

CONSERVATION OF WILD FLOWERS AND SHRUBS A MUNICIPAL DUTY

BY

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Our native wild flowers are fast becoming extinct because people who love them will not let them grow and mature seed. Native shrubbery is fast following the flowers, in spite of the fact that brush holds the hillsides and stops erosion. Encourage the hazel, the wild-crab, plum, the red and black haw, persimmon, sassafras, the prickly, aromatic, and paper ashes, the service bush and red-bud, the wahoo or spindle bush, the gooscherries and blackberries and the wild roses in the draws and washes and plant hickory, walnut, pecan, oak and the conifers on washed off knobs and give nature a chance to take care of some of her own flood control problems.

Just now when the early wild flowers are blooming we must not forget that many varieties are fast disappearing. As a general rule, of the early spring flowers only the violet and cranesbill should be plucked or transplanted in town. Most of the summer and fall flowers seed freely and so may be picked generously. Following is a list of some of the flowers which we should encourage in our wild parks by carefully planting such as are not already there: Hepatica, anemone, wind-flower, spring-beauty, buttercup, blood-root, yellow-puccoon, wake-robin, purple trillium, blue-bell, dutchman's breeches, may-apple, sweet-william, dogtooth violet, shooting star, jack-in-the-pulpit, pansy, hare-bell, solomon's seal, lady's slipper or moccasin flower—all spring flowers—and I must not forget the old prairie or Turk's cap lily, now seldom seen.

May we not all go back to our home town and if there is no wild park, check up on some available rough land, say twenty to a hundred acres, buy it as a community or induce someone to buy or donate it for the town! Clear a few level spaces for picnic, ball, and tennis grounds. Turn it over on honor to the boy and girl scouts or high school to rule and regulate. Give continued instruction and care toward developing a real nature's garden of ground flowers, tangled vines and shrubbery for the birds. When available, a good spring or brook is an added attraction, but good potable drinking water must be provided. A good substantial fence is the next consideration, then clean toilet arrangements and an open building of steel construction with sheet steel corrugated roof large enough to cover a good sized crowd should a storm arise. If the town has no large auditorium, consideration might be given the possibility of using this building for Chautauqua, politics, young folks conventions, 4-H work, etc. By all means, do not combine it with a tourist park.

Uncle Sam has national parks, Illinois has state parks, Cook County has forest preserves and beautiful parks and playgrounds. Why not a wild park and playground near every city and town in the State to help perpetuate the many beautiful native plants, shrubs, and trees and aid us all to know and appreciate the outdoors and what nature reveals to us of God and His wonderful works for the children of men.