

The Farmer's Advocate

HOME MAGAZINE.

THE LEADING AGRICULTURAL JOURNAL IN THE DOMINION.

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Cultivate Now.

Another summer is fast drawing to a close, and again the fields are rapidly being stripped of their golden harvest. Harvest is a busy season, but all seasons on a well-regulated farm are busy seasons, and it is well that it is so, for work rightly done is generally done at a profit, so the busier we are the greater should be our success. No sooner is one crop harvested than it becomes necessary to prepare for another. A twelve-month is, after all, a very short time, and with practically half of it winter, as far as cultivation is concerned, it is necessary that no time be wasted during the season when cultivation is practicable. In the spring, as soon as the frost is out and the land is dry enough to work, we see teams rushing the work of plowing, cultivating, disking and harrowing. Why? To prepare a seed-bed that the grain may fall upon fertile soil and bring forth abundantly. But is the getting of the land in fine tilth the only object of this great rush? No. Experienced men who understand things will tell you that tilling the soil, putting a layer of fine earth on top, conserves moisture for the use of the crop later on. Quite true. If tillage is good in the spring, why is it not beneficial after the crop is off? It is almost as necessary to conserve moisture now as just before the crop is sown, as it is such a short time until another crop must be put in. How often we hear it said that the land is too hard to plow. Much of this may be avoided by as soon as the crop is off, skimming the fields not seeded down with a gang plow, or going over them two or three times with the disks or cultivator. After this give a couple of strokes with a good sharp harrow, to leave the land fine on top. It is seldom land thus treated gets so hard the plow will not take hold of it later on when it is necessary to give the deeper cultivation. A large amount of moisture is thus prevented from evaporating.

After harvest, cultivation does another great work for the man who practices it. Weed seeds

of almost all kinds germinate and grow rapidly in the late summer and fall, in an effort to produce seed again before the winter. These young shoots are very tender, and the later cultivation puts an end to their existence. This is one of the most effective means of fighting weeds, while growing crops, there is. The extra cultivation is worth while, if it did nothing else but put the soil in better tilth. Do not wait until next week. Cultivate each field as soon as the crop is removed. The gang plow does the best work, but the cultivator or disk helps the soil greatly.

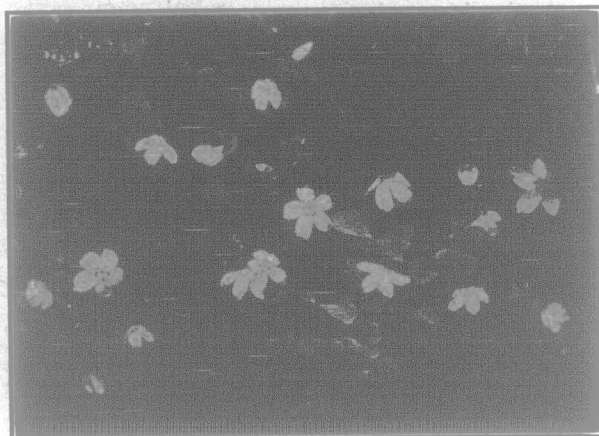
Nature's Diary.

By A. B. Klugh, M. A.

There are a couple of very beautiful, delicate little plants which blossom in our deep woods towards midsummer. They are known as the Twin Flower and the Wood Sorrel.

The Twin Flower is so called because each flower stalk forks at the top into two, and each of these pedicels bears a flower. The corolla is whitish, tinged and striped with rose-purple, and is funnel-shaped. The leaves are rounded-oval and are evergreen.

The scientific name of the Twin Flower is *Linnaea borealis*, being named in honor of Linnaeus, the great Swedish naturalist, who first classified thousands of plants and animals, and who brought into current use our present system of scientific nomenclature. This flower was a special favorite of the eminent botanist.



Wood Sorrel.

The Wood Sorrel has a white corolla which is striped with fine purple lines. It has five petals and five long and five short stamens, which latter alternate with one another. The leaves have three leaflets like the clover.

On the surface of the water of our ponds and streams two interesting insects may be observed, the Water Boatmen and the Back Swimmers. They are both true Bugs, that is, they belong to the order of insects called the Hemiptera. All insects are frequently termed "bugs," but this name should really be applied only to insects of the above-mentioned order.

The Water Boatmen are mottled in color and oval in shape. While they usually are to be seen at the surface of the water, they can descend below the surface and remain there for a long time



Twin Flower.

as they carry down with them a film of air held by the fine hairs which cover the body. The eggs are laid under water and are attached to the stems of aquatic plants.

The Water Boatmen have strong, sharp beaks, and feed upon other aquatic animals. They pass the winter in the mud at the bottom of the streams and ponds.

The Back Swimmers derive their name from their habit of swimming on their backs. The hindmost pair of legs are long and stand out at the side like a pair of oars. They lay their

eggs in the stems of water plants, the female piercing the stem with her sharp ovipositor, and placing about two-thirds of the egg in the incision.

A very brilliant little bird is the Indigo Bunting, he is an iridescent blue nearly all over, a blue which flashes to green and purple as the light strikes at various angles. The female is a very dull-colored mate for such a bright husband, being of a snuff brown.

The Indigo is a rather rare summer resident in the Maritime Provinces and Quebec, a fairly common breeder in Ontario, and is only occasionally recorded from Manitoba.

It is a bird of the clearings and raspberry patches, and makes its nest of grass, leaves, and plant-stems, in a low bush, or in a bunch of raspberry canes. It has a bright, tinkling song.

The Indigo is one of the latest birds to arrive in the spring, and one of the first to leave in the fall.

Another brilliant bird, which always arouses interest when seen, is the Scarlet Tanager. The male of this species is bright scarlet, with black wings and tail, and is sometimes called "Red Bird," "Soldier Bird," or "War Bird," and its gay coloration is often fatal, as it is frequently shot, sometimes to be mounted, but more often looked at and thrown away. The female is greenish-yellow, with blackish wings and tail.

The Scarlet Tanager arrives about May 12th and leaves about September 15th. Like the Indigo Bunting its centre of abundance in Canada is in Ontario, though it is not uncommon in Manitoba.

It has a strong, warbling song, and a call-note which sounds like "Tic-whirr—Tic-whirr."

On the trunks of Oak trees one occasionally finds a huge yellow fungus, consisting of a mass of small caps joined together. It is the Sulphur Polyporus. The name Polyporus is derived from two Greek words, and means "many holes," referring to the fact that the under-side of the cap is made up of a layer of small tubes in which the spores are borne.

In the young stages this fungus is quite soft, and is edible, but later it becomes hard and dry.

All large fungi consist of two parts, the threads, termed the Mycelium which branch through the wood or ground, and the Sporophore which is the part which bears the spores. It is this latter part which we see. The Mycelium frequently lives for years before it produces the fruiting-body, and it is this part which causes the decay of the wood.

THE HORSE.

As pastures become drier, the need for feeding the sucking colt increases.

While horses in Ontario increased 90,447 in the ten years, 1901 to 1911, their average value also increased \$62.47 per head, according to the census report.

Much as horses like the new hay, we are told that it is not as good for them as old hay. Liveries and dray firms always buy old hay for their horses, and find that it is better for them than newly-mown hay.

Many importers of draft horses are landing new importations at this season. It is a good time to look these over, and select the horse to meet your desires before all the choicest have been disposed of. Real good horses are never very plentiful.

Be careful in commencing the horses, which have been at grass the greater part of the summer, at the fall work. They are soft, and might easily be overdone. This is particularly true of mares suckling foals. Care must also be exercised that the colt does not get over-heated milk. Nothing is surer to bring on digestive troubles, and give his growth a serious set-back.

Whether dry or wet seasons have any affect upon the conception of mares or not, we are not prepared to say, but the Live Stock Journal, commenting upon the show season in England, has this to say: "The shortage of yearlings, and the full number of foals being shown this season, leads one to ask whether a hot, dry season affects the conception of mares. Two years ago the weather, for the summer months, was hot and dry, and these appears to have been a shortage of foals last year. On the other hand the breeding season of 1912 was cool and wet, which probably favored foal production, hence the increased number of show foals to be seen. It is also a fact that most breeders have had a good deal of trouble with their brood mares this season, so it seems the climatic conditions affect the foal crop, at least, to some extent."