

The word relict can be correctly applied to these plant oddities. Dan Webster defines a relict as "a species or other group within a community representative of an earlier stage of development or of a different set of environmental conditions."

Welwitschia's "Table-like" central portion is the woody trunk, the leaves projecting from this center in the manner of certain lilies. The plant stops growing up as soon as its first leaves are produced; it then grows sideways, increasing until the circumference may measure as much as fourteen feet. The sheathed leaves grow large too, sometimes reaching six feet in length and nearly half as broad, ending in numerous ribbons.

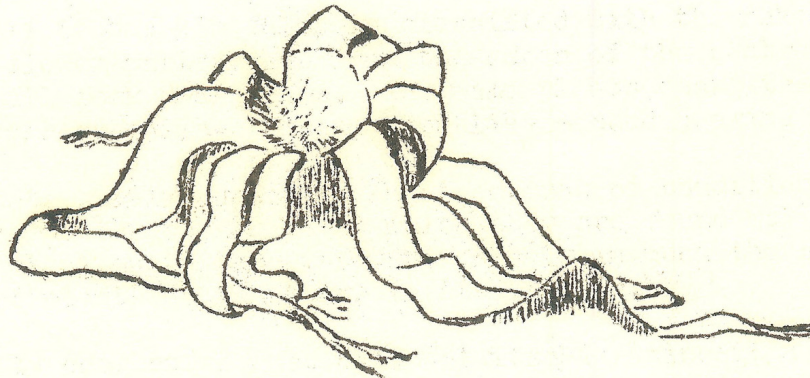
This odd tree, if it has kin folk, is classified with the naked seed plants (Gymnosperms). Its flower parts arise from the edges of the central woody portion and resemble small forked branches. The male plants bear staminate catkins; the females bear larger greenish-crimson, cone-like - seed bearing structures.

Welwitschia plants survive under the most adverse of conditions. The desert regions of Portuguese Southwest Africa in which they are found may go ten years without water. The plant must store its water supply in much the same manner as our California desert plants do, that is, in its tissues.

To be botanically correct we must call Welwitschia *Bainesii* a tree though in appearance it bears little resemblance to any tree. Few specimens of Welwitschia exist away from their native habitat. Canada was reported to have a living specimen a few years ago; Don Woolley reports that U.C.L.A. horticulturists grow a fine specimen only to have it destroyed by a careless youngster shortly after it was planted; a tree was growing at Kew, Royal Botanic Gardens from 1880-1917.

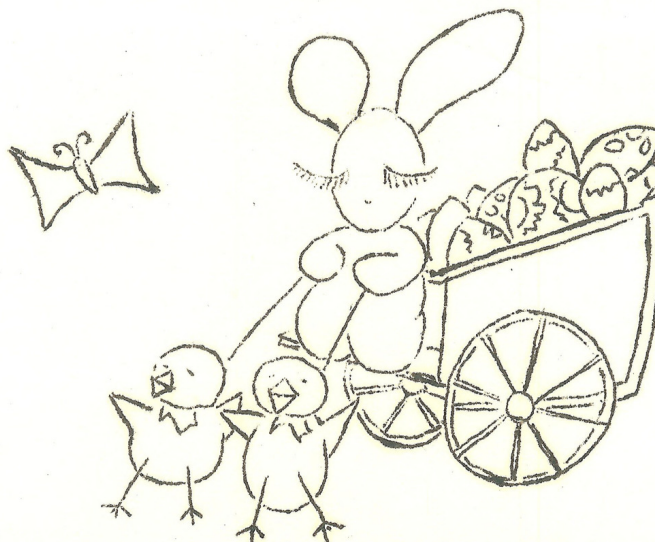
NOTE: Thanks to Al Bardelli for his contribution of a very interesting issue of Natural History. Elizabeth Rigby, "The Tree that isn't a tree," Natural History, June 1956, pp. 322-323.

Scribe - Ed Pugh





MARCH 21, 1957



'A man does not plant a tree for himself, he plants it for posterity'

March the 7th (seventh), Arbor Day, dawned bright and sparkling as if Mr. Weatherman had anticipated the ceremonies to be held at the Arboretum.

Director Hoar and his Drum and Bugle Corp from First Avenue School posted the colors and led the pledge of Allegiance with military precision. Eagle Scout Robert Dennis, his chest ablaze with merit badges, proceeded in his capacity of Master of Ceremonies, introducing in turn Eagle Scout Mike Thorpe, Troop 106, who spoke on 'A Scouts View of Conservation'; Mr. Edward Stickney, Chief Deputy for Supervisor J. Anson Ford, whose topic was 'Arbor Day in The County'; Mrs. William B. Shearer, Las Jardineras Garden Club who, at the last minute, was unable to come, was represented by Mrs. Bertholet, president of the District 12 of California Garden Clubs, Inc., who presented a magnolia to the Arboretum; Dr. Frits W. Went, president of the California Arboretum Foundation, who accepted the Garden Club's gift; Dr. William Stewart, who presented a plant to the Boy Scouts of America, San Gabriel Valley Council, who accepted the Arboretum's gift.

Scout Dennis, closed the meeting by leading those assembled in the singing of America the Beautiful.

#### 'That Dreamless Sleep'

On the first day of March we were shocked to learn of the death of one of our newer employees, Elmer Sexton - Elmer passed away at the County Hospital



Pugh, Edward. 1957. "March 21, 1957." *Staff news* 1957, 1–2.

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