



The Bees' First Feast

THE SOFT MAPLE trees are in a dusky smoldering flame of flower, through which delirious bees dance like dervishes. The bees have had a long period of enforced idleness, and it is downright providential for them that on their first days of free flight they can find such a lavish provider of nectar and pollen and oozing sweetish sap.

The soft maple does not wait for its flowering until the ground thaws out. It does not need ground-water, apparently. There seems to be enough sap stored in trunk and branches to supply the buds when the impulse to break forth is imparted to them by the first promises of springtime warmth. This independence of water supplies from the ground is evidenced by the behavior of pruned branches or felled trees, which may have been lying on the ground all winter. They will blossom at the same time as the standing trees, and almost as freely.

Blossom time is the one brief time in the whole year that the soft maple tree is worth its keep. The rest of the time it is a good deal of a shiftless nuisance. Its leaves seem to have an especial attraction, in summer, for the poison-bristled tussock moth caterpillar. Like many other citizens of dubious value, it is exceedingly prolific of offspring, littering the lawns with billions of seeds. It has a bad habit of going rotten inside at a comparatively early age, and letting big limbs snap off when high winds blow. And yet, when its flowers bring all the bees flying on early warm days, we are likely to forgive it all these sins and others besides, as we are likely to be indulgent toward the town ne'er-do-well because he can whistle like a brown thrasher or carve pretty trinkets of white wood for the children.

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ARCHITECTURE

New Colors in Stone Sought As Relief From Machine Age

MAKING STONE take on the delicate colors of the beautiful luna moth is one evidence of the efforts being expended to gain relief in architecture from the monotony of a machine age. That is what Fred R. Lear, professor of architectural design at Syracuse University, told the American Concrete Institute.

Prof. Lear explained how he reproduced the varied shadings of the insect with a mixture of cement, crushed stone, and color pigments. It is through this medium of synthetic stone, he stated, that the demand for appropriate color in home, school, and skyscraper is being satisfied.

Artificial stone, he said, has been known for some time, but only recently have colors in stone been appreciated for their intrinsic value, and never before has mass production of color in building enterprise been so keenly taken into account.

Metallic oxides are largely used to achieve the desired intensity and shading of the color in the laboratory material. Unlike natural stone, all the hues of the rainbow can be duplicated.

The stone is molded into any necessary shape without the loss from chipping which is characteristic of ordinary stone work. The cast stone can be used alone or in combination with other building materials such as brick.

Cast stone is made with material like crushed marble or granite as a base, according to the quality desired in the resulting product. It is as durable as any natural stone of its price level and retains its color much longer, Prof. Lear stated. In the early days of cast stone, he explained, imitation of natural products was the chief aim. While it is still possible to duplicate these stones, the molded material is now a distinct, individual creation.

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