

BOTANY SECTION

Perhaps with the exceptions of the first appearance and songs of the Meadow Lark and Robin, nothing gives a greater thrill to naturalists in early spring than the sight of the first crocus or violet as they lift their delicate heads to herald in a new season.

For our records we would like an accurate report from various parts of the province, of all our April flowers as they first appear in bloom. The last two springs have been rather late, but in the Regina area we have recorded the following:

April 18, Frenchweed; April 19, Moss Phlox; April 20, Crocus Anemone; April 22, Leafy Musineon; April 25, Wild Parsley (Cogswellia); April 25, Red-seeded Dandelion; April 27, Common Dandelion; April 28, Tufted Milk-vetch; April 29, Early Cinquefoil; April 30, Plains Cymopterus.

Following within five days of these we noted Sand Bladderpod, Ray Pimpernel, Prairie Buttercup, Early Blue Violet, Sand Violet, Rydberg's Violet (Canada Violet). There seems no doubt but that these also bloom in April in some Saskatchewan areas. How many more can you find in April?

If you will press and dry any specimens that you are unable to identify and send them to the Editor of the BLUE JAY, he will make the determinations, and will publish them in our next issue. Send these on or before May 15.

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THALICTRUM BREITUNGII

Many of our members will be interested in the honor recently conferred on Mr. August J. Breitung, formerly of McKague, Sask. A new species of Meadow Rue has been named after him. In this connection the November-December, 1948, Canadian Field Naturalist reports: "This new species is named after August Breitung, a young amateur botanist of outstanding ability who accompanied A. E. Porsild to the Yukon in 1944 and is now on the staff of the Division of Botany and Plant Pathology, Ottawa."

By the way, Mr. Breitung was married, October 7 last, to Miss Mathilde K. Presch, of Ottawa. Congratulations on both counts, August.

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FORESTRY

From Torch River, C. Stuart Francis writes:

"While cutting white spruce trees for sawlogs on my own land last winter, I have been taking special notice regarding the rate of growth of spruce trees under various circumstances. On much of the forest where I have been cutting, the best and largest trees were cut down about twelve years ago, with only the undersized trees left. Some of the undersized trees had taken anywhere from 20 to 30 years to reach a diameter of about six inches; whereas, now that the big trees are removed, these small trees have

grown from 12 to 14 inches in diameter at one foot from the ground in about 12 years. This shows the benefits of good forest management and also shows that it is good sound judgment for any farmer in the northern part of the prairies, who has evergreen forests on his land, to protect the young forest as much as he can.

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Indian Pipes

Mr. Wm. MacNeill, Forester at Meadow Lake, reports having seen a clump of Indian Pipes last summer in an area south-east of Green Lake. In mid-winter (Feb. 7) he found a cluster of the same plants sticking through the snow on the north-east 36, township 63, range 24, West of the 3rd. This area is north of Big Island Lake, known on the maps as Lac des Isles.

(Mr. Cliff Shaw reported the presence of Indian Pipes in the Yorkton district last summer. We would like more reports on this interesting plant. ED.)

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Dwarf Mistletoe

Mr. R. F. Arnold, of the Department of Natural Resources, is very concerned over the increasing damage being done to our Jack Pine forests by this parasitic plant. He writes:

"The appearance of a mistletoe-infested forest is a deplorable sight and reminds one of the frightful human disease of elephantiasis in which human flesh is marred by huge growths."

"Mistletoe in Saskatchewan has only recently attracted pathologists' attention, although known for a long time by forestry men. Practically no research is available on the subject and scientists do not agree on the species or habit of the Saskatchewan form or on what host its life is prolonged in spreading from stand to stand. It has been reported on the forests of Lodgepole Pine in Southern Saskatchewan and is known to infect both Jack Pine and Black Spruce in Northern Saskatchewan."

All members are urged to send in authentic reports on its occurrence and also species determination if possible.

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Plants of Interest

Arch. C. Budd, of the Experimental Station at Swift Current identified some plants last summer which are not commonly found in this province and has been kind enough to send us some data on them.

Lupinus argenteus (Lupine) was found on a hillside about two miles S.W. of Rockglen. "This is, I think, the furthest eastern record so far, and was a surprise to me when I found it."

Ambrosia trifida (Great Ragweed) in large quantity alongside a large slough from two to three miles south of La Fleche. This is quite far west

for this species nowadays. (This is the Ragweed which is held responsible for much of the hay-fever in Eastern Canada. It is abundant in the Red River Valley in Manitoba and is extending westward mostly along the railways. I have yet to find one of these plants growing in Sask. ED.)

Cuscuta curta (Dodder). I found a very interesting area on the Antler Creek near Carnduff and found this species of Dodder. In the same place I located some Western False Crowfoot (Onosmodium occidentale) which is a new Saskatchewan record, I think. There also I found what I think is Nepeta cataria (Catnip).

At Skull Creek near Sidewood I found a clump of Sisymbrium Loesellii. (Loessel's Mustard) and incidentally found it very common at Kamloops, B.C. and in eastern Manitoba. (This plant is quite common in the Edenwold district, north east of Regina, ED.)

Some Saskatchewan Pentstemons or Beard-tongues.

The Beard-tongues or Pentstemons are an interesting and attractive genus, but have suffered somewhat at the hands of the plant taxonomists. Some omit the first "t" and call them Penstemons, some use Pentastemons, but the generally accepted name is Pentstemon. They are distinguished by their opposite leaves, funnel-form or campanulate flowers and by their fifth, sterile stamen which bears no anther and is generally bearded along one side. We, in southern Saskatchewan, have four common and one rare species, the White Beard-tongue or P. albidus; the Lilac-flowered Beard-tongue, P. gracilis; the Smooth Blue Beard-tongue, P. nitidus; the Slender Beard-tongue, P. procerus; and the rare Yellow Beard-tongue, P. confertus.

Our common species generally come into flower in the same regular order, first P. nitidus, from May 9 to May 26 (average date May 19); then P. albidus, from May 17 to June 22 (average June 5); next P. procerus, from May 27 to June 15 (average June 6); and later P. gracilis, from June 17 to June 25 (average June 20); the flowering dates of the earlier species being dependent on the earliness or lateness of the spring.

White Beard-tongue is a white-flowered species growing from 6 to 10 inches in height with a downy haired stem and oblanceolate, finely hairy leaves. The inflorescence is hairy and sticky and the plants grow in dry, exposed situations, sidehills, etc.

Smooth Blue Beard-tongue is the earliest flowering species and has smooth, bluish-green, glaucous leaves, the uppermost ones short and broadly ovate. The flowers are generally deep blue but range through many shades. I have a mount of this species with plants ranging from dark blue, through all shades of purple, red, pink to white, all gathered in an area about ten yards across on a side-hill near Eastend. It grows on steep sidehills, especially on dry, eroded slopes.

Slender Beard-tongue is a slender-stemmed species which generally grows in large colonies in the moister spots of the prairie, around non-saline sloughs, in the shelter of clumps of snow-berry, the sheltered side of coulees, etc. The deep blue flowers are borne in an interrupted spike and are quite small, but very striking when the plants are massed.