

What Shall be Our National Flower?

By EDGAR T. WHERRY

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Memorial Day, one of the most beloved of our holidays, and the only one primarily marked by a display of flowers, seems a particularly fitting day on which to discuss the question of a national flower. Most of our states have selected state flowers, some taking native plants, others introduced or even cultivated ones. But the United States, as a whole, has no floral emblem.

Our national flower should be one found nearly or quite throughout our country. This provision excludes the Dogwood, the Mountain Laurel, or the Trailing Arbutus, which are restricted in their ranges. On the other hand, it should not be a weed, or have a tendency to spread and crowd out garden or crop plants. Its behavior in this respect is one of the points opposing the selection of a plant which has been frequently urged, namely, the Goldenrod. In favor of the adoption of the Goldenrod as our national flower is the fact that one or more species grows in every state in the Union, and that all of them possess certain elements of beauty and charm. These advantages, however, seem outweighed by its undesirable features.

The plant which has perhaps found the most favor in the past as a possible national flower, is the Columbine, also known as rock-honeysuckle, rock-bells, etc. The Columbine has, admittedly, many advantages. All of the species are delicate, graceful, and attractive; none of them ever become weeds. One or more of them is native to every state in the Union, growing at sea level from Maine to Florida, as well as in the highest mountains of the Alleghenies, the Rockies and Sierras. It is easily cultivated, and in fact, already well known in gardens, some of the horticultural varieties being exquisitely beautiful. It is in full bloom now, and will still be at the time of our national birthday, the fourth of July; and our national colors, red, white and blue, are represented in the flowers of cultivated forms, so that it could be used by way of patriotic decoration. The flowers, when viewed end on, have the shape of five-pointed stars. And, finally, the genus name *Aquilegia* is derived from the Latin name of the eagle, our national bird.

There are, however, two sides to every question, and it must be admitted that the selection of the Columbine as our national flower would not be without disadvantages. In the first place, it is not limited to the United States, many species being well known as wild flowers in Europe. Again, it has already been adopted as the state flower of Colorado; and the elevation of the flower of a single state to the position of the emblem of the Nation might be objected to by others, as unfair and discriminatory advertising. Another reason opposing its being made our national flower is the ease with which it can be exterminated.

There is another wild flower which possesses, from the national emblem stand-point, many of the advantages but fewer of the objectionable features of the one just discussed, namely the Phlox. There are about 40 species of this genus known to science, mostly with attractive flowers, some indeed highly brilliant, striking and ornamental, and none possessing weedy tendencies. One or more of these species grows in every state in the Union, and although there is some question whether those found in our northeasternmost states were native there before the coming of the white men, they have at least become thoroughly naturalized. Best of all, from the distributional stand-point, is the fact that the genus Phlox is about as nearly restricted to the territory of the United States as any moderate-sized group of plants can well be. None of its species grows in Europe, except under cultivation. The single Asiatic one is now known to be an Alaskan plant which in some past geological period managed to cross Bering Strait, and make its way a short distance into its adopted land. Both annual and perennial species have long been in cultivation, and are highly prized occupants of our gardens, and red, white and blue color forms, as well as five-pointed stars, developed among the annuals, can be brought into bloom on July 4. Moreover, Phlox has not been used as the emblem of any state, so there can be no objection to it on that score. Finally, most of the Phloxes are either so deeply rooted that they are not likely to be entirely destroyed by picking, or reproduce themselves readily from seed.

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HIDEYO NOGUCHI

Trachoma Tracker

One of the captains of the army that wages war with microscopes on disease germs for enemies, Dr. Noguchi has engaged in many campaigns within the confines of his laboratory and expeditions into far countries, research of fundamental importance to the welfare of mankind.

Born in Japan in 1876, he received from private tutors and the Tokyo Medical College the best training that his native country could give. After study in Europe and at the University of Pennsylvania and a period of service in Tokyo, he came to the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research in 1903, where he has remained since the early days of that widely famed institution.

Dr. Noguchi has demonstrated conclusively that *Spirochata pallida* still lurks in the brain of the victims of paresis, the paralytic aftermath of syphilis that arsenical specifics cannot help. The isolation of the organism that causes yellow fever, along with a preventive serum as well as a curative vaccine for the disease, is one of the outstanding achievements with which he is credited. Within the last year and a half he has made two additions to his bag of microbes. Oroya fever, a curious, highly fatal disease of the Andes Mountains, is believed to have yielded up its causative germ to the Oriental scientist's patient technique, while his recent reports indicate that he has located the germ of trachoma, the infectious nature of which has previously been under dispute.

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The woolly mammoth of prehistoric times resembled modern elephants, but it had long hair and curly tusks.