



The Katharine Ordway
Natural History Study Area

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ORDWAY BULLETIN
No. 80

MACALESTER
COLLEGE

located at 9550 Inver Grove Trail (Dakota County Road 77), Inver Grove Heights, Minn.

The WILD ROSES at ORDWAY.

While walking the familiar pathways each winter, particularly along the railroad tracks, one gets a reminder of what is in store for the next spring when the deep snows will have disappeared and the vegetation once again springs into verdant life. The wild roses, which abound at Ordway, stand up above the snow cover, displaying the firm red fruits which provide forage for a number of winter creatures, both mammals and birds.

From the first of May one can expect to see the blossoms of the roses, those delicate, vari-colored, simple flowers which may lack the elegance and full lustiness of the garden roses but which surpass them in delicate, almost elegant beauty.

Several species grow here but the principal rose resident is the Wrinkled Rose (Rosa rugosa) and it makes its stands along the railroad cuts and banks and in places where the pathways have opened the soil to the sunlight. It usually grows in dense clumps, quite fragrant during the flowering season and very colorful by midsummer and later, when its bright-red fruits make it very attractive. Once a year the railroad maintenance crew mows the right-of-way in order to keep down the growth of brush and small trees. As a result the Wild Roses which grow within eight feet of the rails are all stunted; further away from the tracks the same species of rose flourishes to a height of a meter or more.

Down near the Spring the Swamp Rose (Rosa palustris) flourishes among the tall grasses and dogwood, sending its stalks upward sometimes to a height of more than two meters. It does not have either the beauty or the fragrance of the Wrinkled Rose or the Pasture Rose but it is a gem in its own surroundings.

I think that wild roses were meant just to be looked at. I have never yet seen one survive very long once removed from the plant; by the time they are brought to a vase they are wrinkled and discolored, altogether unattractive.

R J CHRISTMAN,
Naturalist

21 January 1980
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