

COYOTE CAPERS

S.P. Jordon

The following eye witness account of coyote behaviour was told to me by a member of the United States federal department of agriculture:

"I once watched a pair of coyotes capture a gopher by a rather unique method. The coyotes lined up in single file and approached a gopher so that the wind blew their scent away from the gopher. As far as the gopher was concerned there was only one coyote approaching his hole. When the first coyote passed over the hole the gopher reappeared, his safety being assured by the faintness of the scent of the first coyote which had continued on, walking up-wind. The second coyote, having dropped to a crouch position immediately behind the first coyote when it passed over the hole, was able, with one quick lunge, to grasp the unsuspecting gopher."

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FIELD-MOUSE NEST

S.P. Jordon

On May 18 I discovered the nest of a field-mouse. It was composed entirely of chicken feathers and yet there wasn't a farm or a chicken for nearly a mile. What boundless energy must have gone into the construction of this warm and cosy abode!

WHITE-FOOTED MICE

W. Yanchinski

Have the members noticed the scarcity of the White-footed mice this year? I haven't noted a single individual, while working in the fields, although I did encounter several Jumping Mice.

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B O T A N Y

HIS ARTICIE WILL BE MISSED

In this issue readers will greatly miss the usual article on a plant family written by Mr. Arch C. Budd.

We are sorry to report that Mr. Budd has not been weel this summer. He took radium treatments in the clinic at Regina early in June and since then has been having a great deal of trouble with his right eye which had become affected.

On July 21 he wrote that he and his wife were leaving by train for Nova Scotia to attend his son's wedding. They did not expect to be back until mid-August. He expressed his regret at not being able to send his usual contribution but hoped to be able to prepare one for our next issue.

The BLUE JAY hopes that Mr. Budd has had a restful holiday and wish for him a speedy return to good health.

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To turn a world of beauty into a world of ugliness is a great crime.

...Howard Braucher.

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INTERESTED IN BOTANY SECTION

Wm. Niven

I am very interested in the Botany Section and read with interest the descriptions of the different plant families that appear in the BLUE JAY.

I am familiar with the names of most of the common wild flowers, but would like to know them all. I have already learned some of them from the descriptions given by Arch C. Budd.

I am glad to learn that he is publishing a book of the plants and flowers of the West. It should prove a very welcome aid in identifying the different kinds. Two of my favorites are the violets and the wild peas and vetches. There has already appeared a description of the different violets in an issue of the BLUE JAY. The kinds of violets I have found growing around here are the following; the commonest is the Early Blue Violet. The Crowfoot Violet is found in some grassy meadows. The Canada Violet is fairly common in moist well-shaded bluffs. Also I have found one which I think is the Marsh Violet, growing in wet places. The flower is blue, but the leaves are heart-shaped, sometimes reddish on the underside.

(This is the Northern Bog Violet, *Viola nephrophylla*..Editor).

I would like to see an article on the wild peas and vetches as I would like to know the proper names for them. I am familiar with the Golden Bean, a very common flower, but we have several wild peas or vetches, as well as some wild clovers and loco weeds, the names of which I am not yet familiar.

MARSH VIOLET

We were pleased to receive from Mrs. W. Buceuk, of Kamsack, a living specimen of a violet for identification. It was a Marsh Violet (*Viola palustris*) and was found in a damp spot, growing in the shade of trees.

This plant was set out in a flower pot and thrived all summer under the shade of a spruce tree in the garden. We hope to get a plant in full bloom next spring to add to our collection.

CACTI

Never within the memory of local naturalists was there such a profusion of Cacti as appeared on the dry hills of the Qu'Appelle Valley this spring. Some hillsides were yellow with the waxy blossoms of the Prickly Pear Cactus. Others were almost a solid mass of red -- a galaxy of fiery stars protruding from the pine-apple-like green clusters of the Ball Cactus.

Among the yellow blossoms, Mrs. H. A. Croome, of Regina, came upon a Prickly Pear blossom, distinctly pink in color.

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Animals that fight with their teeth retract their ears when angry so that the ears cannot be injured or torn by the enemy.

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THE PRAIRIE LILY

Of interest, perhaps to our new members, is the fact that the Prairie Lily is the floral emblem of Saskatchewan. The Saskatchewan Natural Society should form the nucleus of a group, continually advocating that this beautiful flower be conserved.

Mrs. E. B. Flock, of the Regina Natural History Society first suggested that that society urge the government to declare the lily to be Saskatchewan's floral emblem. In 1941 the Legislature passed an Act making "the flower known botanically as '*Lilium philadelphicum andinum*' and popularly called 'the Prairie Lily'....." the emblem of the Province.

Dorothy Morrison, of Regina, has written a very interesting booklet on this flower, dedicated to the children of Saskatchewan. Copies may be obtained from the School Aids and Text Book Publishing Company, Regina.

In some areas of Saskatchewan, this summer, the lilies appeared in abundance. In other areas there were very few. In the few places they grow around Regina they appeared in profusion but their beauty was soon marred as their petals were destroyed by grasshoppers almost as fast as they appeared. Mrs. Hubbard writes that there were very few at Grenfell, but Mr. Yanchinski reports that they were abundant and lovely at Naicam.

Mrs. S. O. Olson, of Big River, has this to say: "This beautiful flower appears to be on the increase around our home. No one is permitted to pull them and when one has control of a section, a few years soon show
 greater numbers of this lily."

Of particular interest is the following item from C.S. Francis, of Torch River:

Several years ago I found a delicate yellow Prairie Lily, which has since bloomed every year in my garden. About the middle of June, my son, Stanley, a keen naturalist, like his dad, found an even more unusual and lovely wild lily. It was at least two feet tall, with two very large blooms, of unusual beauty. The petals were of a bright red on the outer edge, gradually turning to an orange or a highly strong yellow, while the spots in the throat, which are usually almost black, were of a beautiful clear lilac color. It was strikingly different from the others that were blooming all around it. Needless to say we have this rare find in our garden alongside the yellow lily.

FLOWERS AT GRENFELL

Mrs. John Hubbard

We've had lots of rain (as well as three hailstorms) in June, and the crops are heavy, though late and badly lodged. Wild flowers are not late in spite of the backward season and are very profuse. Lilies were noticeable by their absence this year. My husband brought in a lady slipper from some breaking; the first we've seen in years. They are going with the bush. Saskatoons and wild raspberries have been plentiful this year. Berry pickers were just as thick as the mosquitoes and just as courteous.

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It has been estimated that more than one-half of the world's flowers, would vanish if there were no bees.

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THE GREAT SAND HILLS

A.J. Breitung

There are more or less extensive areas of shifting sand hills in the prairie region of south-western Saskatchewan. The largest of these is known as the Great Sand Hills with an extent of more than 500 square miles. This area is situated approximately 30 to 45 miles east of the Saskatchewan-Alberta border and 100 to 130 miles north of the International Boundary.

The areas of drifting sand are due to the action of prevalent north-westerly winds on an originally sandy and hilly region. Whenever the sod or protecting covering of matted roots is broken or removed, the dry, light sand underneath, coming under the influence of the eddying currents of air, is carried away and piled up in oval or rounded banks. Across these banks clouds of sand are constantly driving. This process continues until the main substance of the hill is gone and nothing but its mere skeleton remains. The floor, after the hill has been removed, is generally covered with pebbles and other heavier matter which was sifted out.

The sand hills appear to be moving slowly toward the east or south-east following the direction of the prevailing winds. The progress is clearly shown on the east side where the hills are now underlaid with a loamy or clay floor and on the western side where solitary sand hills are occasionally found far in the rear of the advancing mass.

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