

## FLOWERS AND INSECTS

In eastern Saskatchewan anyway, there were lots of wild flowers last summer - around Yorkton the roadsides were gay, first with Black-eyed Susans and then with a profusion of sunflowers, golden-rod and asters, while every pond was white with the blossom of the wild parsnip. From McLean, Mrs. E.W. Cates wrote, "The wet seasons have brought back many native flowers not seen for years - more red lilies, and best of all, we now know that the shooting-star and ladies slippers have not gone for ever as we found some of both this summer." Dr. C.J. Houston also reported seeing masses of red lilies while travelling by train in July between Tyvan, Sask. and Brandon.

One interesting plant that flowered in abundance in many ponds this summer was the Bladder-wort, an aquatic plant with two-lipped, bright yellow flowers rather like those of the snap-dragon. The most interesting feature of the Bladder-wort however, lies below the surface of the water, for among the finely divided leaves are tiny bladders, which, by means of a valve-like opening, act as trap to catch small water insects. The imprisoned insects soon die and, from the products of their decaying bodies, the Bladder-wort obtains its supply of nitrogenous food.

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We were grateful to G. Shirley Brooks of Winnipeg for kindly identifying a most ugly black, beetle-like insect which was caught on a Yorkton verandah in August. It was a Giant Water Bug (*Belostoma americanus*). "They are", wrote Mr. Brooks, "most rapacious aquatic insects living on other insects and small fish and are most destructive in a fish hatchery. Water Bugs seize their prey with their front legs and pierce it with their sharp beak. Their mouths are framed for sucking and the beak arises from the front part of the head. They often fly from pond to pond and are frequently attracted to light; I have seen dozens under light standards, but not in late years. I suppose that, like other insects, they go in cycles.

Continuing, Mr. Brooks, who is an authority on Manitoba butterflies, then said, "I spent a month in the north this summer and was at Churchill for half of July. Collecting was poor this year and has been so all over the province. Have you noticed many butterflies? It has been the poorest collecting in Manitoba that I have known in 25 years, and a friend in Birtle, who has collected there for 45 years, says the same thing."

Can any of our members answer Mr. Brook's query regarding the butterfly situation in Saskatchewan last summer? - In and around Yorkton there seemed a marked scarcity of insect pests. Except in May, mosquitoes were not over-abundant; tent caterpillars were few, and the common house-fly hardly put in an appearance. Damsel-flies close relatives of the dragonflies, were abundant. Apparently the species we had was the Ruby Spot Damsel Fly, so called from the red spot at the base of the wings. On the evening of Sept. 26, following an exceptionally warm day, Yorkton's main street was invaded by swarms of Water Boatmen, the same small insect that on Sept. 29 descended on Portage-la-Prairie in such millions as to rate a newspaper story. With them were also quite a number of Predaceous Diving Beetles - another aquatic species which periodically takes a notion to make long flights.

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We were interested to note the following in an account of the Art School at Emma Lake - "Mr. Kenderline insists on preserving the natural beauty of the place. The moss carpet under the tall spruces is thickly sprinkled with creamy pigeon-berry flowers and tiny delicate twin flowers. The students are asked not to pick them, thus preserving the natural beauty of the camp and teaching the students to appreciate loveliness in its proper setting. 'Each thing in its own place is best' is a lesson worth learning."