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# The Wild Lilies of Oregon

BY ALBERT R. SWEETSER

Professor of Botany in the  
University of Oregon  
Eugene, Oregon

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## The Wild Lilies of Oregon

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CONSIDER the lilies of the field how they grow.

☛ They toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." This was not only applicable to the beautiful flowers of Palestine's plains but it is equally descriptive of the glorious riot of plant life that clothes and beautifies the woods and fields of Oregon.

The lily family is well represented in the state by the tall white Washington lily of our fields and the spotted red Columbian lily, often miscalled the tiger lily, and a variety of others equally beautiful, if not as prominent. Our illustration this time shows the photographs of four of these lesser forms.

The lilies have for the most part parallel veined leaves ; have parts of the flower on the plan of three (sometimes it is easy to distinguish three sepals and three petals, and at other times sepals and petals are all, alike and we speak of the floral envelope or perianth); and have ovary with three cells and the ovules attached to the center, or one celled with the ovules attached to the wall in three points.

CAMAS --- *Camassia esculenta*—This is shown in the upper left hand photograph. It is one of the lilies widely distributed throughout the state; it is usually blue but sometimes is white. In the early days the Indians gathered the bulbs, dried and powdered them, and made a sort of bread. Sometimes they accidentally gathered another somewhat similar bulb, a plant known as the death camas, with serious results. It is reported that Burbank is experimenting with the camas bulb, has materially increased its size, and has hopes of producing a rival for the potato. When that day arrives we may have a beautiful lawn in the spring and harvest a food crop in the fall, and in this manner cheat the moss and the weeds.

LAMBS' TONGUES — *Erythronium* — Sometimes this is called dogtooth violet, although it is not a violet at all. It is shown in the lower left hand picture. This plant shows a wide variation of color and size, depending on locality and elevation. Sometimes the leaves are uniformly green and in other cases very decidedly mottled. The yellow forms vary from a cream or almost white to a brilliant yellow, while others show a variety of shades of blue or pink.

TRILLIUM (Upper right hand figure) - The distinguishing character is the presence of only three leaves. In western Oregon we have two species, one with its flower squat down among the leaves, *Trillium chkropetalum*; the other having a definite flower stem and the white flower turning to rose and purple with age, *Trillium ovatum*. In the eastern part of the state the three leaves have long leaf stalks and appear to spring right out of the ground. The flower is stemless and purple.

MISSION BELLS, RICE ROOT (Lower left hand figure) - In central and eastern Oregon it is a small plant with yellow blossoms ; in the western part the plants are taller and have large bells mottled with yellow or purple, and in the south there is a form the blossoms of which show all ranges of scarlet.

NOTE: The botanical department will gladly name any of the wild flowers or shrubs for those who may desire it. Pick enough of the plant to show the typical characteristics: flower, fruit if present, leaves and in some cases the root. Send by mail to the herbarium of the University of Oregon, Eugene.

