

SCHOOL EXHIBITIONS.

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Possibly in no way can one awaken more interest in Nature Study than through the School Fair. Children like to collect with a purpose. And through collecting plants and insects, they become acquainted with these more intimately than in any other way.

Furthermore, the Fair brings the parents to the school. Nature Study too often is made a dry, formal subject forced upon the school by the course of study. Oftener still, it is entirely neglected. With an exhibition in view, however, the subject ceases to be a school subject, and becomes one in which the children are really interested.

Now is the time to begin preparation for next September's Fair. Even if the teachers change in the meantime, the Fair, being largely in the hands of the pupils, is kept in mind throughout the summer. Teachers who really wish to advance the interests of their pupils will start the scheme, even if they never see its completion. Possibly they will go to a school next term where some other teacher has started a similar scheme; and, in such case, the spring's experience will help fit into the new surroundings.

A school Fair should consist of an exhibit of all sorts of grain, vegetables, fruits and flowers, that the school children grew. Whether they grew them at home or in the school garden matters little. All nature collections made by the children should also be exhibited. These will consist of collections of wild flowers pressed and mounted on cardboard or white paper; collections of garden flowers, weeds, seeds, native woods, ornamental shrubs, etc., Many of these collections may illustrate such plant relations as seed-dispersal, protection, adaptation to environment and insect relations. Collections according to locality are always interesting.

Besides plant collections, children will exhibit their collections of minerals, insects, fossils, sea-shells, pictures of natural objects, nature booklets, etc.

Older children could make collections illustrating local, county or provincial industries. For this, much material might be obtained through exchange with other schools.

The girls of the school would exhibit samples

of their sewing, cooking, preserving, stencilling, raffia work, etc.

If they can grow tomatoes, onions, cucumbers and cauliflower, and from these make pickles, their exhibit would have double value.

It is needless to name all the things that might be exhibited. The chief point is the exhibition.

How many teachers, when they read this, will bring the subject before their pupils? The last month of school is usually a "drag." Try this plan to brighten things up. Ask the children to look after the garden plots they already have, and assure them it is not yet too late to plant something more. No matter how small your school is, try the Fair. Talk it over with the people. Ask for one dollar contributions towards a prize list. Appoint an exhibition committee to keep things moving during vacation. This committee will also carry the work over from one teacher to the next. The honor of having *started* the exhibition idea in any school is worth the trouble. If a teacher remains to see the end of it, so much the better.

These Fairs have been tried in many places. They have usually met with opposition from non-progressive people the first year. The second and third years, however, shew marked improvements.

After all, the life of a Fair is the teacher. If she cannot inspire her pupils to do things; if she teaches by the clock; if she thinks of school only between nine a. m., and four p. m.; if she can teach only from a text-book; if she can teach only dead subjects; to be brief, if the teacher have no ambition, energy and snap, she should leave the Fair alone. But if she be a real teacher, this is an opportunity to do something for which she will be remembered when her present pupils are the men and women of the country.

I should consider it a favor if teachers in Nova Scotia who have already tried School Fairs would write me, telling me what they did and with what success. Those who will try it this year for the first might also write me at Truro. I shall appreciate it. I want to know the difficulties you meet and also your achievements. You can help me by such reports. Possibly I, too, can help you.