



Dutchman's Breeches

➤ AMONG the earliest of our wild flowers, and among the flowers most delightful to children, are the "Dutchman's breeches." Many fancied resemblances for which flowers have been named require a considerable stretch of the imagination, but here the likeness is too obvious to escape. If there are nationalities among fairy folk, we know where the fairy "Vrouwen" hang their little boys' small clothes to dry.

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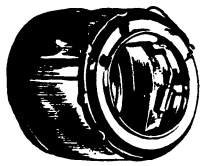


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It surprises some people a little to learn that these flowers, so unlike poppies in superficial form, are fairly closely related to them botanically. But there are marks of resemblance, nevertheless. The sepals, or outer green parts of the flower, are evanescent in poppies, falling off very easily. So also in the Dutchman's breeches, the sepals vanish as soon as the buds open. Again, the petals of the Dutchman's breeches are short-lived, as are also those of the poppy.

If you cut across the seed-pod of the two flowers, you will see a certain resemblance between the structure and arrangements of the reproductive parts. Another sign of the relationship can be found in the bitter taste of the sap, though that of Dutchman's breeches does not, like the juice of the poppy, contain a poisonous principle.

This dainty little plant grows best in rich soil. You can often find it hiding away in rich leaf mold accumulated between boulders and in rock crevices in deep, moist woods. Its leaves, very pale on the underside, all come directly from the ground. The leaves have three main divisions, all of them finely cut.

When big bumblebees visit the blossoms, their weight sometimes bends the delicate clusters to the ground. The bumblebees and long-tongued butterflies are its most frequent guests, however, for short-tongued insects cannot sound the depths of its nectar cups.

Closest botanical relatives of Dutchman's breeches are the squirrel-corn of the woods and the bleeding heart, that old favorite of our grandmothers' gardens. These three flowers belong to the same genus, known to botanists as *Dicentra*, a Greek name meaning two-spurred. They are thus botanical first cousins, while the poppy is related only as a second- or third-degree-removed kinsman.

Science News Letter, April 7, 1951

METEOROLOGY

Plenty of April Showers To Bring May Flowers

➤ THERE WILL be plenty of April showers to bring May flowers this year. The U. S. Weather Bureau predicts "abundant" rain over most of the nation during April.

However, the extreme Southwest, in urgent need of rain to escape threat of drought, and the extreme Southeast are scheduled to have below-normal amounts of rain, according to the Bureau's regular 30-day forecast.

That rain will be accompanied by cooler-than-normal temperatures for the country between the Rockies and the Appalachians. In the Atlantic, Pacific and Gulf of Mexico coastal states, the temperatures are expected to average not far from normal.

Science News Letter, April 7, 1951

AVIATION

Plan To Make Flying Safest Transportation

➤ TOP OFFICIALS of the major American military and civil agencies concerned with aviation safety met in Washington, D. C., to develop plans for making flying the safest form of transportation. Extensive research in safety measures is needed, it was agreed.

"As our economy and the national defense depend more each year on moving people and materials swiftly by air," Harry F. Guggenheim, president of The Daniel and Florence Guggenheim Foundation, said, "it is important for us to know that, out of a truly extensive effort, developments are beginning to appear that will realize our dream of making flying the safest form of transportation."

More than 600 research projects designed to make flying safer are currently under way in the United States, he revealed. In addition there are other projects for the same purpose that are classified as secret, he reported. The statement was based on a survey of aviation safety research in progress in institutions throughout the nation made by the Guggenheim Aviation Safety Center at Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y.

Despite the extent of research in progress, many gaps were disclosed in the survey, it was stated by Dr. T. P. Wright, acting president of Cornell. He is chairman of the Aviation Center at Cornell and was formerly head of the U. S. Civil Aeronautics Administration.

These gaps, he said, include the need for "crash-testing" full-size robot-controlled airplanes carrying instruments and dummy crews and passengers to learn how better protection can be provided

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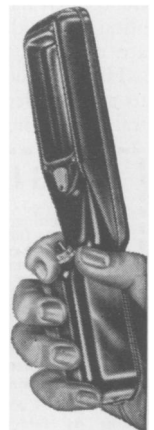
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