

called a pyxis, meaning a box.

In Saskatchewan we find six species, four of which are fairly plentiful; one is quite rare and the other one found, but not persisting, on newly seeded lawns sown to eastern or far western grass seed.

A simple key to determine the Saskatchewan species is as follows:

1. Leaves linear to thread-like—2. Leaves lanceolate to ovate—4.

2. Leaves densely whitish, silky-woolly—*Plantago Purshii*; Leaves green and hairless—3.

3. Inflorescence with bracts at least twice as long as the flowers—*Plantago spinulosa*; Inflorescence with bracts less than twice length of the flowers—*Plantago elongata*.

4. Leaves ovate, not tapering to stalk—*Plantago major*; Leaves lanceolate, tapering to stalk—*Plantago eriopoda*.

Plantago major or Common Plantain is the species found in waste areas, roadsides and gardens almost everywhere and becomes quite a weed in places. The Saline Plantain (*P. eriopoda*) generally has a mass of brownish hairs at the crown of

the root and is fairly plentiful around moist saline areas, creek banks and so on. Pursh's Plantain (*P. Purshii*) is a whitish, very silky-woolly species found plentifully on sandy and light soils, especially in the south-western part of the province. A very small, insignificant species, Linear-leaved Plantain (*P. elongata*) is occasionally to be found along muddy slough margins and is easily mistaken for Mouse-tail (*Myosurus*) at first sight. A very scarce species is the Bracted Plantain (*P. spinulosa*) which has been occasionally found in dry areas and has bracts below the flowers from a quarter to three-eighths of an inch long.

Economically the plantains are considered of negligible value, but birds are fond of the fruit and the spikes of Common Plantain are often fed to cage birds. The leaves of Common Plantain rubbed on mosquito bites seem to relieve the discomfort. Pursh's Plantain is grazed a little by sheep but the food value is limited, and it is reported that the young leaves of Common Plantain were used as food by the Indians of New Mexico.

Familiar Wild Flowers

By B. DE VRIES, Fort Qu'Appelle

No. 2 Western Red Lily

Lilium philadelphicum

L. var. *andinum* (Nutt.) Ker

The Western Red Lily, a variety of the Wood Lily (*L. philadelphicum* L.), is a typical of the Liliaceae (Lily Family), a family of Monocotyledons. Both the Western Red Lily and the Wood Lily are perennial herbs growing from white scaly bulbs to height of about 20 inches. The difference between the two species is in the leaves. The Western Red Lily has alternate lower leaves and the upper ones in whorls while the Wood Lily has all its leaves in whorls. Venation in both species is parallel-linear. Flowers are hermaphrodite and regular, with parts in threes. The perianth is petaloid, occupying the two outer whorls, and followed by two whorls of stamens with a superior ovary of three carpels; the ovary is three chambered with a number of axile placentas. The fruit is a capsule splitting along

the septa and containing many seeds. Because the Western Red Lily belongs to the Lily Family, with the parts in threes, we can write down



a floral formula for it as follows $P3+3, A3+3, C(3)^*$ The flowers are open in form with an upward slightly spreading perianth, red or orange in color with purplish dots in the center. These flowers are quite large and very showy.

The Liliaceae embraces several genera of which I will mention a few: *Allium textile* Nels. and Macbr.—Prairie Onion; *Disporum trachycarpum* S. Wats.—Fairy Bells; *Maianthemum canadense* Desf. var. *interius* Fern.—Two leaved Solomon's Seal; *Smilacina stellata* (L.) Desf.—Star-flowered Solomon's Seal; *Trillium cernuum* (L.)—Nodding Wake-robin; *Zygadenus elegans* Pursh—Smooth Camas. Most of these plants have the same botanical features as the Lily. There are a few exceptions, however, such as the genus *Disporum* where the fruit is a berry, and the leaves are broad and oval, or the genus *Maianthemum* with its flowers borne in a raceme.

The word lily is often loosely used in connection with plants which do

not belong to the genus *Lilium* nor even in the family Liliaceae. Thus the "Yellow Pond-lily" is *Nuphar variegatum* Engelm. (Nymphaeaceae); and the "Sand Lily" is *Mentzelia decapetala* (Pursh) Urban and Gilg. (Loasaceae).

Lilies favour a slightly moist soil, preferably with some sand in it, and so they are found in open woodlands across the province. Owing to the advance of settlement and ruthless picking lilies are rapidly disappearing, especially the Western Red Lily, which was chosen as Saskatchewan's floral emblem because many naturalists consider it one of our most beautiful wild flowers. Let us pledge ourselves, as citizens of a province abundant in wild flora and fauna, to preserve our wild lilies.

* It will be remembered from the previous article on the Crocus Anemone that symbols in the formula have the following significance: P (petals), A (stamens), C (carpels), and that - under a letter indicates that it is superior.

Nature's Schoolhouse

In each issue we offer a prize for the best original story on some nature observation. The story should contain less than 500 words. Place your name, age, address, grade and school on your story and send to The Editor of the Blue Jay, 2335 Athol Street, Regina. The winner has a choice of a *Peterson's Field Guide* (birds, or mammals or butterflies) OR a *Wherry's Flower Guide*. Entries for the next issue must be in by July 15, 1956.

This month the prize goes to Dale Brennan, Leross, Sask., for his story on "A Sharp-Tailed Grouse Dancing

Ground." He is 8 and in Grade 3.

Anne Matthews' story "A Day with the Deer" contains more than 500 words, so she is not eligible for a prize this time. (She has been a prizewinner before). We are printing her story because it is interesting and timely, and we know you'll enjoy it.

We would like students to write stories for their own section Nature's Schoolhouse but you will be interested in other parts of the **Blue Jay** too. We would like to hear from you; short items not suitable for your page might be included in Letters to the Editor.

A Day with the Deer

By ANNE MATTHEWS, Nipawin, Sask. — Age 16, Grade 10

This winter has been a most unforgettable one for me. The deer feeding program carried out by the Nipawin Branch of the Fish and Game League, the Department of Natural Resources, and the local sportsmen and farmers has enabled us to see sights that probably will never be seen again.

One of the most enjoyable trips I had this winter was on the eleventh

of March. We left town about eight o'clock. The morning was cool and clear. It was ideal picture-taking weather and pictures were what we were after.

Our destination was Azevedo's mill, seventy miles north-east of Nipawin. Driving up No. 35 highway, we continued on up the Flin Flon highway. As we drove, we noticed a great many lynx tracks in the snow. Near