

We were especially interested in your list of early wild flowers and made use of it to stimulate interest in our grade eight class. With it as a guide we divided our class into four parts and made a census of the birds and flowers to be seen within a radius of half a mile from our school. Besides finding seventeen species of birds we were able to identify crocus, moss phlox, early cinquefoil, dandelion, violet, blue toad-flax and golden bean. (Cymopterus and Hoary Puccoon were also found and sent in for identification).

We would like to see other group-lists for definite periods of the year."

- - - - -

FLOWERS IN MAY

L.T. Carmichael

It was Sunday morning, May 15: the dead-line date for material of this issue. A few feet from the window a robin was busily at work adding new twigs, dead grass and bits of string to its nest, and shaping it with its breast as it fluttered its wings and revolved in circles. On an adjacent tree, its mate, dressed up for the occasion, was showing off his new plumage and lustily cheering it on. Not more than thirty feet away, half hidden by the leaves of a maple at the corner of the house, a Baltimore Oriole tried to steal the spotlight from this domestic scene by singing to its heart's content. A smoky haze filled the air; there was no wind; it was a dry, but otherwise ideal, day for observing the beauties of nature.

Curiosity as to how the flowers were coming along this spring prompted us to jump in the car and head for the QuAppelle Valley, some twenty-five miles north of Regina.

We soon learned that the hills of the Valley are not a pretty sight this spring. In the complete absence of rain, the grass, which earlier had shown a tinge of green, had withered and turned brown again. Yet as we descended from the wind-swept summit to the valley below, brave little flowers greeted us here and there on every side.

Peeping out from among the dead growth, were the Early Cinquefoils, some having already gone to seed, others with their yellow petals centred in orange, and small clumps of Nuttall's Yellow Violet - a flower too beautiful for such a setting. Most of the Moss Phlox had shed their white petals and the Crocuses had already gone to seed; patches of their plume-like heads showing a purple tinge. The Succulent Buffalo-bean grew in patches here and there. Some still showed their light blue pea-like blossoms, while others already exhibited clusters of luscious looking fruit, already tinged with red and as large as a marble.

The Pale Comandra, with its white star-like blossoms, seemed to enjoy its habitat and were on every side, as were numerous plants of the Common Prairie Onion. Few blossoms of the Bladder-pod remained, but here and there the small mustard-like blossoms could be seen terminating the prostrate branches, bearing the globular and swollen fruit pods.

On the steepest slopes among the Cactus leaves were the stunted shrubs of Sumac or Small Skunk Bush with yellow blossoms but no leaves as yet. The bright green patches of the Creeping Juniper relieved the bleakness of the hill. Most of the creeping branches were laden with fruit, blue-green in color.

The white-blossomed *Cymopterus* was at home in the sun and heat and dry sandy soil. Most of the flowers have now wilted away and in their place the parsnip-like umbels of fruit are almost full grown. Like other members of the carrot family its leaves are narrow and deeply cut.

Like sky-blue sentinals in the midst of the waste, the Blue Beard-tongue stood out as the most conspicuous flower of all. Its thick leaves and sturdy flower-stalk seemed unaffected by the drought. There, too, was the Reflexed Rock Cress, thriving in spite of its environment; its stems standing a foot or more in height. Its long pods droop downward, but its terminal white or pinkish blossoms with cross-shaped petals seem fresh and healthy.

Below the Sumac was a more level ledge; there we found the Bearberry, the underside of each branch being laden with the most beautiful little bell-shaped flowers imaginable.

For one who looks for it, there is true beauty on the dry hillsides of the Qu'Appelle Valley.

As we reached the highway, improved soil and moisture conditions became evident in the more luxurious growth. The Golden Pea was at its very best and the conspicuous white blossom clusters of the Narrow-leaved Milk Vetch bordered the road beyond the ditch on either side. On the bank of the recently constructed road grade, shaded by Rose and Snowberry bushes, was a large clump of Golden *Corydalis*, its yellow blossoms showing up conspicuously from a mass of dark green carrot-like leaves.

We started across the meadow towards the heavily wooded coulee; but before getting there we viewed its border from the distance. Fully ten days earlier than usual the fruit trees were laden with bloom. The Hawthorn, Pincherry, Choke-cherry and Saskatoon showed white against a green background, like an orchard in May.

The odor of the yellow flowers of the Wolf-willow hung in the still and smoky air as we crossed the meadow. At our feet silvery carpets of Pussy-toes were coming into bloom. Among the partly withered grass we saw Three-flowered Avens, Prairie Buttercups, Early Yellow Loco Weed and the dainty *Androsace*.

We approached a small poplar bluff in the centre of the meadow. Around its edge Hoary Puccoons, with their bright orange flowers, seemed to enjoy the partial shade and protection. Within, Early Blue Violets and the Western Canada Violet were blooming in profusion. There, too, were many Wild Strawberry flowers and one Cream-colored Vetchling, which had outstriped the others in its race to produce flowers and seed. Strangely enough, we saw no sign of the large and conspicuous white blossoms of the Wind Flower.

It was not long before we reached the shaded path of the densely wooded coulee that cut through the hills with a northern exposure. Very few of the flowers of the cool shade were yet in bloom, but the Sarsaparilla was there; its buds ready to burst open, and the Star-flowered Solomon's Seal was in flower along the trail. Beside the path, butterflies flitted about the Red-osier Dogwood, and the early Meadow Rue was beginning to exhibit its creamy blossoms. Beside the narrow stream which flowed towards the lower valley, Wild Gooseberries and Northern Black Currents bent over towards the water; their yellow and white flowers hidden beneath leafy stems.

Near the top of the ravine, a spring of ice-cold water gushed from under a rock. There on the moss-covered mud amidst the Scouring-rush, we came upon the prettiest scene of all - blue carpets of the Northern Bog Violet, with long stems and blossoms almost an inch in width. Near the summit was a Hawthorn tree in full bloom, and in its shade the delicate Moehringia, with its white chickweed-like blossoms winked at us as we passed.

Once more we stood on the prairie; behind us was verdant vegetation and the song of birds; in front, miles and miles of level prairie. Fields tinged green with a new crop of wheat were cut by a dusty road. Cars raced through the shimmering haze towards Regina and home.

- - - - -

APRIL FLOWERS

- April 9 Crocuses showing above ground -- C. Shaw, Yorkton  
 10 Crocuses, in Qu'Appelle Valley  
 Pussy Willows at their best -- Mr. and Mrs. H. Flock, Regina  
 17 Crocus -- Mrs. J. Hubbard, Grenfell  
 20 Crocuses and Elm in blossom -- L. T. C., Regina  
 23 Frenchweed -- Mrs. Hubbard, Grenfell  
 26 Moss Phlox -- Mrs. Cruickshank, Regina  
 27 Androsace -- Mrs. Hubbard, Grenfell  
 27 Moss Phlox,  
 Leafy Musineon (Prairie Parsley)  
 Cous -- L. T. C., Regina  
 28 Prairie Buttercup -- Mrs. Hubbard, Grenfell  
 28 Prairie Buttercups - C. Shaw, Yorkton  
 29 Early Blue Violet  
 Western Canada Violet  
 Early Yellow Loco Weed  
 Bladderpod  
 Early Cinquefoil -- L.T. Carmichael, Regina  
 30 Golden Pea  
 Dandelion, both Red-seeded and Common  
 Yellow Whitlow-grass -- Mrs. Hubbard, Grenfell

- - - - -

Mr. Shaw reports from Yorkton that the dry weather and prairie fires have taken a heavy toll of spring flowers along with a number of ducks' nests. Crocuses are very scarce. "In fact," he writes, "I wrote a story about them and then couldn't find a specimen to photograph for an illustration."

LEASK -- Guy C. Coates

Mr. Coates has sent us a specimen of Club Moss for identification. He found three of these plants on his farm and was naturally interested, having never seen the plant before. There are eight species of Club-moss reported growing in Saskatchewan. This particular species has been identified by Mr. A. C. Budd as Running-Pine Club Moss (*Lycopodium Clavatum*).

Mr. Coates also reports a poor display of Crocuses this spring - less than ten percent of normal. "The continued dry seasons," he said, "are having an adverse effect on many wild plants. I haven't seen an Indian Pipe since 1912. In 1925 I found a solitary small Trillium but have never seen another.

In 1939 I discovered three clumps of Calypso (Venus' Slipper) but they never bloomed again."

Mr. Coates has lived over fifty years in Saskatchewan and from childhood has always been interested in all forms of nature study.

- - - - -

THINK FOR A MOMENT

"The next time you see a leaf with the sun shining on it, think for a moment. It is more than something green; it is Nature's greatest and most important factory, whose products are essential for the life, not only of the plant, but of almost all living things, including ourselves."

- - - - -

BLUE JAY'S AS. PRIZES

Charles Leech, Chief Supervisor of the Youth Centre, Regina, is to be highly congratulated on the enthusiasm which he and his staff have aroused among their classes in connection with wild plant and animal life and their conservation.

Mr. Leech has sent us a three page report of recent activities and contests held before and during National Wild Life Week, April 10 to 16. We are very sorry that, because of lack of space, we will be unable to publish the report in full.

After considerable instruction, a contest, consisting of a quiz and dealing with the purposes of National Wild Life Week, with wild plants, with birds and with other animals, was announced. For two weeks or more the boys and girls were busy visiting the museum and obtaining information from various sources. The quiz was held, April 19, over one hundred contestants participating.

For prizes, seven yearly subscriptions of the BLUE JAY, two copies of Taverner's "Birds of Canada", fourteen copies of Taverner's "Bird Houses and their Occupants", and fourteen copies of "Game and Fur in Saskatchewan" were awarded. The Regina branch of the Fish and Game League gave \$15.00 to assist in buying these prizes.

The list of winners is as follows:

Bill Niebergall, Marilyn Durnin, Jim Scarp, Gladys Tomchuk, Jim Toth, Gavin Lahman, Johnny Duriak, Loreen Merth, Joan Livingstone, Marilyn Graham, Bill Morris, Kark McAvena, Marlene McEachern, Donny Bereskin, Beatrice Niebergall, Howard Merth.

Mr. Leech writes; "A National Wild Life Week display and quiz contest will be a permanent feature of our yearly program at the Centre, and I feel sure that if other Centres or Schools would do something along similar lines, they would be as proud and delighted as we were with the results. I am sure we would be doing a great deal of good to insure future conservationists among our younger generation."

- - - - -

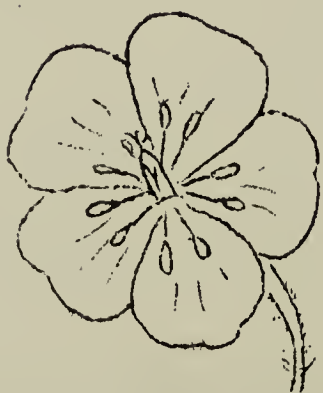
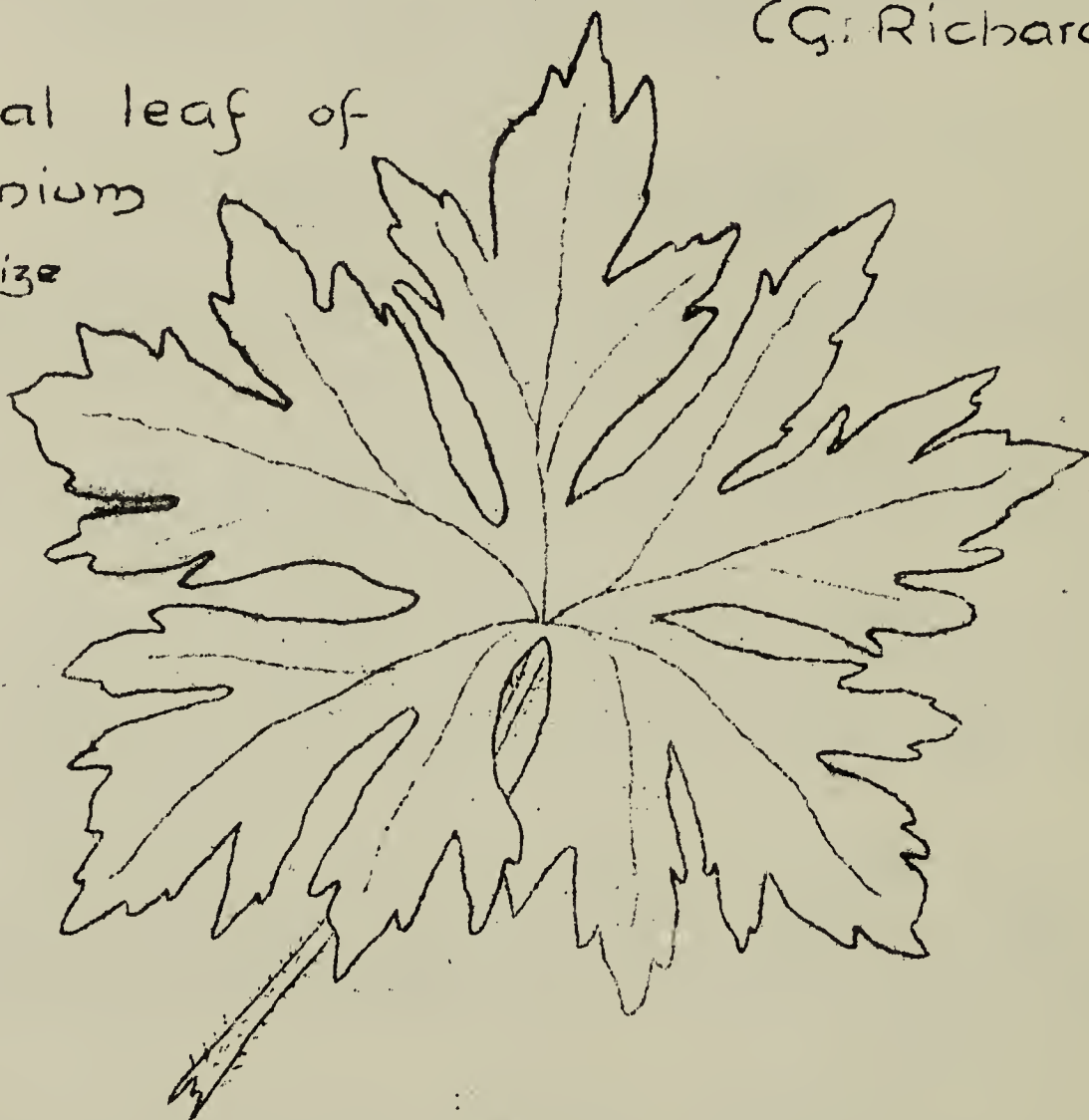
When Cliff Shaw, of Yorkton, goes strolling on Sundays, with his camera, his insect net and cyanide bottle and his plant press he nearly always just happens to run into a nest of arrowheads. This was the case on Sunday, May 15, when he and Mr. McDonald found about 40 good specimens. We think that among his paraphernalia he also carries one of those divining-rods that has a particular affinity for Indian relics.

DIAGRAMS OF GERANIUM.

(G. Richardsonii)

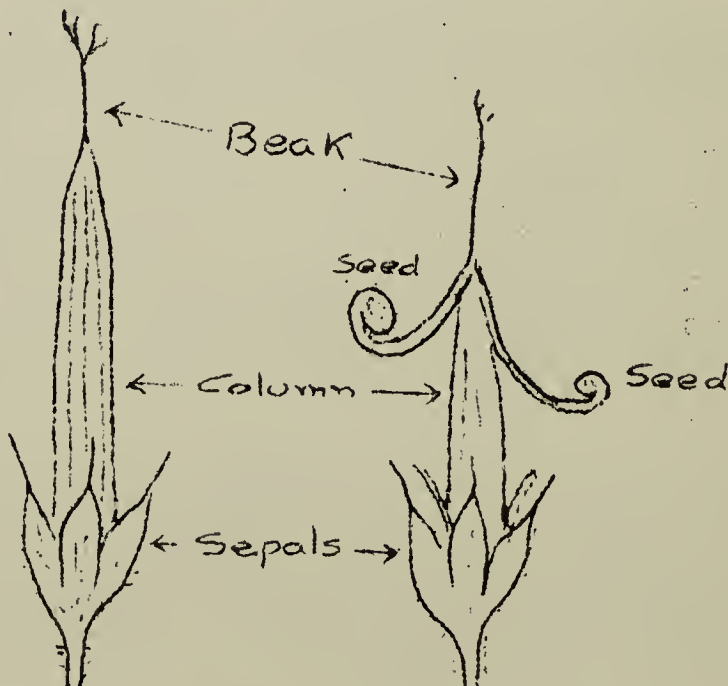
Typical leaf of  
Geranium

Nat. size



Flower of  
G. Richardsonii

Nat. size.



Style column  
x 2