

THE FRINGED GENTIAN

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MIRACLE OF SPRING

Spring comes slowly to the north country. When the heavy snowfall of late winter, following a snowless season has retreated, it is always a pleasure to welcome the first flowers of spring.

This is the season of renewed life and new growth. The earth again breaths gently for the south winds balm is in the air.

The trees in May offer many lovely sights, but none finer than when in bloom, especially the wild cherris, plum and hawthornes.

Spring pauses briefly and passes on. Only about half as many shrubs and trees bloom in July as in May and June. Many cannot tolerate the heat of summer.

We plant seeds and plants and then in spring anxiously wait for the first bit of green to appear. How fascinating is the miracle of the cycle of-seed to flower and again to seed.

The following lines by L. H. Bailey are so appropriate for spring --

"Yesterday the twig was brown and bare,
Today the glint of green is there
To-morrow will be leaflets spare;
I know no thing so wondrous fair
No miracle so strangely rare.

MINNESOTA STATE BIRD

After many years without an official State Bird, the Common Loon or great Northern Diver (*Gavia immer immer*) has been declared the State Bird of Minnesota. Certainly most appropriate for our State of 10,000 lakes.

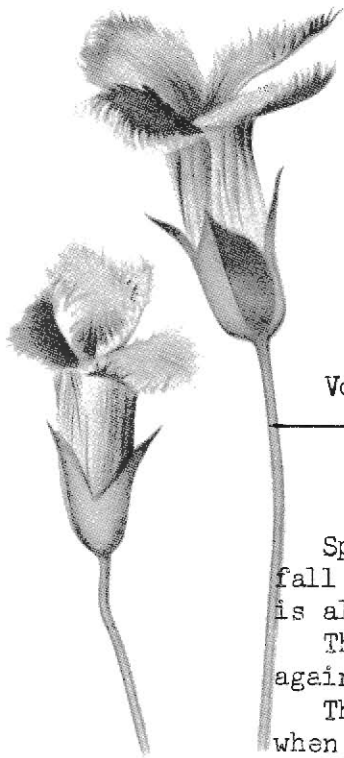
The penetrating wild laughter of the Loon is its best-known vocal attempt.

During their spring migration they do not tarry long on the way but hurry on to their favorite lakes.

Some time ago nearly every lake was populated with these birds but now they have retreated to the more northern lakes.

Many are found in Lake Superior where they breast the cold waves cruising along swiftly, ready to submerge in a flash. They sometimes dive as deeply as 200 feet. When the young are real small they often ride on the backs of the adult birds.

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



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A never-to-be-forgotten occurrence, experienced by your editor last summer while on a fishing camp-out with my Eagle Scout grandson at a wilderness lake near the Canadian border.

As twilight deepened into night, the only sounds were those of nature in this secluded place.

Suddenly we heard the wild eerie laughter of the Common Loon, echoing against the dark tree-lined shore of the lake.

It is one of the unforgettable voices of the wilderness and difficult to fully express ones awe. The recollections of the wild become part of us and from these we never part. As continuous as the countless stars that shone so brightly that night, where the sky-shine of cities does not dim them.

It is hoped that all our readers might have the opportunity to experience a similar situation. Indeed the out doors comes close to being a philosophy of life.

The spicy odor of balsam and an occasional whiff of wood smoke from our campfire soon made us drift into a world of peace with the call of the Loon still heard faintly across the lake.

What a treasure to have this vivid memory of our Minnesota State Bird.

BIRD NOTES

The northward sweeping wave of birds in spring is much more marked than the southward wave in fall. In spring an irrepressible impulse urges them on to their destination.

The sojourn of these birds in the north is brief. The long trip is made to raise their families and take advantage of the abundant insect supply.

It is disheartening to note the great decrease in our bird population, due largely to the spraying of insects thereby reducing their numbers.

In addition to spraying in this area, an extensive program of spraying is being carried on in the south, where insects are most numerous and where many birds winter.

Similarly the robins are decreasing most noticeably. Many home-owners dislike having their lawns disfigured by earthworm borings, therefore spray to eliminate them.

Since the angleworm or earthworm is the principal food of robins, especially when the young need quantities of food, no doubt this is the reason they are moving away from our home grounds. They also relish many kinds of insects, berries and various kinds of seeds.

Some years ago earthworms were mostly lacking in the northern part of the state, but after their introduction there, they are abundant now.

Many species of birds have become extinct such as the Passenger Pigeon, Heath Hen, Eskimo Curlew and many others. Many are on the brink of becoming so, mainly due to the disturbance of the balance of nature.

DID YOU KNOW

That many of the Cliff Swallows of Capistrano, California have nested at the San Juan Capistrano Mission for many years. The regularity with which this colony arrives in the spring on March 19th is most remarkable.

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ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting of Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Incorporated, was held Tuesday, January 10th, 1961, at the home of our President, Mrs. Dorothy Binder, 1627 W. 26th St., Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Officers elected were: Mrs. Dorothy Binder, President; Mr. Leonard F. Ramberg, Vice-President; and Mrs. Martha E. Crone, Secretary-Treasurer.

Elected to the Board of Directors were -- Mrs. Donald Bridgman, Mrs. Bernard Bowron, Miss Marion E. Cross, Mrs. Alice Martin, Mrs. Robert Stange, Mr. Lloyd Hale, Mr. Kenneth Avery, and Mr. Whitney Eastman.

Renamed Directors are -- Mr. Russell H. Bennett, Mr. Earle Brown, Mrs. Elizabeth Carpenter, Mr. Walter E. Lehnert, Mr. Leonard C. Odell, Mr. Carl W. Rawson and Mrs. Clarence Tolg.

Annual reports were given showing that much progress has been made in furthering the work for which this group was organized.

It was voted at this meeting that the Secretary's Annual Report for 1960 be included in the Spring Quarterly, it is as follows --

25 new members were added to the organization during the year. A number of our faithful supporters passed away since our last annual meeting and several others moved away or dropped out. An effort is generally made to further interest those dropping out.

Four quarterly issues of our publication "The Fringed Gentian" were sent to the members.

The open house and Conducted Tour through the garden on May 14th, proved very successful and requests are being made for another such tour.

The garden was in beautiful condition considering the severe past winter. The new labels are very attractive.

In addition to the regular work, the following projects were carried out -- Practically all of Violet path has been redone as well as the large Bird's-foot Violet bed in the upper garden. Several other beds were established. Perhaps it is difficult to understand that compact beds of wild flowers soon are run out by more aggressive plants, therefore have to be replanted.

Many Trilliums were lost during the severe winter, these were replaced. A heavy layer of leaves is spread on the new fern bed to keep down weeds and stop erosion. Other plants in the prairie garden were covered with hay since the exposure to the winter sun is disastrous.

Extensive bird feeding is carried on during the winter.

Our active membership is approximately 180 at this time, memberships terminate a year from the time of entree. New members receive many back numbers of our publication. (49 pages at this time)

5 Kodachrome illustrated lectures of the garden were given to various groups by your Secretary. These often arouse new interest.

In addition to the garden serving as a Wild Flower Reserve, it plays an important role as a nature preserve. With the great amount of Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, Campfire, Schools and others enjoying the facilities of the garden, it seems that more young folks should be interested in the furtherance of the garden.

The fine support given this undertaking by members of the Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, is sincerely appreciated.

Martha E. Crone, Sec'y.

A Conducted Tour and Open House of the Wild Flower Garden, will again be held in May. Notices will be sent to the members.

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HOME GARDEN

A home garden can be established containing both domestic and wild flowers. They harmonize and inter-mingle well.

Try a few of the 10 best starters as mentioned in the Fringed Gentian Publication of April 1958.

The early spring flowers are the most fascinating. What could be lovelier than Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*), Hepatica, Trilliums and Jacob's Ladder, coming into bloom with Tulips, Daffodils, Hyacinths and Scillas, with long-remembered sweetness filling the air. Ferns grown with them provide a satisfactory cover when they have gone by.

The large colony of Hepaticas in the Wild Flower Garden, on the west slope is one of the earliest to come into bloom. Some plants have as many as 300 blossoms in varying shades of pink, rose, blue, purple as well as white. They have no nectar but the bees and insects eagerly gather the pollen. The leathery dark green leaves which have lasted thru the winter will soon be replaced by a new set. They thrive and multiply and are decorative all summer. These attractive plants come into bloom when trees are still without foliage.

HIBERNATION OF TURTLES

Many inquiries have been received in reference to the disappearance of turtles in winter.

They generally winter down a few inches in the muddy bottoms of streams or ponds or in holes in the banks of small streams, also under logs in sloughs. Box Turtles hibernate in shallow leaf-blown hollows of the woods.

The Snappers begin burrowing into their hibernation when the temperature of the water drops to within a few degrees of freezing. They become active soon after the disappearance of the ice in spring.

Turtles are most primitive of existing reptiles. In spite of the many killed on highways during their migration to find sandy areas to lay their eggs, their numbers seem to remain constant.

EXTENDED SEASON

After the spring flowers are thru blooming in the southern part of the state, this pleasure can again be enjoyed in the north.

On a drive to the north, stop for an excursion among the native plants in the Wild Flower Garden just north of Grand Marais on the Gunflint Trail.

There you will see the real glory and wonders of the native wildlings of the north. As well as the treasured scenes of wilderness, woodland and streams.

The universal interest in wild flowers, stem from the human urge to have a hand in the continual creation of beauty.

Springtime is a good time to become a member of Friends of the Wild Flower Garden. Invite a friend.

You not only have the satisfaction of belonging, but also building something tangible for the future.