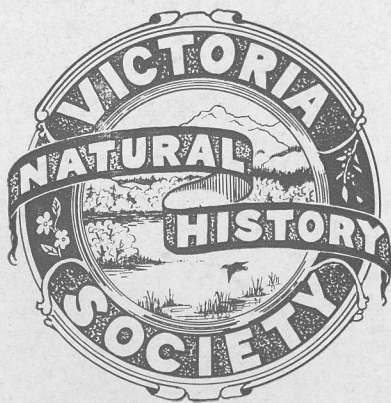


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THE VICTORIA NATURALIST

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----- The Victoria Natural History Society -----

The monthly meeting of the Society, for April, was held in the Reading Room of the Provincial Library on 8th inst. Dr. Carl taking the chair. After the usual business, Mr. Harry Andison addressed the meeting. Mr. Andison works for both the Dominion and Provincial Governments, chiefly researching on insects injurious to crops. Mr. Andison chose for his subject, "D.D.T. and insect control in general."

The struggle between man and insects has been going on since the dawn of civilization, because man and insects are competing for the same things at the same time.

The research which led to the discovery of D.D.T. was the direct outcome of World War Two. Means had to be found to keep lice under control in order to prevent the spread of typhus. The Napoleonic wars were lost because of the spread of typhus, by lice, among the troops. D.D.T. prevented this in World War Two. D.D.T. also made it possible for troops to operate in mosquito infested areas without being decimated by malaria.

Insects are difficult to kill as they are protected by having skeletons on the outside of their bodies and by breathing through tubes in their bodies and not through lungs. The effectiveness of D.D.T. in spite of these difficulties makes it the major insecticide to be discovered for a hundred years. It is effective as it is both a stomach and a contact poison, and is stable and long lasting.

The housefly is affected through its feet when it walks on D.D.T. One application every six weeks is sufficient to eliminate flies.

When orchard owners use lead arsenate spray on fruit trees they must keep the fruit, as it enlarges, covered with the spray, and this requires about seven sprayings a season.

Three sprayings of D.D.T. will do the same work. Also this extensive application of lead arsenate poisons the soil around the trees and eventually kills the trees.

D.D.T. cannot be used on trees in blossom as it kills bees. Nor is it effective against all pests. Some spiders which attack fruit trees are not affected but parasites that prey on the spiders are.

D.D.T. is effective against tent-caterpillars and against the hemlock looper, but it is poisonous to birds, snakes, frogs and fish. There are, therefore, strong arguments against the spraying of forests from planes. Spraying large areas of forest by planes has several times resulted in disaster to the plane and pilot as the flying has to be done at a very low altitude.

D.D.T. is poisonous to man and especially dangerous when used with oil. In water solution or as a dust it is relatively harmless.

One hundred and fifty million dollars worth of damage is done annually to garden produce by insects.

Mr. Andison brought his talk to a close by showing a beautiful film depicting various insects. This film was taken by entomologists in co-operation with the National Film Board.

A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF MOUNT DOUGLAS WITH
SOME ACCOUNT OF ITS SPRING AND EARLY SUMMER
FLORA ---- by Robert Connell -----

Mount Douglas lies four miles directly north of the heart of the city of Victoria at the south-eastern end of Vancouver Island. In earlier days it was commonly known as Cedar Hill, a name commemorating the old cedar forest in the valley at its base. Its height above sea level is 725 feet. As seen from the south it appears as an east-and-west mass separated by a small gully into a larger portion on the east and a smaller more precipitous one on the west. Below the latter a little further to the west is a conspicuous knob 300 feet high. The upper four hundred feet of the hill is rocky and steep and on the south and west almost bare of timber.

Mount Douglas is the largest of a number of large isolated rock-masses in the vicinity of Victoria, known to geologists as "monadnocks" after a lofty example in New Hampshire, 3186 feet high. The term is applied to any hill or mountain left standing above the surrounding country by the processes of erosion, in this case glacial erosion. After the recession of the great ice-caps when the land stood lower by several hundred feet than it does today Mount Douglas, Mount Tolmie, Gonzales Hill, and other rocky heights were islands in the sea that spread across the lowlands east of the Sooke and Malahat ranges.

Along the east and north-east sides of the hill and also extending in a long spur to the south for a mile or more are deposits of sand and gravel that play a not unimportant part in giving variety to the plant life. The main mass of the hill is composed of a dark igneous rock known as diorite and of

Jurassic age. The waters of Haro Strait have cut the sandstone clays on the east and north-east into cliffs and the close proximity of the sea and the broad southerly aspect of the hill, combine to produce a condition remarkably favourable to the smaller native flora and their early appearance in spring. Later in the year the dry exposed slopes are very much poorer relatively, and this is true also of the rocky summit ridges.

There are several types of flora within the area of Mount Douglas Park. One interesting area is that of the long spur on the south. This between forty and fifty years ago was covered lightly with the open glade woods of Garry oak. Some of the trees of this species had attained a great size and one of the giants is still left, or was a year or two ago. The invasion of this oak area by Douglas fir has meant destruction of the oaks, cut off from the light by the rapid growing conifers. This of course means also the disappearance of the glade flora and eventually the substitution of the fir forest flora, a distinct loss. The early fir forest is represented by some very large Douglas firs whose huge branches spring from the lower part of the trunk.

The forest about the base of the hill is of a mixed type, Douglas fir predominating, with some balsam fir and cedar. The hardwoods are represented chiefly by the large-leaved maples, alder, flowering dogwood, willows, bittercherry, and an occasional arbutus.

The slope at the south-east corner of the park is marked in spring by the magenta red flowers of Calandrinia caulescens, or red-maids, a small member of the Portulaca family but very conspicuous by color and relative size of the flower. As the trail passes along the edge of the woods the pink lady's slipper, Calypso borealis, and the white fawn-lily, Erythronium oregonum, are found and also

the small-flowered grove-lover, Nemophila parviflora, besides species of sandwort and miner's-lettuce.

Just beyond a group of fine old maples, their branches green with moss and licorice-fern, comes a steep sandy slope up which runs the path to the main summit. Here the ground is blue with patches of the annual blue-eyed-Mary, Collinsia grandiflora, and fringed with the slender glandular stems of Tellima parviflora, sometimes called ragged-Robin, whose bright pink flowers with their conspicuous toothed petals are not easily overlooked. Higher up the sulphur weed, Lomatium utriculatum, makes great masses of the most brilliant yellow in the scree below the summit. Here too, the wild larkspur, Delphinium menziesii, exhibits its first dark blue flowers.

As the rocks are reached the ferns are represented by the common licorice-fern. Polypodium vulgare, beginning to dry up with the advent of spring. In the crevices may be found the silver-back fern, Gymnogramma triangularis, the old fronds looking stiff and dry beside the young ones with their tender green young fronds and gleaming purple black stems. Neighbouring the ferns is the little dwarf mimulus, Mimulus alsinoides or chickweed mimulus, another annual and rock-crevice lover. On the higher slopes just below the rocks grow small cruciferous plants, all annuals, Thysanocarpus curvipes, the lace-pod remarkable for its prettily edged pods, and Athysanus pusillus, the very small laceless-pod in English: it has no common name, the fate of inconspicuous plants. The third small crucifer is Platyspermum scapigerum, the stem-bearing flatpod, a plant of the dry interior country that, with others, has found its way by the Columbia Valley and Puget Sound to Mount Douglas, Mount Finlayson, and Observatory Hill. It is

marked by a naked stem with a single small pale flower and a flat broadly winged pod. Another interesting occurrence is that of the small Platystigma oregonum, the Oregon cream-cup, a tiny member of the poppy family with white flowers. It grows where moisture remains late in the spring below the rocks.

The slopes just below the rocks on the right exhibit at the top the large-nosed mimulus, Mimulus nasutus, a much larger-flowered species than the one already seen in the rocks. Here too are in abundance the common shooting-stars or peacocks, Dodecatheon latifolium, the purplish red sometimes replaced by an albino form; Collinsia grandiflora, here with conspicuously mauve flowers instead of the commoner arrangement of blues. Sisyrinchium grandiflorum, the purple satin-flower, is another common denizen of the slopes, and a little later the early camass, Camassia quamash.

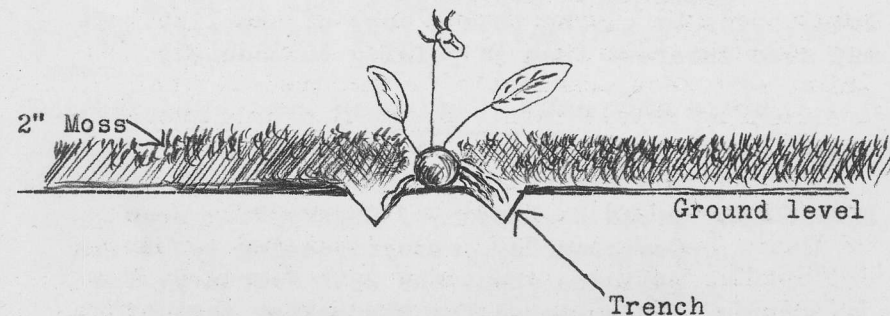
In the shady woods below, Chamisse's shield-fern, Polystichem munitum, begins in spring to replace its still green fronds by new ones. On the dry exposed hillsides, particularly about the isolated west knob Chamisse's is replaced by the overlapping shield fern, Polystichum imbricans, in which the fronds are much smaller and the stiff pinnae overlap like shingles.

I have dealt chiefly with the spring flora of Mount Douglas for it is much the most striking. The woodland flora comes later with the star-flower, Trientalis latifolia, and sweet-cicely, Osmorrhiza divaricata. Then too the grassy slopes will exhibit the minute species of the Phlox family and the tiny Pea-flowered Lotus species.

CALYPSO BULBOSA
(Lady's slipper)

At this time of year attempts are always made to transplant Calypso bulbosa from its natural habitat to cultivated gardens. This usually results in failure because the bulb is not planted properly. The following sketch shows how it should be done.

The bulb should be placed on the flattened top of a cone and the roots arranged in the trench formed by the cone. (This trench can be made with one's finger.) The roots only should then be covered with soil, after which two inches of moss should be laid over the whole. It is important that the bulb should NOT be covered with soil.



J. F. Palmer.

CHECK-LIST OF THE BIRDS OF
VICTORIA AND 20-MILE RADIUS

This is the first check-list of birds that has been printed by the Natural History Society, and has been compiled by J. Owen Clay with the co-operation of Dr. G.C. Carl and Mr. G. Hardy of the Provincial Museum; and Messrs. E.F.G. White and A.L. Meugens.

The list comprises 246 species or sub-species, and, except for headings convenient in their grouping for use in the field, follows closely the check-list of the American Ornithologists' Union.

The list is clear and in very handy form. It has been printed by the Empire Printing Co. and is available to members at 5 cents per copy. Copies may be obtained from Mr. Clay or from the Museum office.

We suggest you interest your friends in our local birds by giving them a copy of the list. It may also interest them in joining our Society.

BIRD NOTE: Dr. E.H. Lawson of Cherry Pt., near Cowichan Bay, reports seeing two white pelicans about the 28th February. The birds stayed for the better part of two days.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT
Audubon Society Screen Tour

The Victoria Natural History Society are glad to announce that five professional lecturers will include Victoria in their itinerary next autumn and winter. All lecturers will bring excellent films. Our Society has had to guarantee a certain sum towards the expenses of the lecturers and will have to hire a hall. It has been suggested that we print and sell a limited number of season tickets for the series and then hold a collection at each meeting for those who have not season tickets. If we have no season tickets, but make a fixed charge at the door, it is believed that a government amusement tax will then be levied. The executive welcome suggestions and hope for the hearty co-operation of ALL our members. We want these lectures to be a tremendous success.

The dates and speakers are given below. Further particulars will be given in our September issue.

| | | |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| October 1st: | Mr. Reynolds | "Fun with birds" |
| November 3rd: | Mr. Sprunt | "Coast to Coast" |
| January 28th: | Mr. Peterson | "Migration" |
| March 15th: | Mr. and Mrs. Hadley | "Michigan" |
| May 6th: | Mr. Work | "Bits of land along the California Coast" |

JUNIOR PAGE

Nature notes by David Birley

I thought that now the birds are coming in great numbers you would like to know some ways to win their friendship. Of course you need a bird table for the winter months when the ground is frozen, but in the summer months the ground is soft and the birds will be able to find their own food.

As they have found kindness in your garden they will come there in the spring to nest. The bird-house is a very good kind of protection against the weather and other bigger birds.

It is amazing what is good enough for them to nest in. I took a few old boards and put them together fairly well and a few days later a pair of juncos moved in. At the time there were workmen in the house and we feared the noise would frighten them away altogether, but a few days after the workmen had left the birds turned up again. I put up another old bird-house and now a pair of violet-green swallows have moved in.

Junior editor's note: A neighbour has a wren nesting in her clothes peg bag. Perhaps some of you know of other odd spots where there are nests.

Editor's note to Juniors: We have talked with Mr. Clay about nesting records and he suggests that you keep summer records of nesting places, times, incubation periods, number of live chicks, number of addled eggs, and the number of families raised by one pair of parent birds. This latter can be done if the several families are raised in the same nest.

AN APOLOGY

It has been pointed out to us that mention of our zoology group and of its convener, Mr. G. Winkler, has been omitted from the list of the society's officers on the back of the new cover. We wish to offer our most sincere apologies to Mr. Winkler and the members of this active group for this editorial omission, and to assure all our members that it was quite unintentional. We have been much indebted to Mr. Winkler during the past year for his energy in arranging a series of geology papers and can only hope he will be forgiving and continue to help us.

CONTRIBUTIONS

May we remind readers that contributions are welcome and that we shall be happy to consider papers for the coming year.

Note on ornithology field group meetings:

Members will note that while a number of dates have been set for bird field group meetings, the place of meeting has not been given. This is because Mr. Clay has not yet decided the best spots from which to "attack" the birds of the Mount Douglas area. The ornithology group will meet at Mr. Hardy's on Blenkinsop Rd. on May 10th to explore the Blenkinsop Rd. side of Mount Douglas. Other meeting places will be announced then or on May 18th.

NOTICE OF MEETINGS

Tuesday

May 13th: MONTHLY MEETING will be held in the
 Speaker: Provincial Library Reading Room at 8 p.m.
 F.Spencer. Subject: Travelogue dealing with main-
 land B.C. parks and the dry
 belt scenery.

Sunday

May 4th: GENERAL OUTDOOR MEETING. This will be
 a field trip for all groups of the Society
 to the John Dean Park (Saanich). A
 special bus will leave the Blue Line
 Office, Yates St., at 10:30 a.m., return-
 ing at 4 p.m. Fare 75 cents return.
 Members may make reservations at the
 Museum.

Saturday

May 10th: ORNITHOLOGY FIELD MEETING. Members will
 meet at Mr. Hardy's, Blenkinsop Rd.,
 about 2 p.m. to study Mount Douglas birds
 from that side of the hill.

Sunday

May 18th: GENERAL FIELD MEETING to Kirby Creek,
 beyond Sooke, leaving the Blue Line
 Office, Yates St., at 10 a.m. in a special
 bus. Fare \$1.10 return. Bus will return
 at 4 p.m. from Kirby Creek. It is expected
 that this trip will be of special interest
 to almost all our members. Reservations
 may be made at the Museum or at the general
 meeting. Friends are also welcome.

Saturday

May 31st: ORNITHOLOGY GROUP FIELD MEETINGS: The place
 June 7th of meeting will be given later. See note on
 June 14. page 23.

Victoria Natural History Society

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