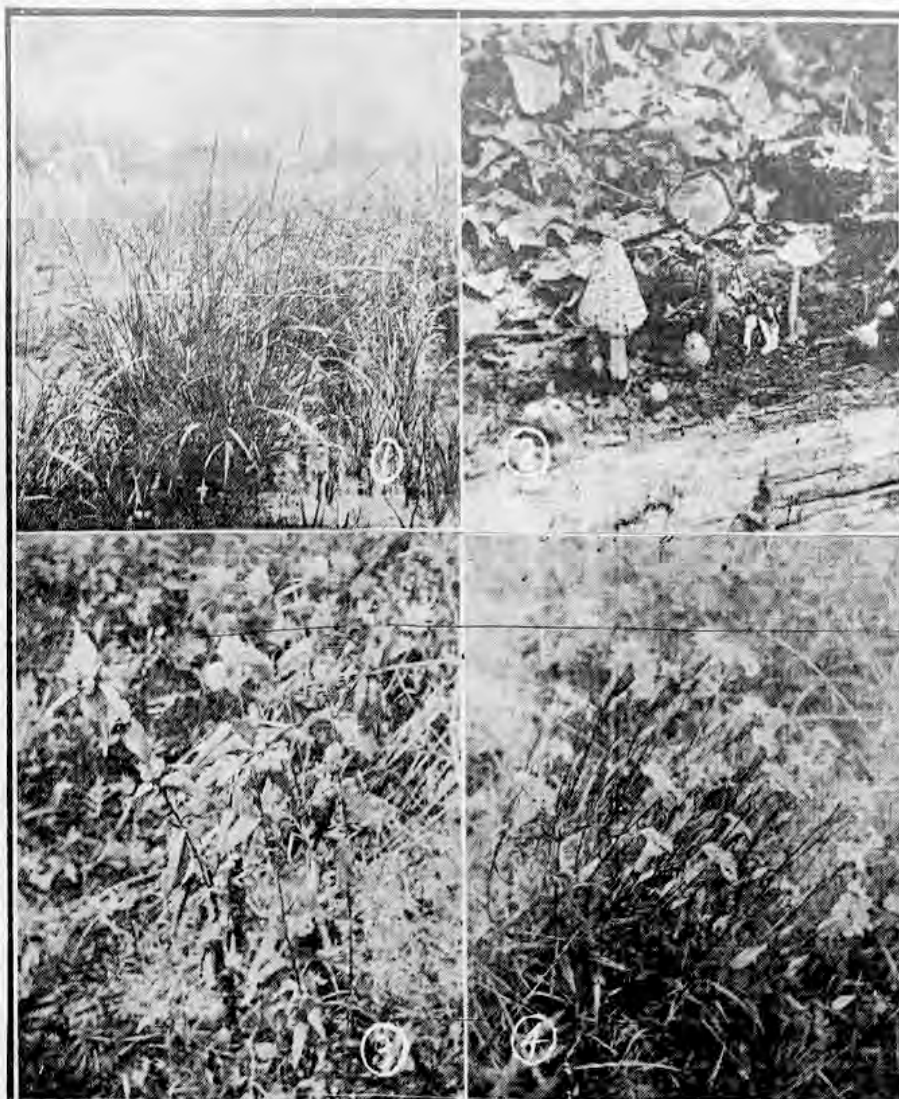


Fringed Gentian, Termed Loveliest of Blue Flowers, Now in Bloom; Asters and Golden Rod Indicate Autumn Has Reached Minnesota



1. Indian Rice. 2. Shaggy Manes. 3. Colored Gentian. 4. Larger Fringed Gentian.

—Photos by M. E. Mosker.

Miss Butler will conduct parties through the wild garden in Glenwood park. Those wishing to see the place may set a time by telephone to suit convenience. Phone, N. W. Colfax 1689.

SEPTEMBER brings us what is pronounced the loveliest blue flower of the world—the fringed gentian. The indescribable color of rich, deep blue, the exquisite finish of the petals, the large number of flowers borne on a single individual, together with the late time of blooming, make this species of extraordinary value. The poet, Bryant, has given it immortal fame. Every one knows this beautiful poem, "To the Fringed Gentian." It is somewhat captious to criticize this venerated master of literature and keen observer and lover of nature. Perhaps the case was different in Bryant's Berkshire home, but, with us, this "blossom bright with autumn dew, and colored with the heaven's own blue," does not "come alone, when woods are bare and birds are flown." Late August finds it here with a large company of other flowers, and the trees are still in full leafage. The color of the flower, also, is not "sky blue." But who can say what sort of blue may not be found in the sky! Among the many tints gentian-blue will sometimes be seen there.

"Then doth thy sweet and quiet eye
Look through its fringes to the sky,
Blue—blue—as if that sky let fall
A flower from its cerulean wall."

A smaller fringed gentian, with slight stem, linear leaves and fewer and paler colored blossoms, grows with the showier species. These flowers are annuals. Florists desirous to cultivate them were long baffled in their attempts. It was at length discovered that the seeds were biennial, that is, that they do not germinate until two years old. We must always leave some of the flowers to go to seed, however much their beauty tempts us, in order that the plant may not be exterminated.

Less local in the meadows is the closed blue gentian, or "chimney flower" (*Gentiana Andrewsii*). The tubular flower never expands. It displays all shades of blue. It is sometimes tinted with pink, and sometimes white, or white striped with blue. There are other small flowered gentians, with white or blue flowers. The prairie gentian, *Gentiana puberula*, has a large, handsome, arm-shaped blossom of the deepest, darkest blue imaginable for petals. It looks almost black when seen across the prairie.

Sure signs of approaching autumn are the asters and golden rods, the lambent flames of dying summer, that leap up and blaze with unwonted vividness before they are banked with snow. Gray enumerates 56 species of golden rod and 59 of aster, a large proportion of which are native to Minnesota. Both are difficult for beginners in botany to determine; but a few of them have such well marked characters that he who runs may read their names. For example, the sweet, flat-topped prairie golden rod, *Solidago rigida*. Another

flat-topped species is the narrow leaved, early blooming *S. graminifolia* found in damp soil. Among the more usual types with many branched, elongated flower clusters are *S. latifolia*, a wood species, with broad, ovate leaves pointed at both ends, zigzag stems and with flower heads in bunches among the leaves, and in bogs *S. uliginosa*, that exemplifies the name in the inflorescence forming a straight, slender reed.

The aster flower head is constructed like that of the daisy. It may be tiny or have a diameter of two inches or more. The ray petals are dark or pale blue, lilac or white, according to the species. The New England aster is tall and many flowered, with long, bright purple rays; aster puniceus is a swamp species with flowers of paler blue and hairy, red stems; *A. umbellatus* is a tall, flat-topped, white swamp aster; and on the prairies are the small-leaved and small flowered *A. multiflorus*, as lovely as the spiraea, known as bridal wreath, and, loveliest of all, *A. sericeus*, a silver gray, silky leaved aster with large, bright, red-purple flowers.

No mention has yet been made of the grasses and sedges. Nature has not granted them bright colors, fragrance or nectar, because they are pollinated by the wind instead of by insects, but in place of these attractions, grace and beauty of form, qualities not to be ignored. They are social plants and live together in large companies. Many sedges have three cornered, solid stems, while all the grasses have round stems which are hollow except at the leaf joints. Colonies of *Zizania aquatica*,

with its Indian rice, may be noted in the shallow waters of lakes and ponds. The leaves are long and slender and the tall, branched flower spikes pierce the air like needles. The wild rice was recently harvested by the Indians for breadstuff, and the grain-eating birds eagerly suck its seeds.

No one fond of mushrooms fails to gather and eat freely the shaggy name, *Coprinus comatus*, for it is easily recognized. There is a lively contest for it on the parade ground, where it abounds, and the first comers in the morning often carry off basketsful in the season. The photograph shows several stages of growth. The cylindrical cap covered with large scales like turkey feathers finally expands into a disk and deliquesces, dripping with a black fluid containing the spores. The mushroom is eaten, of course, before this change takes place, and when the flesh is firm and white. The black liquid treated with a preservative may be used as ink. It has been suggested that the government should use this fluid for printing bank notes to insure against counterfeiting. The microscope would at once expose a fraud, for the spores in the ink have a definite size and shape.

Two other coprini are common and also edible—the ink cap, *Coprinus atramentarius*, whose cap is usually smooth, gray and cup-shaped; and the little ink cap, *C. micaceus*, a small yellowish brown mushroom, common on lawns, especially above decaying roots of trees, throughout the season. The cap of this species is sometimes covered with gleaming, mica-like scales. The gills turn black when mature, but the plant generally dries without deliquescing.—ELOISE BUTLER.

THIEF STEALS A GIRL'S PHOTO

Baltimore, Md., Sept. 10.—(Special.)—A thief broke into the store at Eastern avenue and Sixteenth street and stole a picture of the niece of the proprietor some time early in the morning. When the storekeeper, Walter T. Whiteford, awoke he found that the store had been entered by a front window and the picture of his niece was missing.

Opinions are divided as to whether the photograph was the sole motive of the thief in breaking into the store. Out of justice to the admirer of the young woman it must be said that besides the photograph some eggs, milk, syrup and a ham were also missing. The police of Baltimore county are on a lookout for the culprit.