

# THE FRINGED GENTIAN

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## THE DAYS OF WINTER

The waning daylight heralds the coming of winter, when the sun forsakes us for warm southern lands.

Altho the transition from our long evening hours out-of-doors is rather sudden. Yet when twilight time comes early, there are many spellbound hours to devote to reminiscing, relaxation and planning for the spring to come.

October ushered in the winter rather hurriedly with a heavy snowstorm, followed by a killing frost, cutting down many flowers before they finished blooming. Thick ice formed on the lakes and streams exceptionally early this year.

The miracle of falling snow when the air is a dizzy maze of whirling flakes, noiselessly transforming the world into glittering fairy land. The winter woods so still have every tree laden with snow, there solace is found in the silence.

The snow which now covers the earth plays a beneficent part towards vegetation. But by February the snow drifts that were so exquisite are earth-stained and weather worn.

Having passed through the winter storms safely and once again the coldness of winter has flown, the languors of springtime beckon, we are then reminded of the lines by Harriet Prescott Spofford--

"Under the snowdrifts the blossoms are sleeping,  
Dreaming their dreams of sunshine and June."

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## NATURE ENJOYMENT

To enjoy the year-long spectacle of Nature to the utmost, one needs a program to follow the events of the year.

Each season has its thousands of marvels, interesting things can be found everywhere. A stroll in the country or even a city park can give close acquaintance with Nature.

Now can be seen the endless branching of deciduous trees. They divide and subdivide until the trunk is lost in a maze of limbs.

The pines and other evergreens never have the main stem divided unless some accident nips the leading shoot.

In winter the stars seem to have rekindled their fires, apparently due to less light received from the slanting rays of the sun.

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



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BIRD NOTES

Feed the birds during winter when snow and ice covers their normal source of food. Provide suet and sunflower seeds for the chickadees, nuthatches and woodpeckers. Cardinals are very fond of peanuts and peanut butter. Seeds of pumpkins, squash and melons also are greatly relished by them.

Its time to look for the Cedar Waxwings, Bohemian Waxwings, Purple Finches, Snow Buntings, Lapland Longspurs and Evening Grosbeaks. They are visitors here for the winter from their northern homes where they nest.

Upwards of 30 species of birds can be seen hereabouts during the winter, they consist of either permanent residents or winter visitants.

The Snow Bunting also called Snowflake breeds in the Arctic zone, winters in Canada and northern Minnesota. They migrate southward in October and November and back north again in March.

During October large flocks were noted along the North Shore of Superior not far from the Canadian border. They are most active during snow squalls, flocks of them whirling here and there as tho they are part of the wind driven snow.

It has been proven that by attracting chickadees with a supply of their favorite food when they need it, really pays off by the many eggs of cankerworms and tent caterpillars and other insect enemies of trees that are devoured by them.

In early spring before the chickadees leave for their nesting site in the north, they eat countless cankerworm moths before the moths have a chance to lay their eggs. The chickadee takes credit for the extermination of many injurious insects of trees and shrubs.

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WAX-PLANT

Wax-plant (*Hoya carnosa*) of the Milkweed Family is a native of China and Australia.

This plant is one of the most popular old-fashioned in-door plants. Some of them bloom very freely while others are difficult to bring to the blooming stage. There are records of plants 25 years old that never had a blossom. Yet the foliage is interesting enough to warrant having them.

It is easily grown from slips or cuttings. The flowers are pinkish-white, waxy and deliciously fragrant. The thick waxy leaves are evergreen remaining on the plant several years.

It has been recommended that they should rest after spring or early summer blooming. In the winter keep it barely alive in a cool and dry place, preferably a maximum of 50 degrees, yet not much lower.

In the early spring bring the plant out to a warmer temperature and sunshine, and water once a day. When the new leaves are forming it responds to an application of liquid manure once a week. In summer it can be placed out-of-doors in the shade.

It only needs re-potting once every four or five years. It has a twining or climbing habit by means of small roots along the stem. A small trellis should be provided or better yet an upright piece of rough bark into which it can fasten its roots. Its worth trying.

Handle carefully, leave new spurs undisturbed since they are the source of flowers.

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SPECIAL NOTICENOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The regular Annual Meeting of Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc., will be held Tuesday, January 5th, 1960 at 7:30 P.M., at the home of our President, Mrs. Carroll Binder, 1627 W. 26th St., Minneapolis, Minn.

Kindly attend.

CHICORY

Chicory (*Cichorium Intybus*) of the Composite Family is a bi-ennial native of Europe that is grown in this country quite extensively.

The thick parsnip-like roots when dried and pulverized form the Chicory of commerce, used as a substitute for coffee or often as an adulterant of coffee. It has a pleasant taste.

The foliage resembles dandelion plants, and often mistaken for them. They are frequently used as greens and for salads.

Chicory plants have escaped from cultivation and are found growing wild. The wild flower garden has a good supply of them.

The first year a rosette-like plant forms, followed the second year by a tall open branching plant 3 to 5 feet tall. The exquisite sky-blue, wheel-like blossoms, one to two inches broad are set closely and vertically against the stem. They are scattered along the entire stem several inches apart. Sometimes called Blue Sailors they open early in the morning and on sunny days close at noon.

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CRANBERRY

Cranberry (*Vaccinium macrocarpon*) of the Heath Family is the common Cranberry of our markets and is exclusively an American fruit, since it is unknown in other countries, except the supply of fruit that is shipped there from this country.

The fruit is borne on trailing vines in acid peat bogs, which when flooded cause the berries to float and thus they are harvested.

In the wild state the vines were well summerged in Sphagnum moss and wholesale harvesting could not be carried on to any extent.

The moss protected the plants against winter injury or from the heaving of the soil when the bog thawed. The moss also kept the weeds out which under cultivation are checked by spraying.

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STRANGE AS IT MAY SEEM

Honey bees start at the bottom of a plant and work upward to gather nectar and fertilize flowers, while wasps start at the top and work down.

Bees collect gum or wax from the sticky spring buds of the Balsam Poplar and Balm-of-Gilead.

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LINGON BERRY

Lingon Berry, also called Red Whortle-berry, Tyttebaer and Preiselbeeren, is a native of northern Europe, especially Sweden.

Preserves made from these berries can be purchased in some of the larger stores here yet infrequently used being rather high priced. It is excellent with various meats especially with game.

Instead a small cranberry only a little larger than a currant is extensively used here. This cranberry is also called Rock Cranberry, Cowberry and Foxberry. (*Vaccinium vitis-idea*).

Found in Artic America and southward in the mountainous regions of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts and as far as Lake Superior.

They are used for jellies and preserves much as the common large cranberry. They are acid and rather bitter when raw and a little more tart when cooked than the large cranberry.

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PRESERVATION

It is hoped that this little publication will prove helpful and encouraging in a small way to those who wish to undertake the planting of wild flowers, or establishing wild flower gardens, large or small.

To those who are interested in preserving the few remnants of wild flowers that are left a vote of thanks is extended.

If we do not protect our wild flowers many will become extinct, some already are gone.

A wild flower garden is always a pride and pleasure and the finest heritage that can be passed on to the next generation.

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RAINFALL

It is estimated that trees and plants receive approximately 90 per cent of their nutrition from the atmosphere and only about 10 per cent from the soil.

Plant fiber and tissue are formed by the agent known as chlorophyl, which uses the energy of sunlight to create starch, sugar and related substances by combining carbon from the air and water and other materials from the soil.

The rain and snowfall of 1959 was well over the average, 26 inches were recorded up to the end of November. A good deal of moisture fell during the fall when it is mostly required to build up the reserve. Winter-kill of trees and shrubs should be minor this year.

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DID YOU KNOW

That Maraschino Cherries are cherries bleached white with sulfur dioxide, then dyed a brilliant red or green with pure vegetable dye.