



Wild Iris

**O**UR GRANDMOTHERS always kept a goodly plot, in their well-tended gardens, for the flowers they called "flags." We, with a wider world of horticultural offerings to choose from, are becoming increasingly devoted to the taller, more variegated, frequently more delicately tinted descendants of these same flags, which we now call by their Latin name, Iris.

But almost all of the varieties of iris we grow in our gardens, as well as the old-fashioned "flags" of our grandmothers, are imported flowers—immigrants or the descendants of immigrants, like ourselves. Some of them, like the bright yellow *Iris pseudacorus*, have escaped from cultivation and are mingling amicably with the native wildflower population in wet places.

However, America has its own tribe of native irises, that need yield nothing to the newcomers from Europe and the Orient, whether in beauty of form or in decorative color scheme. Perhaps the most widely distributed, and certainly one of the loveliest, is the species known simply as the larger blue flag.

There is a peculiar thing about all iris leaves, that is not found in those of any other flower. If you will look at one of the plants, you will see that the stiff, sword-shaped leaves are turned edgewise toward the stem, and not, as in other plants, with the flat side facing upward. You will notice also that the stem seems to come from the inside of the leaf, which clasps its base. The reason is, that the iris leaf is really folded in the middle, with its upper surface grown together inside, so that what seem to be the two sides of the leaf are really only two halves of the back!

*Science News Letter, May 23, 1931*

## ASTRONOMY

## Search for Comet In Eastern Morning Sky

**A**FTER nearly eight months without discovering a comet, astronomers are now anxiously watching the eastern morning sky for the reappearance of Neujmin's periodic comet. Discovered by a European astronomer in 1913, it was under observation at that time from September 6 to the following January. Since then it has not been seen, but calculations indicate that it returns once every 18 years.

Dr. Harlow Shapley, director of the Harvard College Observatory, Cambridge, Mass., has made public a "search ephemeris" computed by Frank Seagrave. This tells where the comet should be, and provides astronomers with information as to where they should direct their telescopes. According to these figures the comet is now in the constellation of Cetus, the whale, visible low in the east just before sunrise. It is moving in an easterly direction, towards the sun, so that it will increase in brightness, but as it enters the sun's glare, it will become more difficult to locate.

Probably even when brightest, it will be too faint to be observed with the unaided eye.

*Science News Letter, May 23, 1931*

## COMPARATIVE PHYSIOLOGY

## Touch of Spring Fever Makes Whole World Kin

See Front Cover

**I**N THE SPRING a young man's fancy turns to thoughts of another nap even more often than it does to amative imaginings, Tennyson to the contrary notwithstanding. "Spring fever," that drowsiness and mild lassitude that comes of warmth and well-being rather than of the crabbed winter of fatigue, has never received the serious attention of research workers in pathology—and it is to be hoped it never will. They might turn up a cure for it, which would be most deplorable.

Whatever spring fever is, it is no monopoly of the higher primates. Its benign affliction is visited on our humbler brethren as well. Cornelia Clarke's cat had a fine attack of it. Miss Clarke herself, however, remained awake enough to snap the camera shutter at the right moment.

*Science News Letter, May 23, 1931*

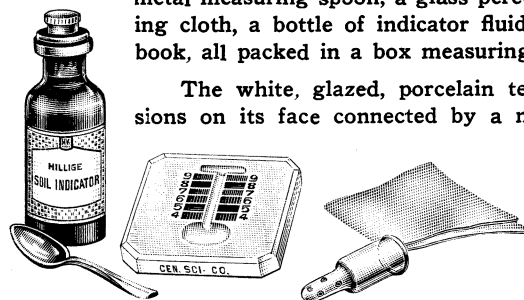
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