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BOTANY

New Oil for Paints Promised by Safflower

SAFFLOWER, *Carthamus tinctorius* L., which in its photographs looks to the layman something like a thistle without prickles, is one of the new plants being developed experimentally by the Department of Agriculture for its oil-bearing seeds.

The seeds contain a drying oil valuable in the production of paints and varnishes and allied products. The oil cake is useful as a stock feed.

The plant is not really new, excepting in this country. For years it has been cultivated in India and Egypt as an oil-seed crop.

Frank Rabak of the Bureau of Plant Industry, U. S. Department of Agriculture, under whose supervision experimental plantings of safflower have been grown, states that the crop is especially well adapted to the northern Great Plains region.

In this section of the country too much wheat is grown, the Federal Farm Board believes, while figures show that the United States is actually importing flaxseed for the linseed oil which it con-

tains. In 1929 this country produced only forty per cent. of its linseed oil.

Safflower is suggested as a supplementary crop to flax for the Northwest. The same farm machinery for sowing and harvesting it can be used as is now employed for other small grain crops. The safflower plant grows well in sandy or clay loam soil, and it appears to be more resistant to frost than flax.

Mr. Rabak emphasizes, however, that while safflower apparently gives promise as a drying oil seed crop, commercial growing of the crop is not yet recommended.

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