of the birches appear well in advance of the earliest flowers. Some of the largest catkins are found on the Aspen.

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

(2)

AN APPEAL

Help to insure the continuance of the ever-widening scope of bringing to the public the joys and pleasures of this unique garden.

There must be greater support to protect this bit of wild area and keep it in its natural condition.

We must make the best use of the resources we now have at hand and never relax for a moment.

Its really a challenge to keep this Wild Flower Garden since we and the next generation need the beauty of our native flowers, many of which are disappearing in advance of our civilization.

Many years of great endeavor of planning and planting have brought the garden to the present well established place of interest and beauty.

The marked growth of this area in recent years has been most outstanding. Well over 80,000 visitors enjoy its facilities each year.

So much more can be done with your assistance.

NATIONAL FLOWERS

The United States cannot be said to have a generally accepted National Flower. A number of attempts have been made to select one but no decision has been reached.

A National Flower is usually recognized only when tradition and legend give it significance and not because of a popular vote. According to this it really should be the Trailing Arbutus (Epigaea repens). Altho it doesn't grow in every State of the union, yet it gave the pilgrims so much courage when they found it blooming so early in their first spring here after landing the previous December at Plymouth Rock.

A number of National Flowers are -

England	Rose	France	Fleur-de-lis
Ireland	Shamrock	Germany	Cornflower
Scotland	Thistle	Italy	Chrysanthemum
Wales	Leek	Spain	Pomegranate
Mexico	Cactus	India	Lotus

All of these have a special significance for their origin.

STRANGE AS IT MAY SEEM

Bees sleep wherever night overtakes them, since they fly as far as ten miles from the hive. They are frequently found on flowers early in the morning before the sun has warmed them.

In the spring the bees are about, as soon as the fuzzy buds of Hepaticas are unfolding in the wake of the melting snow.

The handsome little blossoms of pure white, pink, blue or purple have a faint sweet fragrance noticeable when nearing a patch.

Many of our dainty woodland flowers come so early when there is still danger of frost and are often snowed under.

(3)

BIRD NOTES

When winter trims the forest with glittering white, turning bleakness into beauty, our midwinter birds have taken over. As long as birds have plenty of food, cold and below zero weather have no terror for them. They find a resting place for the night in hollow trees, under roofs or in brush piles.

Seed pods and grasses held above the deepest snows and berries and crab-apples that cling to bushes and trees all winter make it possible for many birds to pass the winter here.

The native mountain ash has a fine supply of food, the red berries clinging until taken by the birds.

It has been stated that Evening Grosbeaks greatly relish sunflower seeds, yet they have not been noted coming to the feeder for them, preferring box-elder keys instead.

In addition to sunflower seeds and suet, the chickadees, both red and white breasted nuthatches, as well as the hairy and downy woodpeckers are very fond of bacon grease spread on the bark of trees. Even juncos are often observed partaking of this treat, providing the bark is rough enough for them to cling.

This is safe from sparrows and blue jays, since they are not able to hang onto the bark.

LEATHERWOOD MOOSEWOOD

Dirca palustris - Leatherwood Family

This is one of the most hardy and easily grown shrubs and can be planted in various situations in home landscaping. It is the first shrub to unfold its leaves in the spring. The small pale yellow flowers appear even earlier sometimes in March. The fruit is a red oval-shaped drupe.

This symmetrical shrub seldom exceeds 4 feet in height, growing native in woods therefore will tolerate shade.

Altho this family has about 37 genera and 460 species widely distributed, only two species of one genus occur native in the United States. One is California and *Dirca palustris* in this area.

The bark and twigs of this shrub are exceedingly tough and pliable and cannot be broken.

Plants can be obtained from Wild Flower Nurseries, especially from those located in Minnesota.

DID YOU KNOW

That Coconuts grow no further north than Florida. It is at home everywhere in the Tropics, Panama, Jamaica, Southern coast of Asia and Southern India. The Philippines, Central America and South America.

There are about 35 known species, some of them seldom grow very far from the seacoast. 80 to 100 nuts ordinary are the annual yield of each tree.

It spreads quite readily, the thick husk is adapted to the preservation of the seed, while the nut is tossed about by the waves until it reaches some distant shore.

MEMBERSHIPS

Membership in Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc., a non-profit corporation, may be obtained by writing to the Secretary, Mrs. Martha E. Crone, for a membership blank.

The Fringed Gentian, the official publication issued quarterly is included with membership. New members are given the benefit of a number of back issues.

Annual membership fees which are tax deductible are as follows-

Active	\$ 3.00	Sponsor	\$ 25.00	Founder	\$200.00
Sustainer	\$10.00	Builder	\$100.00	Benefactor	\$500.00

SPRINGS RESTLESSNESS

It is in early spring that a restlessness stirs within us, which modern life does not seem to satisfy, then we wish to be closer to the out-of-doors, and are irresistibly drawn by the appeal of Nature.

Quiet contemplation in natural surroundings gives one the necessary release from the tenseness of present-day life.

The true nature lover never finds a dull season, for each is successively absorbing. In Spring it is the awakening of countless forms of life. Summer reveals the maturity of all creation. Autumn brings the fulfillment of earlier promises, and Winter with its frost and snow lulls life to sleep and rest.

WHITE-FOOTED MOUSE

The White-footed Mouse is really a handsome creature with its large eyes and ears. Its spotless robe of grayish above is sharply contrasted with the pure white beneath and white feet.

They have a natural grace and gentleness of disposition similar to the Flying Squirrel. They soon become tame in captivity.

They construct outside nests in thick tangles of bushes or vines from four to ten feet above the ground. The beautiful workmanship of these nests is remarkable.

Fine grasses, rootlets, shreds of leaves and strips of pliable bark are worked over and over again, fluffing it and then weaving an almost perfectly spherical ball. A small opening is left at one side, just large enough to squeeze in. It is lined with the softest material, bits of moss and plant-down.

Their food is mostly nuts and seeds, yet will eat many other articles.

This mouse is often blamed for the destruction caused by the Meadow Mouse in orchards, nurseries, gardens, especially to evergreen ground covers which they practically destroy.

The best method to discourage them is by scattering mothballs about these areas.