



The Katharine Ordway
Natural History Study Area

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ORDWAY BULLETIN
No. 110

MACALESTER
COLLEGE

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

A POSTAGE STAMP at ORDWAY - II.


Minnesota's state flower, the Showy Lady's-Slipper, is depicted among the recent issue of postage stamps alongside its state bird, the Common Loon. Much is reflected in these stamps about the geography and also the character of the several states. Of fifty flowers (some are trees and shrubs) there are some duplications: the Violet has been chosen by four states and the Wild Rose by three; two each have selected the Apple Blossom, the Mountain Laurel, the Goldenrod, the Magnolia, the Dogwood and the Rhododendron. The remaining thirty-one states have unique flowers, usually one peculiar to the particular region, like Yucca, Sagebrush, Saguaro Cactus and the Golden Poppy of California.

Generally, the selections are wild flowers but several domesticated tree blossoms - the Orange, the Peach, the Apple - rate high with their local citizens and cultivated flowers, like Peony, Lilac, Carnation and Iris, are the favorites of others. Two of the flowers - Kansas's Sunflower and Vermont's Red Clover - are agricultural crop plants while one - Maine's Pine Cone - is a forest tree. At least one of the flowers may be an exotic: Georgia's Cherokee Rose is defined as "a Chinese climbing-rose" and I do not know if it is actually indigenous to North America or was brought early to Georgia as there was a popular practice during the 18th century for Englishmen and other Europeans to exchange exotic plants and attempt to raise them locally.

Common names differ in separate sections of our country and this applies to two of the flowers, both known as Mayflower. Known locally as "May Flower" the Pasque Flower is typical of South Dakota's grasslands. The Mayflower of Massachusetts is actually the Trailing Arbutus, widely found in cooler climes, including central and northern Minnesota.

There are, alas, no Lady's-Slippers growing at Ordway. This is a flower which is typical of bogs and there is no such habitat at Ordway. Our wet areas have harbored a few members of the Northern Orchids but not the Lady's-Slippers. I can say this, though - the sight of a clump of this spectacular bog-plant in full bloom is unforgettable and worth every waterlogged step of the efforts expended to reach its habitat. I hope no one will ever succumb to the urge to pick one - they quickly wither and are beautiful only in their own surroundings.

August 16, 1982
crc/


R J CHRISTMAN,
Naturalist