

REPORT ON THE WESTERN RED LILY

The Red Lily, Saskatchewan's Floral Emblem, staged a brave comeback this season. From widely separated points in the province came reports of "hundreds blooming where in recent years there had been but an odd stray blossom." And it may also be noted that no subject discussed in the "Blue Jay" has brought such a response in the way of letters. There is no doubt that many nature lovers are deeply concerned over the future of our provincial flower emblem.

Evidently the dry years had a great deal to do with the scarcity of the Red Lily, and, this should be noted carefully, it has taken all this time for it to become re-established. A report received from Mrs. F. Bilsbury, Grenfell, seems typical of what took place in many districts. "We have a spot on our farm", she writes, "where lilies grow. It is quite a large area on the west side of a big hay slough, lying between two clumps of trees. Part of the lily-covered land runs nearly into the slough. During the years 1919 - 1929 this spot of ground was a flaming mass of lilies. Then came the drought years and the lilies grew less and less until there was not one to be seen. However, to our great joy, in 1940 a few appeared in the old spot, increasing in numbers each season, and it is now a mass of bloom again!"

Many correspondents commented on the large size of the lilies this season and several reported two or more flowers on the one stem being quite common. One letter told of "eight perfect blooms on one stem."

Reports also came in of yellow-flowered Red Lilies of which Lad. Martinovsky, Gerald, was asking in the last issue of the "Blue Jay". In 1944 two lilies, each with two lovely yellow flowers with deep crimson spots, were discovered on the Bilsbury farm at Grenfell. These yellow lilies came back again this year and showed an increase in numbers. M. G. Street found a yellow-flowered lily north of Nipawin. "It was not", he said, "the bright yellow of a dandelion but it did stand out so that I spotted it far back from the road." And A. O. Aschin, Hudson Bay Junction, wrote of finding a lily in 1940 which was "a pure golden yellow with darker gold blotches on the inside of the flower." Mr. Aschin put a peg by the plant so he could find it again and move the bulb in the Fall. However, some campers happened along and that was the end of the lily. He has never seen another although he has noted some showing a faint trace of yellow.

Most of our correspondents expressed a desire to help in the protection of the Red Lily. The question now is, what shall be done?

The Regina Natural History Society and our Yorkton Society have set up a joint committee and will consider ways and means this winter. The most commonly made suggestion is "Do something in the schools". This is an excellent idea, but often it is the family party "out for a run in the country", who, quite thoughtlessly, are the worst offenders in destroying our native wild flowers. Mrs. E. B. Flock stressed a significant fact in a recent article in the "Leader Post" when she pointed out how far more abundant the Red Lilies are along the railway right of ways than along the public highways. In British Columbia the picking of the Flowering Dogwood is prohibited within a given distance of the highways. Can we in Saskatchewan attain the same end with regard to the Red Lily by education and publicity, rather than by legislation?