

# NATURE NOW

## Trillium Is Popular Among Naturalists

By LYDIA KING FREHSE  
Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

There comes a day in late May when the tide of wild flower bloom reaches its height. For this brief hour of color and beauty, the forest aisles have waited long and silently.

The living sun filters through the overhanging branches of variegated green where the half-opened leaves tremble on their stems. Soon summer will close the canopy and the forest floor will grow dim, its bloom ended for another season.

But now as we wander briefly in the spring woods, our feet touch the carpet of wild flowers. Here, amidst the gentle curve of leaf and bud and petal, each of us can find his own preferences.

Many will select the trillium as the most beautiful of them all. When Dr. Molken, curator of the New York Botanical Gardens was preparing the manuscript for his recent book "American Wild Flowers," he sent a questionnaire to 1,500 naturalists asking them to list their favorites. The trillium ranked high among the 1,080 plants nominated.

genera and 35 species throughout the world.

It belongs to the larger order of the lilies, although it departs from their habit of parallel veining to arrange its own settled leaves in a single whorl on the stem.

The trillium takes its scientific name from its arrangement of leaves, sepals and petals in groups of three; its common name "wake-robin," from its early appearance in springtime. The erect, single-stemmed plants come up through last year's leaf mold from short tuberous rootstocks or rhizomes.

Of the several species within our range the red variety "Trillium erectum" appears first in late April or early May. Its ill-scented flowers are dark maroon or wine colored and are pollinated by cartoon-loving flies which are attracted by the odor and raw-meat color of the bloom.

THIS SPECIES is fast disappearing from the rich hummocks of our shady lowland where it grows in the company of marsh marigold, skunk cabbage and our swamp-loving ferns.

Many botanists prefer the species *Trillium undulatum* to all others. Its common name "painted trillium" suggests the pink or rose "V" which appears at the base of each narrow white petal. This variety is more common east and north of our range and southward in the coastal mountains.

I first learned to know the nodding trillium (species *cernuum*) in the mixed pine and hardwood forest on the north shore of Higgins Lake. Here it was the only representative of its family.

The small white flowers with their pollen-laden stamens and strongly recurved petals keep well hidden under their whorl of leaves, hence the common name. I have not found this species growing in the Detroit area.

But to see the trillium at its best, one must wander some late afternoon in our mixed hardwood forests, where the largest and most abundant species—grandiflorum, stars the ravines and gentle slopes.

THERE IS NO lovelier sight in all the May woods than a waving hillside of these pure white blooms. Before the petals wither they turn pink and finally rose color.

Do not confuse them at this stage of their bloom with the red trillium whose petals are very dark and more pointed, and whose blooming period is almost over before the large white trillium opens. Last week we visited an area northeast of Oxford, where Cranbrook Institute is studying the mutations of *Trillium grandiflorum*.

This species seems to be generally more subject to the appearance of "sports." In addition to the regular white flowers we found many that were variously striped with green and white, some that were pale green and others that were double.

FIELD naturalist Walter Nickell explained these sports as mutations caused by the rearrangement of the genes. As a result the chlorophyll which usually goes into the leaves, appears in the flowers as well, causing the green color of the petals.

The Institute is extending its study of this area over a period of several years, in the meantime transplanting some of the material for more accurate studies.

There is a slight possibility that these color variations may be the result of a virus in the soil which attacks the rhizome. This is a principle involved in breeding tulips of unusual markings.

When a virus developed from tulips is injected into the bulb, new and unusual color patterns appear in the flowers of the resulting plants.

Nickell reported that the studies will need to be pursued for a longer period before any definite conclusions can be announced regarding these "freak" flowers.

ALL VARIETIES of trillium are on the list of protected plants of our state. However, no spring comes and goes without my seeing at least one bunch of these wild flowers leaving the woods in a tightly clutched hand. All too frequently their beauty never reaches the confines of a vase but is brushed aside from a car seat in a wild heap.

Because the flower stem is so short, the careless picker breaks off the entire stalk including the leaves, thus destroying the plant. And so the trillium pays for its beauty at the hands of the careless picker. It needs your protection and mine, if it is to survive in our parks and wood lots for the enjoyment of future generations.

### Have You Met . . .

Dr. and Mrs. William J. (Mary Louise) Westman of 1250 Villa, formerly of Detroit? Dr. Westman is a psychiatrist at Veterans' Administration Mental Hygiene clinic in Detroit and is a member of Wayne County Medical Society and American Psychiatric Association. Mrs. Westman, a teacher and occupational therapist at Bloomfield Cooperative Nursery school, is a member of the Association Occupational Therapy Association.



Mrs. Frehse

AS PLANTS GO, the trillium family is a small one; only four

species are native to Michigan.

They are: *Trillium erectum*, *Trillium undulatum*, *Trillium cernuum*, and *Trillium grandiflorum*.

The trillium is a member of the lily family and is one of the most popular wildflowers in Michigan.

It is a hardy plant and can be found in a variety of habitats, from wet swamps to dry woods.

The trillium is a beautiful plant and is a favorite of many gardeners and naturalists.

It is a plant that is worth looking for in the woods every year.

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DEEP IN SPRING ACTIVITIES at Mills college, Calif., are Judith and Mary Jane Frost, daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Earle Rockwell Frost of Henrietta street. Both graduates of Birmingham high school, Judith is a freshman at Mills and Mary Jane is completing her senior year.

## U of D Sponsors Summer Workshop

Dr. Dorothy M. Perry of Colonial court, supervisor of English and literature in Detroit Public schools, is one of the workshop staff members in a six-week summer workshop in human relations beginning June 28 at the University of Detroit.

## First Quadrillion Ball

Roger Beebe of Birmingham and Ruth Olson of Wayne were among those who attended the first annual Quadrillion Ball held Friday at the Masonic Temple in Lansing. The dance is sponsored by Delta Tau Delta fraternity of which Roger is a member.

Wayne Stettbacher, 1954 Hillcrest, general manager and secretary of Employers Association of Detroit, will be one of the workshop consultants.

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## NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

IN THE SEVERAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF THE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN

A special election having been called to be held in all the voting precincts of the school districts of the County School District of Oakland County, State of Michigan, on the 14th day of June, 1954, for the purpose of voting on the following question:

"Shall the limitation on the total amount of taxes which may be assessed each year against property in the County School District of Oakland County, Michigan, for all purposes except taxes for the payment of interest and principal on obligations incurred prior to December 8, 1932 be increased as provided in Section 21, Article X of the Constitution of the State of Michigan of 1908 for the years 1954 to 1959, both inclusive, by one-twentieth of one percent (50¢ per \$1000) of the assessed valuation as equalized for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of The Special Education Act, which statute is designed to encourage the education of handicapped children?"

THEREFORE, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN

That any qualified school elector who is not already registered upon the books of the city or township in which he resides may register for the election with his city or township clerk prior to 5:00 o'clock P.M., Eastern Standard Time, on Friday, 4 June, 1954.

W. J. Emerson, Secretary  
Oakland County Board of Education

Dated: 13 May, 1954.

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School District of the City of Birmingham  
Oakland County, Michigan

## NOTICE OF LAST DAY OF REGISTRATION

Whereas the annual election is to be held in said school district on the 14th day of June, 1954:

THEREFORE, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN, that Friday, the 4th day of June, 1954, up to 5:00 P.M., Eastern Standard Time, is the last day on which unregistered persons may register in order to be eligible to vote at said annual school election.

Application for registration should be made to the clerk of the city or township in which the elector resides.

Persons already registered upon the registration books of such city or township clerk need not re-register.

Amos F. Gregory  
Secretary of the Board of Education  
Dated: May 18, 1954.

## Notice of Last Day of Registration

of the qualified electors of School District No. 2, Fractional, Townships of Bloomfield, Troy, West Bloomfield and City of Bloomfield Hills, County of Oakland, Michigan

TO THE QUALIFIED ELECTORS OF SAID SCHOOL DISTRICT:

Please Take Notice that the Board of Education of School District No. 2 Fractional, Townships of Bloomfield, Troy and West Bloomfield and City of Bloomfield Hills, County of Oakland, Michigan, has called an annual election to be held in said School District on June 14, 1954.

Section (2) of Act 199, Public Acts of Michigan, 1951, effective September 28, 1951, provides as follows:

"The Inspectors of election at any annual or special election shall not receive the vote of any person residing in a registration school district whose name is not registered as an elector in the city or township in which he resides . . ."

THE LAST DAY on which persons may register with the Clerk of the City or Township in which they reside to be eligible to vote at said annual election called to be held June 14, 1954, is Friday, June 4, 1954. Persons registering after 5:00 o'clock p.m., Eastern Standard Time, on said Friday, June 4, 1954, are not eligible to vote at said annual election.

Under the provisions of Act 199, Public Acts of Michigan, 1951, registrations will not be taken by school officials, and only persons who have registered as general electors with the Clerk of the City or Township in which they reside are registered school electors. Persons planning to register with City and Township Clerks must ascertain the days and hours on which the Clerk's office is open for registration.

This Notice is given by order of the Board of Education of School District No. 2, Fractional, Townships of Bloomfield, Troy, West Bloomfield and City of Bloomfield Hills, County of Oakland, Michigan.

DAVID W. LEE (Signed)  
Secretary—Board of Education

## NOTICE OF REGISTRATION

School District City of Birmingham  
of  
OAKLAND COUNTY, MICHIGAN

A special election having been called to be held in all the voting precincts in the County School District of the County of Oakland, State of Michigan, on the 14th day of June, 1954, for the purpose of voting on the following question, to-wit:

"Shall the limitation on the total amount of taxes which may be assessed each year against property in the County School District of Oakland County, Michigan, for all purposes except taxes for the payment of interest and principal on obligations incurred prior to December 8, 1932, be increased as provided in Section 21, Article X of the Constitution of the State of Michigan of 1908 for the years 1954 to 1959, both inclusive, by one-twentieth of one percent (50¢ per \$1000) of the assessed valuation as equalized for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of The Special Education Act, which statute is designed to encourage the education of handicapped children?"

THEREFORE, NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN That any qualified elector of School District of Birmingham who is not already registered upon the registration books of the township or city of his residence may register for this election with his city or township clerk prior to 5:00 P.M., Eastern Standard Time, on Friday, 4 June, 1954.

Amos F. Gregory, Secretary  
Board of Education

Dated: May 13th, 1954.

**CLOSED FOR INVENTORY**  
**FRIDAY, SATURDAY & MONDAY**  
**MAY 28, 29 & 31**

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