

# Saskatchewan's Sweetest Scented Flower

Archie Budd, Swift Current.



**P**ERHAPS the sweetest smelling native Saskatchewan flower is the Gumbo Evening-Primrose, *Oenothera caespitosa*, generally represented here by the variety *montana*. This is a low growing perennial of the *Onagraceae* or Evening Primrose family and is nearly caespitose or stemless, the leaf and flower stalks arising almost directly from the crown of the long tap root. The leaves are generally long lanceolate

with winged stalks, and vary in length from an inch to eight inches, and in form from entire margined to toothed, and generally have a pale mid-rib.

The flowers are very large and showy, from one and a half to three inches across, with four sepals, soon turning downwards, and four large white petals which open during the night but turn pink and wither in the late morning. Looking into the sweet scented open flower we find eight yellow stamens with their anthers horizontally on top of the filaments, and a yellow pistil consisting of a thin style with a four-lobed cross-like stigma on the summit. The fruit are rather hard, ovoid capsules from a half to one and a quarter inches long, borne closely on the root crown and ribbed with knobby ridges.

The Gumbo Evening-primrose is found on hillsides where the soil or subsoil is clay, and also on clay flats and coulee bottoms, and generally flowers during late May, June and early July. The typical form is practically hairless but most of our western plants are the variety *montana* which has a rough, white hairiness on the leaf stalks, flower-stems and base of the the plant.

In the native state the flowering period is fairly short but it has been found that under transplanting and cultivation it can be extended almost until freeze-up. It is a lovely plant for the garden with its showy, snow white petals and its golden yellow stamens and pistil and also the sweet, delicate scent in the early mornings.

## Golden Chokecherries

**W**E were surprised and pleased to receive from Mr. Cliff Shaw, during the first week in September, a package of golden-yellow chokecherries found in the vicinity of Yorkton.

Mr. Shaw admits that he was very skeptical about the reports of these berries until he and another naturalist friend went out and saw them. There were five trees, ten to fifteen feet high, all heavily loaded and growing among the common variety.

The farmer who owns the trees has known of them for about eight years. He reports that they ripen fully ten days earlier than the others, and are much sweeter.

Dr. G. F. Ledingham of the University reports that while a chokecherry with whitish to yellow fruits and described as "*leucocarpa*" is listed in Gray's manual of botany, the Yorkton find is the first received at the university. Neither he nor Dr. R. C. Russell, leading

authority on Saskatchewan plants, has ever heard of yellow chokecherries before.

Speaking at our Annual Meeting, Mr. D. R. Robinson, of the University Extension Department, said that similar berries had been located at two other points in the province.

## Lillies and Bluebells

*C. Stuart Francis, Torch River*

OUR beautiful Yellow Wild Lily had three lovely blooms this past season. The blooms lasted for quite a number of days before starting to wilt, which was probably due to the cooler temperature than is usual at that season. Our other unusual Wild Lily also had two nice blooms. The native Bluebell (*Tall Mertensia*) also seemed to have its blooming season just about double in length of time as compared with other years.

We were very interested in A. J. Breitung's article on "Carnivorous Plants", and hope to meet him personally some day. These plants are native to this area.

## A Hand Painted Guide to the Flowers and Birds of the Prairie

WE were very pleased and thrilled on receiving from Mr. Hugh McLaughlin, of Lewvan, an illustrated nature book of wild flowers and birds. But this is no ordinary nature book. It contains the original paintings of 36 common prairie flowers and 23 of our most common birds. The descriptive notes about each specimen gives extensive information about first appearance, habitat, family, environment, field marks, etc. It is a work of which the author may be justly proud. In respect to it Mr. McLaughlin writes:

"I couldn't lay my hands on a book that contained "my" wild flowers and birds, so I had them definitely identified and then drew a specimen of each.

That's how I feel about the BLUE JAY. We need a Natural History Magazine and Society in and for Saskatchewan. I appreciate the efforts of those who made and make it possible. You mentioned the "Kingdom of Nature"—and that in our Society one may enter with a love of flowers or birds or rocks, and that we all benefit from one another.

I don't imagine there is anything new or of value to the magazine in the contents of my little book—still it acts as a sort of ambassador to convey my interest and desire to help you."

## Random Botanical Notes

*A. C. Budd*

LAST fall several items were noted in the press regarding fall blooming of *Crocus Anemone*, and suggesting that such was unprecedented. This is not the case and I find Dr. G. M. Dawson reports away back in 1873 that these plants were blooming on August 7 and in the second week of September at Turtle Mountain and Long River. Last year I noted them on August 30 and this year several were blooming September 13. The Moss Phlox also occasionally shows fall flowering and in 1946 it bloomed near Webb on September 19, and this year I noted it on September 12 at Cadillac and on October 1 and 10 locally.

A plant of Milk Thistle, *Silybum Marianum*, has been found as a garden weed at East End, Saskatchewan. This is apparently the first record of this plant for the prairie provinces and was identified by Dr. C. Frankton of Ottawa.

Wild Pansy, *Viola arvensis*, was found north of Wilkie, Saskatchewan this fall. The only previous record seems to be that of Mr. L. T. Carmichael, who located it at Canora, Saskatchewan.

Bitter Cress, *Cardamine pennsylvanica*, was found last June in the Cypress Hills. All previous records seem to have been from the northern parts of the province.