

THE MILKWEED AND INSECTS.

In connection with Mr. Sladen's note in the December number of THE NATURALIST telling of the bee with the pollinia of *Asclepia* attached to its feet, and describing the remarkable method of cross fertilization adopted by this plant, it may be of interest to remark that *Asclepia*'s device to ensure the effective dissemination of its pollen causes—in the case of our native *A. syriaca* at least—the death of large numbers of insects. The pollinia are so difficult, comparatively, to withdraw, that they can be removed from their cells only by strong insects like the larger species of bees. Less sturdy seekers after nectar which get their feet caught in the clips, as recounted by Mr. Sladen, are not able to pull out the pollen masses. Their struggles seem only to wedge their legs more firmly in the narrow fissures of the corolla, and unable to free themselves, these hapless guests at the Caesar Borgia feast spread by the plant, die a lingering death.

Many different kinds of insects, such as flies, beetles, gnats, wasps, bees, and small butterflies and moths, come thus to an untimely end, but in my experience, by far the most frequent victims are ants. An examination of the blossoms of *A. syriaca* growing in the vicinity of ant colonies never fails to discover some of these exemplars of Solomon caught fast in the manner described, some still vainly struggling for freedom, others hanging dead like gibbeted malefactors.

This destruction of insect life is apparently merely accidental, and seems to be of no particular use to the plant. For, of course, *Asclepia* is entirely devoid of any such digestive apparatus as is found in the sundews and pitcher plants, and cannot utilize the dead insects in any way as food. Doubtless, cross fertilization is much better accomplished by the stronger flying insects, which are capable of carrying the pollinia farther and safer than the weaker flyers or the crawlers, but death seems a rather severe discipline of the latter for their undesired visit.

CHARLES MACNAMARA, Arnprior, Ont.

BOOK NOTICES.

HARDY ROSES: THEIR CULTURE IN CANADA, by W. T. Macoun, Dominion Horticulturist; Pamphlet, No. 9, Dominion Experimental Farms.

Lovers of flowers will welcome the appearance of this pamphlet of 12 pages, which may be obtained free of charge

from the author, Central Experimental Farm, Ottawa. The titles of the paragraphs will give an idea of the scope of the publication, viz.: "Site and Soil"; "Plants and Planting"; "Cultivation and Watering"; "Manuring"; "Pruning"; "Winter Protection"; "Insects and Fungous Enemies and How to Treat Them," and pages 7 to 12 are occupied in listing the "Best Varieties of Roses." Ottawa growers will find the information on pages 11 and 12 of much value as we have here reliable data on the successful growing of many choice varieties at Ottawa. During the past 21 years very many varieties have been tested on the Central Experimental Farm.

A. G.

CORRESPONDENCE.

The Editor, OTTAWA NATURALIST:

Many of your readers know of the bird nesting boxes made in Germany after the pattern of Baron von Berlepsch, and some would doubtless like to get them, if available at a reasonable figure, but importation from Europe is of course expensive. To meet this need I have just brought out a few dozen assorted sizes and will turn these over to any nature lover at actual cost as long as they last. The sizes are:

A1. For Wrens.

A. Tree Swallows and Wrens, etc.

B. Blue Bird, Crested Fly Catcher.

C. Flicker.

D. Screech Owl, Sparrow Hawk, Flicker.

The first two sizes cost 40c., B. 50c.,
and C. and D. \$1.15.

The packing in London will cost 15c. for one and 5c. for each additional one. Remittances should, of course, be made with the order. It is quite probable that several Ottawa people would want to buy these, and it might be advisable to have the orders collected by your secretary and shipped in one lot, which would economize in packing and freight. The boxes are not here at this writing, but are expected by February 15th, and it would be well to have them in advance so that they may be put in place by the time the birds arrive.

In 1912 the first Flicker I saw was the one in the nesting box within twenty feet of my bedside, where they nested last year, which goes to show that they do not waste any time in looking over the ground.

W. E. SAUNDERS.

London, Ont., January 31st, 1913.



Gibson, Arthur. 1913. "Hardy Roses: Their Culure in Canada, by W. T. Macoun [Review]." *The Ottawa naturalist* 26(11), 151–152.

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