



Neglected Treasures

➤ GARDEN enthusiasts will go to all kinds of trouble to induce rare and delicate native plants to grow under their care. It is really something to be able to boast of a good clump of moccasin flowers or a bed of dogtooth violets or a veil of maiden-hair fern over a moist rockery. Maybe we value things in proportion to the trouble they cause us. In any case, there seems little inclination to cultivate some of the stout and lusty flowers of late summer and early autumn, that anybody can grow. Only a few gardens can show goldenrods and wild asters, liatris and cardinal-flower.

Fewer still have members of the horsemint group, though these are perhaps the most easily grown of all. About

all they require is to be pulled up by the roots, stuck in a hole and have dirt tramped on them. They do like good soil and reasonably abundant moisture, but like all late-summer flowers they can endure a considerable degree of drought.

Perhaps one reason why they have not been more generally accepted is the rather strong colors of their flowers. Oswego tea, otherwise known as bee balm, is about the most bumptious red-head you can find among flowers. It just doesn't match with anything. But it can be used very effectively if you have a mass of rather dark foliage that needs lighting up.

Similarly the wild bergamot is hard to fit into most orthodox garden color schemes. Its tousel-headed flowers are variously described as lilac and purple, but a closer characterization would be a blazing electric blue. Yet in the wild state, growing along roadsides or in field corners with goldenrod or wild senna or other yellow-flowered plants, it fits into the sunlit picture very harmoniously. Perhaps that would be the way to handle it in a garden: massed with yellow-flowered plants at an open vista's end.

The horsemints are true members of the mint family, all right; their leaves have something of that strong, aromatic odor that is associated with all mints. The "horse" part of the name is probably a reference to its strong, lusty growth; horses certainly do not go after them the way cats go after catnip.

This group of plants is as American as cornbread and baked beans. The only suggestion of foreignism is in their generic name, *Monarda*, which commemorates a sixteenth-century physician, Nicolas Monardes. However, Monardes was much interested in New World botany and wrote a good deal about American plants, so it is fair enough that he should have an American botanical monument in this plant name.

Science News Letter, September 7, 1946

TEXTILES

"Azlon" Is Newest Protein Base Fiber

➤ ADD TO rayon and nylon, "azlon."

A conference called by the Federal Trade Commission has agreed that "azlon" will be the official name for protein base fibers used as a textile product in making garments.

Man-made, natural protein base fibers, or "azlon," are manufactured principally from casein of milk, soybeans and other sources of natural protein.

Science News Letter, September 7, 1946

INVENTION

Refrigerator with Two Temperatures for Homes

➤ A TWO-TEMPERATURE refrigerator, with ice-cube freezer in a compartment entirely separated from the food-cooling section, promises greater ease and efficiency in tomorrow's housekeeping. It is covered by U.S. patent 2,405,392, recently issued to Leonard W. Atchison of Schenectady, N. Y.

The freezing compartment, at the top of the cabinet, receives full benefit of the mechanical refrigeration. The food compartment below, which is to be kept at a somewhat higher temperature—40 or 45 degrees Fahrenheit—has its own cooling coil, which is filled with a mixture of oil and an easily evaporated refrigerant of the Freon type. Extensions of this coil into the upper compartment are connected with a condenser that functions as a heat exchanger. When the lower compartment tends to warm up, some of the refrigerant in its coil evaporates. The vapor rises into the heat exchanger, where it is condensed and re-cooled, flowing back into the food-cooling coil. The process is thus one of extreme simplicity and fool-proof efficiency.

Patent rights have been assigned to the General Electric Company.

Science News Letter, September 7, 1946

GEOPHYSICS

Sub-Surface Explosions Make Greater Havoc

➤ THE ATOM BOMB is a much more formidable weapon when exploded under water than it is when exploded in the air. This was made apparent by comparative motion pictures of Able and Baker tests shown before an audience of returned Bikini correspondents.

Much of the footage was taken by automatic cameras on towers on the atoll's islets and on ships in the target array. The rest was "shot" from planes flying as close to the scene of the explosions as the pilots dared.

Within seconds after the explosion burst violently through the lagoon's surface, a dense white mist had risen to many times masthead height and completely engulfed the ships. Charged as it was with radioactivity of deadly intensity, this mist was far worse than any poison gas used in Flanders during World War I. No protective clothing or gas mask could prevent its lethal

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