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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

Saturday, July 23, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "NEWS NOTES FROM WASHINGTON." Information from the Bureau of Entomology and Plant Quarantine, United States Department of Agriculture.

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Our Department of Agriculture correspondent writes today about flower-garden insects.

"That's in a name?" she asks. "Suppose I wrote you of a garden party where the guests included a painted lady, a cabbage looper, a puss, a yellow woolly bear, saddle-back and a stinging rose. You wouldn't guess, would you, that this was a caterpillar party?"

"But you'll find caterpillars known by every one of those names in Farmers' Bulletin No. 1495 called 'Insect Enemies of the Flower Garden.' You'll find them in print and in pictures.

"Now for instance, take the painted lady mentioned on page 12 of the bulletin. The immature stage of the painted lady is a small fuzzy caterpillar that feeds on hollyhock and calendula leaves and has the habit of tying up the end-leaves by a special device of its own. It is the larva of the painted lady butterfly.

"As for the cabbage looper, that's a small green caterpillar with a white stripe along each side of its body that gets its name because it likes cabbage and travels from place to place with a curious looping or measuring movement. The looper not only gives trouble in the cabbage patch but also in the flower garden. You may find it on chrysanthemums, mignonette, ivy, geraniums and many shrubs and ornamental plants.

"Puss is a broad flat caterpillar completely covered with long silken hairs. It occasionally eats roses and English ivy in the South.

"And the yellow woolly bear is a very common caterpillar. You may find it anywhere in the United States. July and August are the months you are most likely to see it feasting in your garden. It overwinters in cocoons made from its woolly coat and silk. Its name comes from its appearance; it looks like a fat yellow bear because it is covered with many long hairs that may be yellow or fox red. It feeds upon dahlias, chrysanthemums, sunflowers, moonflowers, morning glories, petunias, salvias and many other flowering plants.

"Finally, the stinging rose caterpillar is a worm that feeds on rose leaves and has poisonous hairs or spines that cause a painful burning sensation when they come in contact with tender skin.

"These are just a few of the many caterpillars that may do damage in your flower garden. They may have odd and funny names but they are all

destructive. Department gardeners advise generally that a stomach poison like arsenate of lead is one way to get rid of them. The gardeners say that the way you control garden insects depends on the way they take their food. Some, like these caterpillars, have mouths for biting and chewing foliage and flowers. Others take their nourishment in liquid form by sucking plant juices.

"Among the common chewing insects are the leaf-eating beetles and grasshoppers as well as the caterpillars and other wormlike forms. To combat these, use arsenical sprays or dust on the foliage of the plants. These insects will eat the poison along with the leaves.

"The sucking insects like red spiders and aphids aren't bothered by stomach poisons. They need what the gardeners call 'contact poisons'--substances like nicotine or soap sprays, or pyrethrum and sulphur dusts which suffocate and burn the insects.

"Department gardeners tell me, though, that in small flower gardens you often do as well or better by avoiding these drastic methods of spraying and dusting. You can soon pick off and destroy all the insects or infested leaves. If you wear gloves, you can pick off caterpillars and beetles and drop them into a pail containing a little kerosene oil. If you don't like to touch the insect, pick off the leaf on which it is feeding and drop the leaf, insect and all in kerosene.

"Sometimes when a plant is infested with a good many leaf beetles or plant bugs, you can get rid of them in the following manner: Lay a piece of cloth on the ground under the plant and shake the insects off by tapping the stem with a stick. Then gather up the insects that have fallen off and drop them in kerosene.

"For example, you'll read in the bulletin about insects in the flower garden--that in controlling the stinging rose caterpillar, you can spray or dust the underside of the leaves with arsenate of lead, but if only a few are present, hand-picking with gloves on is better. Use stout leather glove and not thin silk or cotton gloves for this stinging caterpillar. The same rule goes for the southern puss caterpillar.

"Winter is a good time to cut down the population of the woolly bear which leaves its cocoons under loose shelters like trash and dead leaves and clods of earth. Sometimes quantities of cocoons, even 20 or 30, are found under the same shelter. The gardeners advise destroying these cocoons if you find them. In July and August if the caterpillars are thick use sprays or dust against them, or put on your gloves and hand-pick them.

"That's all I'm going to write about flower garden insects today. You'll find other information on the subject in that bulletin I've referred to several times. And you get that bulletin just by writing to the Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C. Send a postal with your name and address and just say: 'I want Farmers' Bulletin No. 1495, called 'Insect Enemies of the Flower Garden.'" Be sure to write or print your name and address plainly.