

## Inexpensive Summer Fun

# Autumn Fruits and Seeds Fine to Collect

(Eleventh of a series of 12 articles. Next week—Collecting Skulls and Bones)



**S**UMMER is waning, only the late wildflowers are left, and soon leaves will be changing from green to yellow and red. Yet the collector's holiday is by no means over. Autumn brings the harvest, when men gather in the fruits of the season and store seed for next spring. Harvesting fruits and seeds can give the nature collector some very interesting hours, too, and provide him with treasures for more leisurely study later on.

Most satisfactory, and easiest to keep, are dry-fleshed fruits, nuts, acorns, and seed-pods. These need no particular care, beyond keeping them separate in boxes or trays. A little more attention must be given to the winged seed groups of certain trees, like hard maple, linden or basswood, and the various species of ash. These dry membranes are easily broken, so it is best to give a small box to each group of specimens, to prevent breakage from too much shaking and jostling.

Less easy to keep are some of the fleshy fruits, such as red-haws and wild crabapples. Wild grapes, of course, will hardly keep at all. However, even the perishable fruits are worth collecting and

studying as long as they last. The edibility of some of them will suggest appropriate disposal when scientific purposes have been served!

Not all the fleshy fruits are thus perishable, of course. Some, like bitter-sweet, are so lasting that they are much used as permanent winter bouquets. The same use is made of dried seed-pods and seed-heads of such plants as lotus, and even of weeds like teasel and jimson-weed. The practice of "decorating" these with iridescent paint, however, is really just a bit too "arty"; and for a natural history collection it is not even to be thought of.

Just collecting your harvest into boxes, however, is not the whole story. Comparative study is the key to the real value of collections of any sort. So get generous samples of the fruits of any kind of tree or bush that interests you, keeping the harvest of each individual in a separate container. In the evening, spread out your takings on the table, and ask yourself questions about them.

In just how many ways, for example, are the acorns of white oak, black oak, red oak, and bur oak different from each other? In how many ways are they

alike? Make a tabular list of differences and likenesses. Do the same for other related species, such as the different kinds of hickory nuts, or walnuts and butternuts, or evergreen cones, or the pods of black locust, honey locust, and Kentucky coffee tree. Even different kinds of cockleburs can yield interesting information in this way.

Finally, most of the fruits in your collection can have their seeds extracted, to be kept in tight envelopes, pillboxes, or small vials until next spring. It will be interesting then to plant them, find out what percentages of the various kinds will grow, and see what the plants and seedling trees look like when they are very young.

For more information about collecting fruits and seeds and a list of books and pamphlets on the subject, send us a postcard with your name and address. Ask for Bulletin 11. Address Science News Letter, 2101 Constitution Ave., Washington, D. C.

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### ZOOLOGY

## Moose Looks Like Creature Of Earlier Geologic Age

See Front Cover

**S**OME animals impress us more as survivors from an earlier geologic age than as normal inhabitants of the present-day earth. Rhinoceros and elephant, giraffe and kangaroo, somehow give us the impression of belonging to the pliocene rather than to modern times.

Most creatures that we instinctively half-disbelieve even when we see them belong to the tropics, but a few live in cooler lands. Probably the most incredible-looking of North American mammals is the bull moose, with his almost elephantine size and his massive head with its tremendous spread of palmate antlers.

We commonly think of the American moose as just one species of animal, but zoologists are fairly well agreed that the slightly smaller moose that inhabits the borders of Yellowstone National Park is distinct from the Canadian moose. The photograph on the cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER is by J. E. Haynes.

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