

WILD FLOWER CONSERVATION

The Regina Natural History Society and ourselves are jointly considering ways and means to arouse a greater interest in the need for protecting native wild flowers, particularly our provincial floral emblem, the Red Lily. Several ideas have been brought forward - one Regina suggestion was, "that through the medium of the "Blue Jay" an attempt be made to find out exactly in what sections of the Province the Lilies are most prevalent. Follow this information up with letters to the nearest town weekly, or what we think might be interested organizations, asking for their full cooperation in the preservation of the lily in that locality."

This seems an excellent suggestion. If one or two towns would make show places of spots where the lily still grows in abundance, it would do much to arouse public interest generally. Other places, British Columbia for example, have made their wild flowers a matter of public pride and interest. We should aim at doing the same thing.

Meanwhile the Red Lily will be in bloom before the next issue of the "Blue Jay" appears, so we again point out that the Red Lily is a perennial bulbous plant, reproduction by seed being a very slow process taking several years. If one breaks off the whole lily stem, one has utterly destroyed both that plant and others which might have sprung from its bulb. We therefore ask members to try and spread the idea that lilies, if picked at all, must be picked carefully, leaving some leaves to replenish the bulb below. And, above all, to remember that a few flowers carefully arranged look far more beautiful than a whole mass crowded into a jar. This "goes" for all wild flowers. We still shudder when we think of a jammed-in bunch of Lady's Slippers we were shown last summer.

PLEASE LET US HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS ON THIS MATTER. IT CONCERNS US ALL.

SASKATCHEWAN MAPLE SUGAR

Have any members ever made maple sugar from native maple trees? It can be done. Last year one Yorkton citizen tapped an old maple tree at the bottom of his yard and succeeded in getting a small quantity of sugar to the extreme surprise of his sceptical family!

And in a recent article, "First Breath of Spring", in the Regina Leader-Post, R.C. Mackenzie wrote - Along the banks of the Carrot River in the northeastern part of the province, many big old maple trees are tapped annually, and each produces a quantity of sugar sap which is collected and later reduced to boiling to yield a fairly good grade of sugar. These are Manitoba maples (*Acer negundo*), the only maple growing naturally in Saskatchewan. This is the same tree that provided the earliest settlers in Manitoba with most of their syrup and sugar."

Frogs were first heard piping at Yorkton March 22 - which is another unusually early first date recorded for this 1945 season. Few people have seen frogs awakening from their winter hibernation but one spring Mrs. Marion Nixon disturbed an old hot bed, and huddled there at the junction of soil and manure were about twenty small Swamp Tree Frogs. The ground was still partly frozen and some of them were still encased in icy soil - but just as soon as a clod became broken to expose a leg, that leg would start wiggling, flexing rhythmically and slowly, and soon the owner would squirm his whole body free."

During the Christmas holidays a lump of domestic ice was brought to us by Jack Shave, Yorkton, with what appeared to be a large beetle frozen in the centre. The insect, however, proved to be a Giant Water Bug. It was in an excellent state of preservation and showed clearly the sharp downward-pointing beak with which these creatures stab their victims! Water Bugs are air-breathers and hibernate in mud or pond banks so it seems likely that this particular specimen had been caught by a sudden freeze-up - which is exactly what happened last Fall.