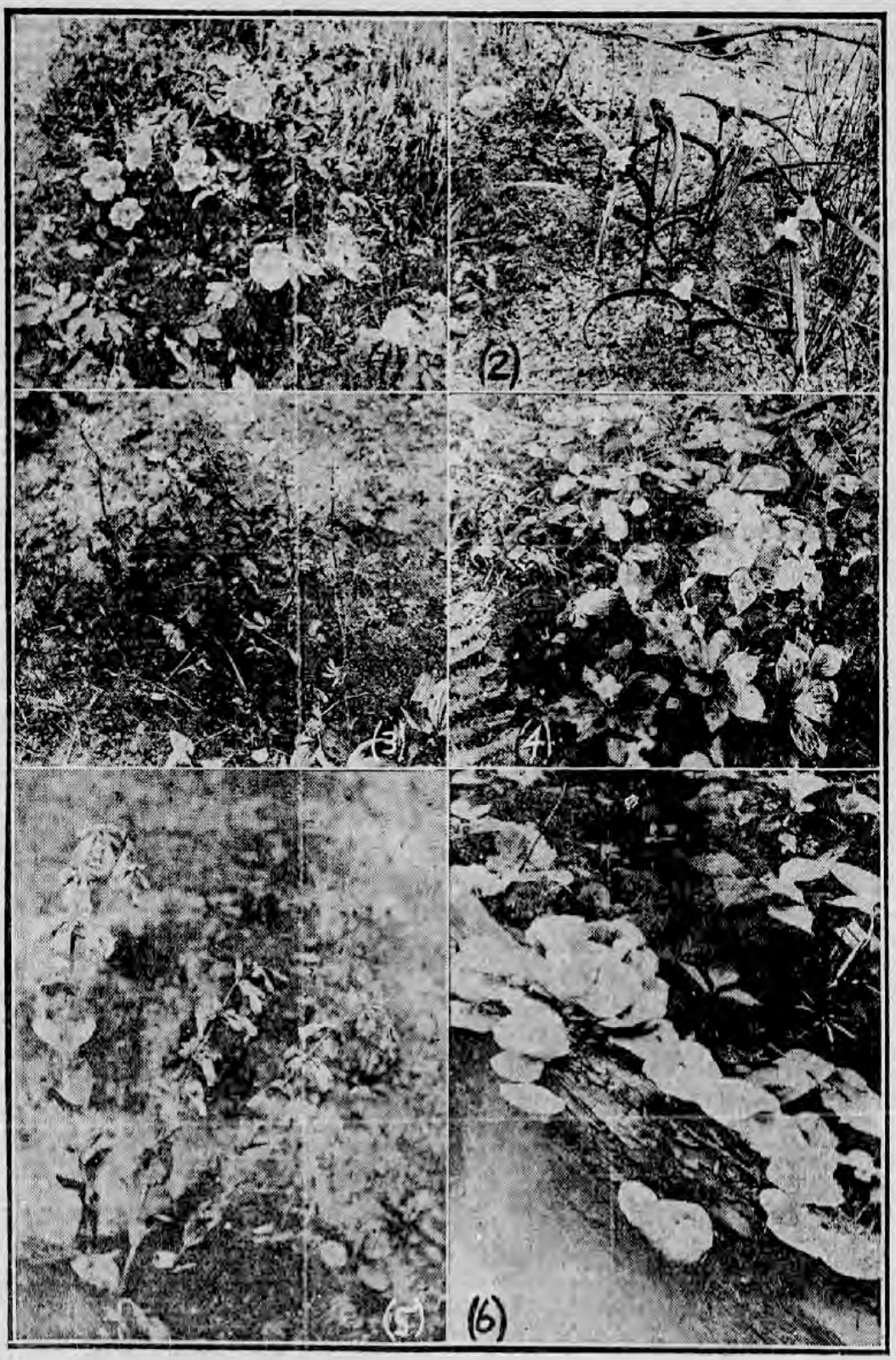
Wild Roses Know When It Is June, According to Miss Butler, Who Describes Blossoms That Delight the Rambler Out-of-Doors



1. Wild rose. 2. Spiderwort. 3. Pentstemon. 4. Dwarf Cornel. 5. Lupine. 6. Oyster Mushroom.

ONE unfamiliar with the native flora is surprised to learn that the superb large-flowered Pentstemon (P. Grandiflorus) is not an exotic. A hillside covered by this plant, with its large, showy, five-parted, two-lipped bells of delicate, varying shades of blue, lilac and lavender, once seen can never be forgotten. Attached to the inner base of the corolla are five curved stamens, the origin of the scientific name, Pentstemon. One of these stamens has instead of the usual pollen sacs a close tuft of hairs. This bearded stamen, partially closing up the throat of the corolla tube, and thus facilitating insect pollination, has given rise to the common name, beard-tongue. The thickish even-margined, grayish green leaves, as may be noted from the accompanying print, are arranged in opposite pairs. They are covered with an evanescent bloom, like the leaves of the cabbage and pea, or the fruit of the plum.

The Pentstemon is but one of the many native flowers as remarkable for size, color and beauty as many that are laboriously cultivated in gardens or greenhouse, and with the elusive, in dividual charm [illegible] plants torn from their natural setting.

Another beautiful flower, often cultivated, and like the beard-tongue, a frequenter of sandy soil, is Tradescantia Virginiana, commonly called spiderwort, from the slender, keeled leaves stretching out like the legs of a spider. This plant is closely allied to the lilies. The flower is on the plan of three—having three green sepals, three bright reddish or bluish purple petals, six stamens and a pistil usually made up of three united carpels. The stamens are a distinctive feature of the flower, with their yellow pollen sacs against the purple petals. The stalks of the stamens are densely fringed with purple hairs, whose beauty has a depth "that is deeper still" under the armed eye of the microscope. The hairs, when magnified, are seen as branching chains of exquisitely tinted spherical and cylindric, bead-like cells, within which pulsate circling streams of protoplasm—the living substance—endowed with the same properties in the humblest and in the highest forms of life.

Many plants of the pea or pulse family are now in bloom. Among them the lupine will easily rank first, by reason of its showing spikes of blue or purple butterfly shaped flowers, and beautiful palmately divided leaves. The lupine also grows in sandy soil, to which it is adapted by a tap root penetrating to a depth that will tire out the most persistent digger who may intend to obtain a specimen for transplanting.

A search in bogs and low rich woodlands will be rewarded at this time by the lovely dwarf cornel. What seems like four white petals in this flower are bracts—as the leaves on flower stalks are technically named—and no integral part of the blossom, but grouped about a cluster of small flowers, which develop later into a rounded bunch of bright red berries, toothsome to children, although of cloying sweetness. One would not at first sight connect this lowly herb with its relatives, the dogwood shrubs, one species of which is favored for hedges on account of its attractive white, flat-topped flower clusters, its white or sometimes purple fruit, and especially for the vividly red stems that give the needed touch of color to the winter landscape.

Although not flowers, we cannot pass without a glance the denizens of decaying logs and stumps. To students of foliage and epicures these forms of vegetation may be of more interest than the flowering plants. The specimen illustrated here is the edible oyster mushroom, pleurotus ostreatus. It is somewhat shell-like in shape and the individuals overlap one another like oysters attached to some substratum in the sea. The under surface is covered, too, with gills, not for breathing, as in oysters and fish, but for bearing spores or reproduction cells.

How do the roses know that it is June? With the advent of the crowning month of the year, gardens, wild wood and prairie are ever redolent with the fragrance and glorified with the supernal loveliness of the rose.

Strange to say, a cult exists, slowly increasing in numbers, that considers single flowers—yes, even single roses—more lovely than the double ones, transformed by man from beautiful utility to useless beauty. For, with the multiplication of the velvety petals disappear the stamens and pistils which are the essentials for the formation of the seed—the purpose of the flower in nature. We may marvel at the skill of the florist in producing a cabbage like double dahlia and chrysanthemum; but we linger over and dearly love the single forms of these flowers. Banks of single roses in large gardens of double ones compel admiration and seem more decorative than the artificially produced double ones to these possibly mistaken few.—ELOISE BUTLER.