

A NEW SASKATCHEWAN RECORD FOR ADDER'S-MOUTH

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Last summer Ernie Sauer from Regina came to our place and was interested in fishing. So on 9 August I took him north on the Fir River road in the Pasquia hills (north from Highway No. 3, five mi. west of Hudson Bay). The road was fairly good to Mile 15 campsite. From there on it was terrible with ruts and mudholes. After going as far as I dared I parked the car. Ernie was intent on catching brook trout, but I didn't bring any fishing tackle along as I was interested in looking for plants.

We followed a pathway through popular woods down into the river valley. As we got on lower ground we came to a black spruce swamp which extended along the river for a considerable distance. There were thick growths of willows overhanging the river. The water was rippling and splashing over the rocks. What a peaceful spot!

Ernie tried fishing for a while but with no luck. I said "let's go upstream further, maybe we can find a better place" (always a fisherman's dream, of course). Then I proceeded to lead the way along a path winding through the Black Spruce woods. The moss was a luxuriant green, as the whole area was moist and cool from little springs, and pools of water. After a while Ernie called out, "Wait a minute, my line is tangled up." While waiting on Ernie to get out of his difficulty I made a little circle around looking at the vegetation. Back from the path a short way was another spring. It was a pool about three feet across. Along the edge of the pool were a few small orchids. Right away I noticed that they had only one leaf which was part-way up the stem. I knew that I had found one of the species of the rare Adder's

Mouth (*Malaxis* sp.). There were about twenty plants in all; they were in such a small patch that a single moose could have flattened the whole works down at one time, if it lay on them. I collected a few plants to press for the Fraser Herbarium, at the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon.

I then went to see what Ernie's problem was, and I found that he was in real trouble. His fish hook had caught on a stick away back in the woods, and most of his line was out. The line in the rod had twisted loops in about seven places. After we got this straightened out he was able to reel his line in again. It was a bad experience for Ernie, but it was good for me. If he hadn't had trouble, I wouldn't have circled around and found the rare Adder's Mouth.

After Ernie got fishing again, I looked all through the immediate area but could not see any more plants of the orchid. I did find, however, a small patch of Creeping Snowberry (*Gaultheria hispidula* (L.) Muhl.). This species has been listed as rare in Saskatchewan.¹ I also collected a sample of this for the Fraser Herbarium.

Upon returning home I checked the Adder's Mouth in my plant books. I found it to be White Adder's Mouth (*Malaxis monophyllos* (L.) Sw. var. *brachypoda* (Gray) Morris & Eames), the floral lip being deflected, pointed, and not lobed.² My identification was verified by Dr. Harms when I sent him the specimen for the Fraser Herbarium. This species is rare in the prairie provinces. It has only previously been found in Saskatchewan in the central part of the province, from Waskesiu to

Prince Albert and MacDowall.³ In Manitoba it has been found in the south-central region in three localities, Grandview (1950), Lake Winnipegosis (1881) and Treesbank (near Brandon, 1914).⁴ There are possibly other, more recent, Manitoba records of this species of which I am not aware.

Well Ernie didn't get any fish, but the trip was very rewarding in the finding of more rare plant species in our area. Not to mention of course the ever-rewarding experience of roaming around in our beautiful mixed woods, and enjoying the various aspects of nature.

¹HARMS, V. L. 1978. Preliminary checklist of rare and potentially endangered native vascular plants of Saskatchewan. The Fraser Herbarium, Dept. of Plant Ecology, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Sask.

²LOOMAN, J., K. F. BEST. 1979. Budd's Flora. Research Branch, Agriculture Canada Publication 1662.

³MAHER, R. V., G. W. ARGUS, V. L. HARMS and J. H. HUDSON. 1979. The rare vascular plants of Saskatchewan. National Museum of Natural Sciences. Syllogeus No. 20. Ottawa, Canada.

⁴SCOGGAN, H. J. 1957. Flora of Manitoba. National Museum of Canada, Bulletin No. 140, Ottawa.

PEACH-LEAVED WILLOWS IN SASKATCHEWAN

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The Prince Albert district may have the largest willow trees in Saskatchewan.

Brought up from Ontario and planted in 1895 three Peach-leaved willows (*Salix amygdaloides* Anderss.) have

grown to huge sizes in the Prince Albert district.

Located on the farm of Tom and Mary Robins 16 mi. east of Prince Albert the largest has a spread of 82 feet and 10 inches, the second largest has a spread of 63 feet and 9 inches and the third has a spread of 55 feet and 9 inches. The largest trunk has a circumference of 11 feet measured 4 feet above ground level.

Although the Peach-leaved willow is native to Saskatchewan, it is not common.

The Prince Albert district trees are growing on sandy loam soil; they have survived many wind storms and at least one bad hailstorm. One survived a grass fire. They are now 87 years old, appear to be healthy and should survive for many years to come.

I would appreciate hearing from anyone that may know of larger trees.



Willow with trunk circumference 11' at 4' above ground.

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