



Summer Wildflowers

WILDFLOWERS move more and more into the open as summer advances. Spring flowers are predominantly woodland flowers: violet, spring beauty, trillium, Solomon's seal, Dutchman's breeches, bloodroot, hepatica, anemone, columbine. But if you go into the woods now you will find relatively few flowers, and those are most likely to flourish where the overhead canopy of leaves is broken or thinned, so that patches or filterings of sunlight come through.

If you would find wildflowers in midsummer, you must fare afield rather than into the forest. In open meadows, along roadsides, and railroad right-of-way areas is where you'll find them: goldenrod, wild aster, blazing-star, butter 'n' eggs, Indian paintbrush, horsemint, wild bergamot, daisies, a dozen kinds of wild sunflowers. Ponds and lakes offer arrowleaf, pickerelweed, spatterdock, waterlily, lotus.

There are reasons. One hint is supplied by the clustering of summer woodland flowers around such crumbs of sunlight as find their way down through the overhead canopy. In the spring, the forest floor is essentially open ground. The leafless trunks and branches of the trees do not seriously interfere with either light or wind, so the flowers have their day in the sun. They must make haste, however, for as the leaves unfold overhead they are curtained into summer-long shadow.

One of the notable things about the summer wildflowers of the open is the dominance of one botanical family, the composites. Goldenrod, wild aster, blazing-star, daisies, wild sunflowers all belong to the same cousinship, and a host more might be added. Why this family should be slow-blossoming and prefer

open sky and hot sun is not as yet satisfactorily explained.

More easily explained, perhaps, is the presence of many annuals among the later-flowering species, as contrasted with the predominance of perennials among the early flowers of the woods. Since annuals must get started anew each season, and come to full maturity before they can blossom and bear seed, they need more time than is afforded by the few weeks required for the unfolding of tree leaves and the closing of the forest canopy. So

the most successful annual species are those that evolved in the open.

Science News Letter, August 1, 1942

In controlling the apple maggot fly advantage is taken of the fact that the female cannot lay eggs until after she has fed on leaf and fruit surfaces, which may be dusted or sprayed with poisons.

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