

Duneland Vegetation

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PRICKLY MILK-VETCH



We discussed two legume species in the September issue that were generally confined to sand dune areas. Continuing our study of plants that indicate sandy soils, here are two more native species that are usually only found in our dunelands.

There is another legume occasionally found in the dunes, the Prickly Milk-vetch (*Astragalus kentrophyta*), a low tufted species with the leaflets and stipules spine-tipped. The leaves bear from five to seven still leaflets each from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch long. The flowers are borne in small round clumps of three or four in the leaf axils and are yellowish-white with a pale bluish tinge, and from $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch long. The ovoid-oblong pods are very short stalked and about $\frac{1}{4}$ inch long. In southern Alberta it is found on the eroded bad-lands along

the Milk River but in Saskatchewan only in the sand dunes.

Bur-ragweed (*Franseria acanthi-carpa*) is another native plant rarely met with except in the sand dunes. This is a much branched plant with doubly pinnate leaves which belongs to the Ragweed family. The staminate flowers are borne in long terminal racemes while the pistillate flowers are clustered in the upper leaf axils and bear very spiny involucres. The fruits are very spiny burs and consequently the whole plant, when mature, is very uncomfortable to handle. Livestock in the dune areas appear to graze the young plants.

The sand dunes, although unfit for cultivation, are both picturesque and interesting, in early summer being a mass of wild roses, and affording not only grazing for livestock, but a haven for game birds and deer.