PUBLICATION OF
FRIENDS OF THE
WILD FLOWER GARDEN, INC.

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MINNEAPOLIS 12, MINN.

THE FRINGED GENTIAN

(5)
Vol. 17 April 1969 No. 2

JOYS OF SPRINGTIME

Winter passes and the coldness has flown. Spring keeps the promise of a new beginning and fulfills our hopes of another garden. On every side are signs of life renewed.

When the season is once launched it all goes too fast. It's hard to do justice to this spring that will never return.

Spring is rushing past so swiftly. The glorious time of bloom for April and May merges so gently hardly to be noticed.

The bursting seed, the opening bud, the unfolding fronds of ferns, new blooms popping everywhere and the first longed for note of the robin.

That is the most breathless moment of the year, the atmosphere of promise.

By June the first ecstacy is gone and the early bloom has dropped its petals and the woods have passed their time of sweet promise and have grown dense with green obscuring leaves.

Perhaps the following lines by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow might seem quite fitting here --

> "If Spring came but once in a century, instead of once a year, or burst forth with the sound of an earthquake, and not in silence, what wonder and expectation there would be in all hearts to behold the miraculous change."

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DID YOU KNOW

That if it weren't for the sake of a tiny wasp-like insect we would not have the luscious figs.

There were no native figs here and when first introduced in California, they grew readily but produced no fruit.

It was discovered that a certain insect was the only one capable of fertilizing them. Then this insect was imported. In all the pages of history this fact is one of the strangest.

This little insect burrows its way into the fruit-like flowers thereby fertilizing them and thus bearing fruit in abundance.

If the extensive spraying continues, eventually they will become exterminated and there would be no more figs.

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

BOG GARDENS

A true bog is a flat piece of ground composed largely of peat and covered with living sphagnum moss. It retains the moisture throughout the summer season.

The possession of a natural bog offers an unusual opportunity for a unique type of gardening.

Lacking a bog but desirous of growing bog plants, one can be created by artificial means.

The two essentials are a continuous supply of water, and a soil which is capable of retaining it.

One of the simplest methods is by mixing equal portions of sand and peat moss with generous quantities of humus. The mixture should be deep - 18 inches if possible, and a one-inch layer of peat moss should be spread over the surface.

The only further care of a bog garden after the plants have been established is the occasional removal of undesirable plants which may have crept in.

A partial list of plants recommended for a bog garden are --

Closed Gentian	(Gentiana Andrewsii)
Fringed Gentian	(Gentiana crinita)
Cardinal Flower	(Lobelia cardinalis)
Jack-in-the-Pulpit	(Arisaema triphyllum)
Marsh Marigold	(Caltha palustris)
Troutlily	(Erythronium americanum)
Pickerel-weed	(Pontederia cordata)
Pitcher Plant	(Sarracenia purpurea)
Cinnamon Fern	(Osmunda cinnamomea)
Royal Fern	(Osmunda regalis)
Trilliums	(T. grandiflorum & sessile)
Lilies	(L. Canadensis & superbum)
Iris	(Iris fulva & pseudacorus)

Also various Lady's-Slippers (Cypripedium)

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STRANGE AS IT MAY SEEM

The distance of the sun from the earth has no bearing upon winter and summer. The sun is more than three million miles closer to the earth in January than it is in July.

The earth is farthest from the sun about July 4th. The difference in temperature between summer and winter is the angle at which the rays of the sun strike the earth.

During the winter months the full moons have looked down our chimneys. Soon the noon sun will occupy this position while the full moons retreat toward the south.

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SPRING MUSHROOM HUNTING

Much of the upper midwest had a great abundance of snow this past winter; this generous moisture should well balance the dryness of past seasons and bring up the diminishing water table.

This appears to be an ideal spring for Mushroom enthusiasts. Venturing into the woods after the snow is gone and the wonderful fragrance of damp earth steals over you, that means there must be mushrooms in the vicinity.

The early spring mushroom, the delicious Morel, is sought after most. The heavy snow of the past winter has well prepared the earth for good hunting.

During the month of May the delicious Morel (Morchella) grows in damp woods, pastures or other grassy areas. Old apple orchards have been favorite places.

These mushrooms are easily identified. The surface of the stalked and conical structure is marked with irregular pitlike depressions giving it the appearance of a sponge. Its color is tan, yellowish or brown.

This is the choicest of all mushroom and is greatly esteemed for its fine culinary virtues.

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BIRD NOTES

The bird life again flows back to the north like a tidal wave. The northward sweeping wave in spring is much more marked than the southward wave in fall.

In spring the migrating hosts are as much under the spell of new life as the flowers and trees.

In fall most birds drift along leisurely, while in spring an irrepressible impulse urges them to hasten on their journey.

Spring travels northward at the rate of about 13 miles a day, and when the far-going migrants, like the little yellow warbler leave the gulf cost, they travel at about the same speed.

But as they approach their northern nesting grounds, they increase their speed, so by the time they reach the far north they increase the rate of their flight to 250 miles a day.

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CONSERVATION

The knowledge and understanding of our natural resources invites the efforts of all friends of the outdoors.

Especially in the spring when enthusiasts of the ourdoors participate in a nationwide conservation program. It sounds the call to everyone to rally to the defense of our national resources, for after all they form the basis of our national economy.

Alone the individual can accomplish little. United and constant action can accomplish a great deal.

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VALUE OF FERTILIZING

Fertilizing plants means supplying nutrients as supplements to those originally mixed with the potting soil.

Fertilizers increase the rate of growth when applied after the plant has become well established. Rapid growth of House Plants is sometimes undesirable. In such cases fertilizers are withheld to reduce the rate of growth.

House Plants need to be supplied with only three fertilizing elements, nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium.

The others, so called trace or minor elements, usually are present in adequate quantities, even in the meager quantity of soil in pots.

Nitrogen stimulates rapid vegetative growth, phosphorus encourages root, flower, and seed development, and potassium promotes disease resistance and balances the effects of nitrogen. A fertilizer containing nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (like 10-24-10) is designated as a complete fertilizer. The first numeral designates the percentage of nitrogen; the second the percentage of phosphorus; and the third represents the percentage of potassium.

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HARDINESS OF PLANTS

Hardiness, when dealing with plants, refers to a plant's ability to survive the extremes of cold temperatures.

But other factors such as rainfall, soil and summer heat contribute to the plant's ability to flourish.

Many times, one year will vary greatly from another.

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SPICES

Nutmeg and Mace come from the kernel and inner coat respectively of the fruit of a tree (Myristica fragrans). It was known and was costly in medieval Europe.

Like Cinnamon and Cloves it has a history of monopoly after discovery by the Europeans.

The trees are bushy evergreens about 40 feet high, yielding when 15 years old. On ripening, the outer fruit coat about the size of a small peach and equally as luscious, cracks revealing a branching aril - the mace, covering a kernel, the nutmeg. About one pound of Mace is obtained to ten pounds of nutmeg. These are dried and ground for use.

Allspice, so named because the flavor resembles a mixture of clove, nutmeg, and cinnamon. It is the fruit of a small evergreen tree (Pimenta officinalis) of the West Indies. In Jamaica the tree is so common that it is not even cultivated.

The fruits are collected unripe since most of the aromatic qualities are lost on ripening. They are ground before being used as spice. The extracted oil is similar to clove oil.

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

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