

## The Dry Hillsides

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In our series, we have come from the arid dune sand vegetation, through the sandhills and the eroded slopes. As conditions improve we find a greater number of species present. In this issue let us look at two native perennials, one from the Sandalwood family and the other, a mustard.

The Pale Comandra (*Comandra pallida*) belongs to the Sandalwood family. The Pale Comandra may be partly parasitic on the roots of other plants. The creeping white rootstalks send up several plants in erect bunches, 3 to 18 inches in height. The

leaves are without stalks, alternate on the stem and are pale green with a whitish bloom.

The flower clusters are at the ends of the stems. The centre flowers open first. The color varies from greenish-white to a pinkish shade. It is the five-lobed calyx that gives the appearance of greenish-white petals on the tiny flowers. The leaves as well as the flower buds are often a delicate shade of pink. The fruit is a small drupe—a fleshy fruit with a hard, nut-like seed in the centre. The plants are frequently attacked by a tiny insect which causes small round





galls that are often mistaken for the fruit.

Budding usually occurs in mid-May but the plants are quite slow to bloom.

One of our native mustards, the Sand Bladder-pod (*Lesquerella arenosa*) is a slender-stemmed perennial which grows close to the ground. The leaves are mostly basal

and a gray-green so frequent among prairie plants that are protected with fine hairs. The pale pink buds open into dull yellow or reddish tinged four-petaled flowers about  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch across. As the name suggests, the pods resemble small bladders and are borne on curved stalks.

Flowering generally occurs during the early part of May.