

FLOWER SANCTUARY  
by Dorothy Morrison.

The camp site was lovely. A friendly ash bent shelteringly over our tent. From our camp we looked out across the lake towards sunlit hills with treed valleys. Twisted old elms added a touch of the picturesque and a medley of bird-song provided a background of intriguing music.

But something was missing. At first we felt it vaguely - then it came to me. More color was what I wanted - mid-summer with practically no bright wild flowers was incomplete. We began to ask questions.

"Oh yes," people told us, "there used to be flowers here years ago."

We began to look for them and found evidences of the early flowers - leaves of wood violet, roses, false solomon's seal - but the flaunting mid-summer flowers in which Saskatchewan was once so very rich were lacking or present in small numbers. A few goldenrod grew where there should have been masses; one or two lovely white and purple asters took the place of the lovely clumps that must have once grown here; a little late bedstraw, that lacy white beauty, and leaves of the inconspicuous meadow rue almost completed the pitifully short list. True - there were several kinds of prickly purple thistle and masses of gaudy sow-thistle; they did make a touch of color but it is difficult to feel real pleasure in the beauty of weeds.

All the evidence seems to point to the gloomy fact that we have been and still are denuding our summer resorts of flowers. The effect of thoughtless picking is seen much more at such places because of the concentration of people here. Walking along a lakeside path people are in the mood for appreciating beauty and coming upon a patch of flowers the natural impulse is to take some of this beauty away. When this is repeated over a period of twenty or more years the supply of beauty becomes sadly depleted.

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Legislation regarding conservation of wild flowers might be of value but what is most needed is an educational campaign to get people to see the disastrous results of over-picking our wild flowers. The true flower lover knows that "each thing in its place is best." He can enjoy flowers in their natural setting and when he does pick them he does it sparingly. A few flowers well arranged and effectively placed are as a rule more attractive than large bouquets that too often merely clutter a room.

There is a philosophy about the enjoyment of flowers that we would do well to teach our children. Let us teach them to enjoy beauty in the present as it is rather than to try to hoard it for their own exclusive enjoyment. Let us teach them tactfully - (it is no small matter to receive indifferently a child's gift of flowers) - but let us be sure that we do teach them or the rich variety of Saskatchewan's wild flowers will become a thing of the past.

What can be done in a locality in the way of conservation of flowers has been clearly demonstrated by Mr. Kenderdine of the University Art school at Emma lake. The students know that he disapproves of flower picking on the art camp grounds so they resist the temptation with the result that flowers in profusion still dot the green carpet under the tall spruce trees - dainty twin-flowers, creamy pigeon-berry blossoms, graceful grass of Parnassus and so on.

A conservation project which might well be an example to Saskatchewan people was undertaken by an Ontario farm woman. Due to overpicking, the trilliums, those aristocrats of the woods, seemed in danger of practically dying out. So this purposeful woman decided to do something about it. She made a flower sanctuary of their woodlot and now after her program of conservation has had a chance to show results, the woodlot is a show place in springtime - a place of beauty and delight where visitors are welcome to look but not to pick.

Saskatchewan's wild flowers are worth conserving. Are we going to neglect them until it is too late?

-from the REGINA LEADER-POST  
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