

Colorful Exhibits to Open Annual WNFGA Xmas Show

"Merrily, Merrily, Ring the Bells" is the theme chosen by the Birmingham Branch of the Woman's National Farm and Garden Association for the annual Christmas show. The event is scheduled for Dec. 15 at the Birmingham Community House announces the president, Mrs. Robert Watt.

Mrs. Frank Webb, general chairman, has been in charge of organizing the committees and making preliminary arrangements for the project which has become a well-known tradition to the community. Numerous artistic and educational displays will be included in the show. Club members will share in the undertaking by preparing an exhibit or working on a committee.

THERE will be various classifications in each of the eight sections to be judged for merit. Chairman of the sections will be Mrs. Setsi Shawson, Mrs. ...

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NATURE NOW

Plants Have Unique Travel Methods

By LYDIA KING FRENSE
Special Writer For The Birmingham Eccentric

Most of us, if asked to point out the difference between a plant and an animal, would suggest that plants are stationary while animals can move about at will.

However, we say this only because we see a plant within its seasonal limits rooted in a garden bed or in a meadow or enclosed within a barbed-wire fence.

It isn't and does move, else all the seedlings would grow in one spot and all the oaks in one wood.

Not only can a species move so that it may travel across the continent to the casual observer, but viewed through the magnifying glass of a geologist, whole forests have moved from the arctic to the temperate zone and many single species have traveled across the continents to encircle the globe.

In the short space of time since man has come upon the scene, he has greatly aided plant dispersal by carrying a shoot or a graft or a packet of seed with him on his journey.

BUT DURING the course of time when plants traveled strictly on their own, they had already filled every tenurable spot on the continents, and a species might have to travel a long distance to find a new home.

It is interesting to watch this present of seed production and dispersal in my wild flower garden.

Here an early spring flower, the twin-leaf, named *Jeffersonia* in honor of Thomas Jefferson blooms briefly and sheds its white petals. Then the seed, box shaped like a small urn with a creased lid, develops rapidly. By early June it has matured and dried sufficiently so that it contracts and in so doing tips itself toward the earth. Soon the lid opens and the seeds, like small brown beads, spill out and roll away.

By late May the wild geranium is the most conspicuous bloomer in my garden. Within two weeks the flowers are replaced by a five-sided and about three-fourths of an inch long.

AT THE BASE of each of its segments is a tiny cup holding a few suggestions from our home group.

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seed. As the seed matures it is raised in its enclosing tissue much like a hand ready to throw a ball. Then the warm sunshine pulls the trigger by shrinking the cells of the core until it frees itself.

Each strap then releases and curls upward throwing out the seed and coiling itself into a symmetrical design around the tip of the beak. If the seed is just at the correct stage of ripeness this performance can be touched off by a gentle tap of the finger.

With autumn comes the ripening of berries' holding seeds within their pulp. Among these are the "dolls eyes" of the white hawberry, on their crimson-purple stalks, the coral fruit of the euonymus vine and the red, bead-like berries of "Jack-in-the-pulpit" on their stout spathe.

EACH OF THESE adds its own beauty and color to my wild-flower garden then gently drops it seeds to earth.

In late summer along streams and swamps, great patches of jewel wood open their seeds. Have you ever touched a long and slender poppy only to have it explode and pop its seeds into your face?

This poppy is made up of five or six strap-shaped segments which wind at some distance from the mother themselves as it grows. When plant.

THESE EXAMPLES present only a small sample of nature's way with seeds. At season-long tension, the segments snap free, coil up and throw out the seeds.

On autumn trips along the Au-Sable river, we frequently saw the wild cucumber which grows in a tangle over tall weeds and shrubs. As its prickly egg-shaped fruit ripens, a gas is generated which finally explodes, throwing the seed a considerable distance from the mother plant.

THIS HAS BEEN a standard ritual preceded by blooming, pollination and the fading of the flower. But the methods which nature has invented to send each seed family on its separate way are amazingly individual and slightly civilized.

And so it is that (as I travel) too, the embryo seed sprouts encased in its own unique seed. If you find a favorable growing space they will make a new home for themselves next season, often far from the mother.

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