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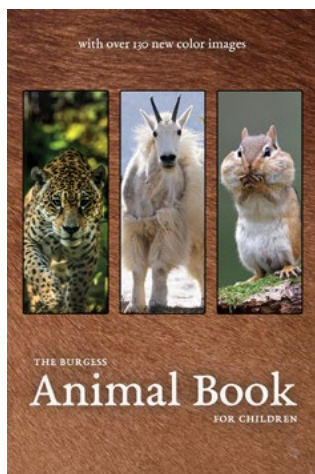
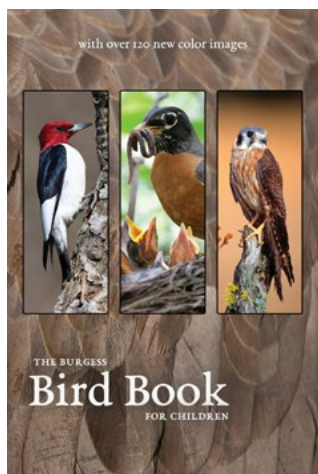


THE BURGESS

Flower Book

FOR CHILDREN

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THE BURGESS FLOWER BOOK FOR CHILDREN

THORNTON BURGESS

WITH NEW COLOR PHOTOGRAPHS.



FROM THE PUBLISHER

WITH their vivid descriptions of the flora and fauna of North America the Burgess books have entertained and educated generations of children for over 100 years.

The flowers described within these pages haven't changed much since the book was released, however, our ability to show what they look like on the page has improved. To take advantage of these changes we undertook to re-release these classic books with both new photographs and more images of more species described. Now you can get closer, and see the flowers better, than ever before.

We have not updated the text in each chapter. Some flowers are now classified differently to how they were in Burgess time. We have included the new scientific names at the start of the chapter along with the main flowers described within. The end of each chapter also references where you can learn more about them in our color releases of Comstock's *The Handbook of Nature Study*. For these and many other great books to help on your nature study journey please see www.livingbookpress.com.

It is our dearest hope that with these new editions these books will continue to delight readers for many generations to come.

LIVING BOOK PRESS

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TO THE AWAKENING IN CHILDREN OF LOVE FOR OUR WILD
FLOWERS AND THE DESIRE TO PRESERVE THEM IN THEIR
NATIVE HABITATS FOR THE BEAUTY AND JOY THEY GIVE TO
THE WORLD THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED.





I. PETER RABBIT FINDS SIGNS OF SPRING

Skunk Cabbage – *Symplocarpus foetidus*

“Winsome Bluebird’s on the way:
He is due here any day.”

OLD Mother West Wind’s children, the Merry Little Breezes, sang this softly as they danced over the Green Meadows and around the Old Briar patch. Peter Rabbit pricked up his long ears.

“How do you know? Who told you so?” he demanded.

“Nobody told us so; we just feel it, Peter,” cried the Merry Little Breezes, and kept on singing as they danced.

“Huh!” exclaimed Peter. “Feeling isn’t knowing. Perhaps Winsome is on his way and perhaps he isn’t. I hope he is, for that would mean that Mistress Spring is on her way too, and she can’t get here too soon to suit me. But I would feel a lot more sure of it if I could see some signs.”

“Use your eyes, Peter! Use your eyes! There are flowers in bloom already, for we’ve seen them. What better sign that Mistress Spring is coming do you want?” chanted the Merry Little Breezes.

Peter jumped a foot off the ground. “Say, are you crazy?” he cried. “Look at this snow all over the Green Meadows! Do you expect me to believe any such story as that?”

“We don’t care whether you believe it or not, it is so!” cried the Merry Little Breezes, dancing around Peter and throwing snow in his face.

“Welcome Robin’s on the wing;
Very soon you’ll hear him sing.”

With this the Merry Little Breezes danced away across the Green Meadows towards the Green Forest, leaving Peter to stare after them as if quite sure that they really were as crazy as they seemed.

“Of course, it isn’t true,” muttered Peter. “The very idea of saying that they have seen flowers in bloom when the ground is still frozen and there is snow everywhere! I don’t believe a word of it.”

Nevertheless Peter couldn’t get it out of his mind that the Merry Little Breezes had seen something that he hadn’t. Thoughts of the glad springtime began to chase each other through his funny little head. Presently he began to have a queer feeling — which little by little he

recognized as the very feeling the Merry Little Breezes had spoken of, — the feeling that Mistress Spring really and truly was on her way.

“Huh!” exclaimed Peter just as before, and shook himself. But he couldn’t shake off that feeling. Then he thought again of what the Merry Little Breezes had said about signs and about using his eyes. “Huh!” said he again. “I guess if there is anything to see I would see it! There’s nothing the matter with my eyes, and I haven’t seen any signs of spring yet. Flowers in bloom! The very idea!”

Now, of course, Peter didn’t really believe that the Merry Little Breezes had told an untruth. No, indeed! He thought that they were either just trying to tease him, or that they had been mistaken. But he couldn’t get rid of the thought that perhaps they had seen something which he hadn’t seen; and nothing upsets Peter more than the thought that others may know more than he does about what is going on in the Green Forest and on the Green Meadows.

“If there are any signs of spring which they have seen, I’d like to know where they are,” muttered Peter, as he hopped all through the dear Old Briar-patch, looking sharply at all the bushes and little trees and brambles to see if any of the sleeping buds showed any signs of waking. But they didn’t, and Peter felt satisfied that there were no signs of spring in the Old Briar-patch. Certainly there were none on the Green Meadows, for these were still covered with snow.

Then Peter made up his mind to visit the Green Forest just to make sure that he had missed nothing there. Nowhere could he see the least sign of the coming of Mistress Spring. Snow was everywhere. An idea popped into his head. “If they saw any flowers, it must be that they saw them through a window of Farmer Brown’s house. I’ve seen them there myself,” thought he. “But flowers up there are no sign of spring.”

A few minutes later Peter came to that part of the Green Forest where in places it was swampy. You know a swampy space is where the ground is always very wet. This was the warmest place in all the Green Forest. The snow had disappeared in spots and in one of these a tiny stream of water was coming from a place where it bubbled out of the ground. It was a spring, and the tiny stream was the beginning of the Laughing Brook. Peter stopped on the edge of it. Just then along came the Merry Little Breezes and one of them tickled his nose with a queer smell. Peter sniffed.

“It smells to me as if Jimmy Skunk had left a little of that scent of

his around here, but I haven't seen Jimmy's tracks anywhere," thought Peter. Again he sniffed. This time it seemed as if that smell came right out of the water in front of him. He stared at it a minute and for the first time noticed several queer brown-and-green things, like pointed hoods, standing in the water. Peter leaned forward to look at one a little closer, and right then he made a discovery. That smell, like Jimmy Skunk's perfume, came from that queer little hood! Peter hopped a step nearer that he might see better. On one side of that queer hood was an opening, a narrow opening. He was all curiosity now. He held his nose while he peeped in that narrow opening. You see, he didn't like that smell, and so close to that little hood it was very strong.

At first he saw nothing. But a moment later he discovered, down at the bottom of that little hood, a sort of thick stem all covered with something yellow. Peter's eyes seemed to pop right out as he looked harder than ever. Then he saw that the thick stem was covered with very, very tiny flowers, all yellow with the dust-like gold which most flowers have, and which is called pollen.

Peter jumped a foot straight up in the air. "Why, the Merry Little Breezes did tell the truth!" he exclaimed.

"Of course, we did!" cried the Merry Little Breezes, who had been watching him. "We always tell the truth. These are the first flowers of the year, the flowers of the Skunk Cabbage, and the sure sign that Mistress Spring is on her way."

Peter remembered the big broad leaves he had so often seen growing here and in other swampy places in the summer. He looked all about, but he didn't see even one. He wrinkled his brows in a puzzled way. "I thought the Skunk Cabbage was a big green plant," said he.

"So it is," laughed one of the Merry Little Breezes. "These are its flowers. They bloom before the leaves show at all. Queer, isn't it?"

"I should say so!" replied Peter. "I didn't know it had any flowers. I've seen these things early in the spring many times, but I didn't know what they were. I never thought anything about them."

"That comes of not using your eyes, Peter," cried a Merry Little Breeze. "There are many wonderful things all about you every day which you never see at all."

"What is there wonderful about these?" demanded Peter a little sharply, for he felt a little put out that any one should think he didn't see all there was to be seen.

“Isn’t it wonderful that these little flowers can come up and be brave enough and strong enough to bloom when Jack Frost is still making everybody shiver?” asked the Merry Little Breeze.

Peter nodded. “That’s so,” he said slowly. “I didn’t think of that. It is wonderful. I don’t see how they do it.” He looked at the tiny flowers with new interest. He saw how thick was the little brown-and-green hood inside of which they were blooming, and how warm and cozy it was in there with only a narrow opening for the light and air to enter. Then he began to understand how Old Mother Nature was protecting them.

“It is wonderful,” he repeated. “I certainly have learned something today. I’ve always watched for the coming of Winsome Bluebird as the first sure sign of sweet Mistress Spring and never once have thought that there might be other signs. Do you know, I rather like this smell now. It is — why, it is a sort of promise that winter will soon be over. Now I must hurry to tell Mrs. Peter the splendid news that the first flowers of the year are in bloom.”

SKUNK CABBAGE IN A SPRING SWAMP.



II. TWO SURPRISES IN THE GREEN FOREST

Hepatica – *Hepatica triloba*

Early Saxifrage – *Saxifraga virginicensis*

“DEE, dee, dee, chickadee! Where are you going in such a hurry, Peter Rabbit?” cried a merry voice, as Peter was scampering down the Lone Little Path to reach the edge of the Green Forest on his way to the dear Old Briar-patch to tell Mrs. Peter the good news.

Peter stopped abruptly. “Hello, Tommy Tit,” he cried. “I’ve just made the most wonderful discovery. I’ve found the first sure sign that Mistress Spring is on her way and will soon be here.”

Tommy Tit the Chickadee flitted down to a twig just above Peter’s head. “Is that so, Peter?” he cried, pretending to be very much surprised. “Is that so? What is it?”

“I’ve found flowers in bloom!” cried Peter. “Yes, sir, I’ve found flowers in bloom. I wouldn’t have believed it if I hadn’t seen them with my own eyes.”

Tommy Tit’s bright little eyes twinkled.

“What flowers are they, and where are they?” he asked.

“They are the flowers of the Skunk Cabbage, and they are in those funny little brown-and-green hoods down by the spring in the swamp!” cried Peter, and looked at Tommy as if he expected him to be greatly surprised.

“Dee, dee, dee! Do you call those flowers?” demanded Tommy rather scornfully.

“Certainly they are flowers,” replied Peter rather sharply. “What is more, they are the very first flowers of the year. I think it is the most wonderful thing I’ve ever heard of that they are actually blooming now before the snow has gone.”

Tommy Tit began to chuckle.

“What are you laughing at?” demanded Peter.

“To see you so excited over something I have known about for a long time,” replied Tommy Tit. “I suppose those really are flowers, but I don’t think much of them myself. They do come first of all, but they are not much ahead of some real flowers, flowers worth seeing. I saw



HEPATICA.

some of the latter only a few moments ago, and they certainly did my eyes good.”

Peter sat up very straight and stared very hard at Tommy Tit. “Do you mean to tell me that there are other flowers in bloom now?” he demanded. “I don’t believe it, Tommy Tit.”

Again Tommy Tit chuckled. “Peter,” said he, “for a fellow who has lived in the Green Forest and on the Green Meadows as long as you have, you don’t know much. No, sir, you don’t know much. There are other flowers in bloom right this minute in the Green Forest, and I suspect that if I went to look for them I could find some right out on the Green Meadows, if there are any places where the snow has melted away. It doesn’t make a bit of difference to me if you don’t believe what I have told you. But if you will run up on the hillside back there and use your eyes as they were meant to be used, you will find some of the dearest, sweetest, bravest little flowers of all the year. I just love them. I watch for them every spring, and when I see them I know that winter is really over. Good-by, Peter.” Before Peter could say another word Tommy Tit had flown away.

Peter was of two minds, as the saying is. He wanted to hurry home to tell Mrs. Peter of his wonderful discovery, and he wanted to go up on that hillside to see if Tommy Tit had told the truth. Somehow he just couldn’t believe it. Then, too, his pride was hurt. He couldn’t bear to

think that he didn't know all there was to know. He started on towards home, but he only made a few hops before he stopped. Curiosity would not let him go on. Suddenly he turned and away he went, lipperty-lipperty-lip, for that hillside.

When Peter reached the foot of the hill he began to go up slowly. Snow lay in big patches all over it. "Of course," said Peter to himself, "those flowers will be where the snow has been melted longest." So he picked out the largest open spot and carefully hopped back and forth all over it. But all he found was a carpet of dead, brown leaves. Then he visited the next largest open spot with the same result. So he went from open spot to open spot until he had visited all of any size. Not a sign of a flower had he seen.

At last he sat down to rest. He was disappointed. Yes, sir, he was disappointed. "I don't believe Tommy Tit saw any flowers at all," muttered Peter. "No, sir, I don't believe he saw a single flower. He was jealous. He was jealous and he just made up that story. I'll rest a few minutes and then I'll hurry home to the dear Old Briar-patch."

Now right in front of Peter was one of the smallest open places on that hillside. It was so small that he hadn't thought it worth looking at. But as he sat there, his eyes just happened to rest on that little bare space in front of him. Suddenly Peter blinked and sat up very straight. Then he blinked two or three times more and gave a little gasp of surprise and unbelief. Right in the middle of that little bare space, standing bravely up above the dead, brown leaves, was something that looked very much like a flower! Yes, sir, it did so.

Peter jumped off the snow and hopped over to it. His face wore such a funny expression. Unbelief struggled with belief. But Peter knows that if he cannot believe his eyes he cannot believe anything. There under his very nose was the daintiest of little starlike flowers, a little lavender blossom bravely smiling up at him.

"Oh!" cried Peter under his breath. Then for a long time he simply sat there gazing at that little flower without saying a word.

It was a *Hepatica*. It was about four inches high at the top of a woolly-looking stem, for that stem was covered with tiny fine hairs. Beside it, not yet ready to open, was a bud, and Peter saw at once that this also was covered with fine hairs and that it hung bent over. Though Peter didn't know it, this was to protect it from storms. Looking down, Peter saw other buds just starting up from the middle of a cluster of

queer-shaped leathery-looking leaves. Some were green and some were purplish, and all lay almost flat.

Somewhat hesitatingly Peter stretched out his wobbly little nose and sniffed at that little blossom. "Why, it has a sweet smell!" he exclaimed.

"Have you just found that out?" asked a voice behind Peter. There was Tommy Tit, his small black eyes twinkling down at Peter.

"Yes," Peter owned up truthfully. "I remember seeing *Hepaticas* every spring, though I didn't know they came so early; but I hadn't noticed that they had any smell at all."

"Some don't," replied Tommy Tit. "Some, like this, are sweet-scented, and others have no scent at all. Even the sweet-scented ones lose that scent when they become old."

"I didn't know *Hepaticas* were this color, either," said Peter.

"Many of them are not," replied Tommy Tit. "Some are white and some are pinkish and others are almost blue."

"You seem to know all about them," said Peter a little enviously.

"Oh, no, I don't know all about them," replied Tommy. "But I've used my eyes and know some things. Do you know that they close at night?"

Peter's eyes opened very wide. "No," said he. "Do they?"

Tommy Tit nodded his black-capped little head vigorously. "Yes, sir," said he. "They even close on dark days. That is, they do until they get so old that they have begun to fade. Hello, it is beginning to snow! Just as if we hadn't had snow enough for one year! I think I'll get under cover."

So Tommy Tit flew away and left Peter sitting there, still staring at that little flower. Peter didn't mind a little snow. He knew it wouldn't amount to much, and somehow he didn't want to leave just yet. So he sat there looking at the brave little *Hepatica*. Presently he made a discovery that caused him to squeal right out. That little blossom was slowly closing. It didn't like the snow. Besides, it had grown quite dark. Slowly the little blossom closed and then Peter saw that its outer covering was overgrown with little fine hairs just as was the covering of the buds. "Why!" said Peter to himself, "the *Hepaticas* have regular little fur coats to keep them warm."

What Peter didn't find out until long afterward was that these same little hairs serve quite another purpose. They keep the ants and other crawling insects from climbing up and stealing the sweet juice which is called nectar, and which is hidden in the heart of each flower.

Another thing that Peter didn't learn until long afterward is that

the colored parts which look like petals are not petals but are what are called sepals. The Hepatica has no true petals.

Finally Peter decided that nothing more was to be learned by sitting there, and once more he started for the dear Old Briar-patch, lipperty-lipperty-lip. He had so much to tell Mrs. Peter that it seemed to him he couldn't get home soon enough. "Flowers are wonderful. They truly are wonderful," thought Peter, as he scampered along. "I didn't know they were interesting at all. But they are, and I am going to find out all I can about as many of them as I can. Here it is early March and winter not yet really gone, and already I have found two kinds of flowers in bloom. I wonder what the next one will be."

It was a week before Peter got back to that hillside in the Green Forest. By that time all the snow had melted. That first brave little Hepatica had faded, but here and there all over that hillside were other little groups of Hepaticas. And Peter found that what Tommy Tit had told him was true; some were pink, and some were white, and some were a lavender which was almost blue, and some were sweet-scented, and some had no scent at all. But all were beautiful. "I love them," whispered Peter to himself. "I just love them. Now I know that sweet Mistress Spring is almost here."

Peter climbed up to the top of the hill. It was rocky up there. Peter likes to climb among the rocks sometimes. He didn't think of flowers up there, and so when he discovered a little cluster of tiny white, five-pointed, starlike flowers with yellow centers, growing, as it seemed, out of the very rock on which he sat, it is a question whether he was more surprised than delighted.

The stem was about four inches high and Peter looked at once to see if it also were covered with tiny hairs. It was. What is more, those tiny hairs were somewhat sticky. The stems sprang from the middle of a rosette of small, smooth, oval leaves with scalloped edges growing very close to the ground. It was then that he discovered that this little plant was not growing out of the rock, as at first glance it had seemed to be. There was a little crack in the rock filled with earth, and it was out of this that the plant was growing.

Peter looked all about. "I wish Tommy Tit was here," said he right out loud.

"Why?" demanded a very small voice. "I don't wish he was here."

Peter looked this way and that way, but could see no one.

"Where are you?" he demanded somewhat crossly. Just then he happened to glance at that cluster of tiny flowers. There, at work getting nectar

from them, was a very small member of the Bee family. “Oh, excuse me!” exclaimed Peter.

The little Bee kept right on working. “What do you want of Tommy Tit?” she demanded.

“I want him to tell me what kind of a plant this is,” replied Peter.

“It’s the Saxifrage, the Early Saxifrage. I thought everybody knew Saxifrage when they saw it,” snapped the little Bee, keeping right on with her work.

“Isn’t this a queer place for it to be growing?” asked Peter rather timidly.

“No, it isn’t,” retorted the little Bee. “It would be queer for it to be growing anywhere else. The Saxifrage loves the rocks. That is where you will always find it. They do say that people used to believe that it could split rocks and that is how it came by its name. Of course it can’t do anything of the kind. That is all nonsense. But it does love to grow in little cracks like this one. That is where I always look for it. I’m very fond of the Saxifrage, because it comes when there are so few other flowers. Now I must go look for some more.”

Away flew the busy little Bee and left Peter to think over the new knowledge he had gained.

*For more about the Hepatica see The Handbook of Nature Study
-- Wildflowers, Weeds and Cultivated Crops p19-23.*

EARLY SAXIFRAGE.



III. PETER MAKES MORE DISCOVERIES

Spring Beauty or Claytonia – *Claytonia virginica*

Common Dandelion – *Taraxacum officinale*

Larger Mouse-ear Chickweed – *Cerastium vulgatum*

PETER Rabbit slowly went down from the rocky top of the hill in the Green Forest. At the foot of the hill he turned towards the Green Meadows. He would make a few hops and stop. Then he would do it over again. He paid no attention to where he was going. The fact is, Peter was doing that most foolish of all foolish things for any of the little people of the Green Forest or the Green Meadows to do, forgetting to watch out. Like a great many people he can think of only one thing at a time, and just now he was thinking of flowers and not of possible danger.

So it happened that he almost walked into Reddy Fox. Just in time, the very nick of time, Peter saw Reddy. At the same instant Reddy saw Peter. You may be sure that all thought of flowers left Peter's funny little head then. There was nothing for him to do but to take to his heels. That is just what he did. Yes, sir, that is just what he did. He made those long heels of his fairly fly.

After Peter raced Reddy Fox. Reddy knows that Peter can run fast for only a short distance. He must reach a place of safety very soon. Reddy meant that this time Peter shouldn't reach a place of safety. Peter is a great dodger. He dodged around trees and jumped over logs and darted behind stumps. All the time he could see Reddy gaining on him, and in Reddy's eyes was a look of hungry eagerness which made Peter feel most uncomfortable.

Now Peter was down near the edge of the Green Forest where the trees were rather far apart. It was the kind of a place where Reddy Fox could run at his best. "Oh, dear!" panted Peter. "I must get to that old bramble-tangle on the edge of the Green Forest. If I don't, Reddy will surely catch me."

But that bramble-tangle was farther away than Peter had thought, and it began to look very much as if Reddy Fox would have a Rabbit for his dinner. Twice Peter dodged barely in time. He was in despair when he scampered around a big stump, and there between two roots was a hole just big enough for him to squeeze into. Peter didn't waste any time. He popped into that hole without waiting to find out anything about it. For all he knew there might be somebody in there. As his funny little apol-

ogy for a tail disappeared, Reddy's teeth snapped so close to it that he actually pulled out a little bunch of white hairs.

Peter remained in that hole for a long time. He didn't even peek outside. He knew that Reddy Fox could be very patient at times and might be waiting around for him to come out. So Peter was content to be safe and wait. After he was quite over his fright, he began to think of flowers again, and the surprising things he had learned. Already he had found three kinds, yet rough Brother North Wind still howled at times through the Green Forest and Jack Frost still came around at night.

"I wonder," thought Peter, "if there are any other flowers. Tommy Tit said that he suspected he would be able to find some on the Green Meadows if he went to look for them. I wonder what ones he thinks he could find there this time of year. Oh, dear, I wish Reddy Fox had kept away from here! I want to go hunt for more flowers."

By and by Peter ventured to peep out to see if the way were clear. He could see nothing of Reddy Fox, but that didn't mean that Reddy wasn't somewhere about. He might be hiding. So Peter sat with only his nose out of that hole. Thinking of Reddy Fox, he forgot flowers until something pink just a little to one side caught his attention. It was a flower! There was no doubt about that. Peter ventured to poke his whole head out that he might see better.

"It is a pink Hepatica, I do believe!" exclaimed Peter to himself, and poked his head out still farther. Then he noticed the stem. It was very different from the stem of the Hepatica. It was longer, slender, and perfectly smooth. There were no little hairs on it. As he looked more closely he saw that while at first it had seemed to be all light green, it was slightly stained with red. It wasn't straight, but rather crooked, and halfway up were two leaves which right away made Peter think of grass, for they were long, narrow and pointed.

"Why-ee!" exclaimed Peter. "It isn't a Hepatica at all."

"Who said it was?" demanded a very small voice, which Peter at once recognized as that of the little Bee he had seen so busy at the blossoms of the Saxifrage. Then, without waiting for Peter to reply, the little Bee continued, "It is the Spring Beauty which I've heard some folks call Claytonia. I like the first name best myself."

Peter nodded. "I say so, too," said he. "When I first saw it I thought it was a pink Hepatica. Are the Spring Beauties always pink?"

"No," mumbled the little Bee, as she sucked up the nectar from the



SPRING BEAUTY.

heart of the flower. “Sometimes they are white with little pink veins. This is the first one I have found this spring, but there will be a lot of them around here soon, for this is the kind of a place they like. You notice that the ground is quite damp here, and the trees are so far apart that the sun can get in. It is a good thing that jolly, round, red Mr. Sun is shining, or we wouldn’t have seen this little beauty.”

“Why not?” demanded Peter.

“Because, like the Hepaticas, it closes when there is no sunshine. If you sit here long enough, you will find that it turns so as to always face towards the sun. It surely is a lover of sunshine. Just notice that it has five petals. There isn’t any other flower quite like the Spring Beauty. By the way, Peter Rabbit, are there any dandelions yet on the Green Meadows?”

Peter shook his head. “I haven’t seen any,” said he.

“Pooh! That doesn’t mean anything,” said the little Bee. “I guess I could find some if I went to look for them. Dandelions and Common Chickweed can be found any month in the year if you look in the right place for them. Good-bye, Peter Rabbit.” The little Bee disappeared as suddenly as she had appeared.

Peter waited only long enough to make certain in his own mind that the way was clear. Then he started for the Green Meadows and the dear Old Briar-patch. A glint of yellow caught his attention on the



THE STAGES OF A DANDELION.

very edge of the Green Meadows. Eagerly Peter turned that way. Could there be a Dandelion there? Yes, there was! There was no mistaking that round blossom of pure gold. Peter had known Dandelions ever since he could remember. Sometimes he got Dandelion leaves in his mouth and he knew just how bitter they are. But that spot of bright yellow where the grass had hardly yet begun to turn green was good to see, and as Peter looked down at the cheery little blossom he was filled with respect for this common plant.

A Merry Little Breeze came dancing along and saw what Peter was looking at. "Isn't it wonderful how so many flowers can grow together on one stem?" cried the Merry Little Breeze.

Peter stared about him, blinking rather foolishly. "I don't see but one flower," said he.

The Merry Little Breeze rumbled up Peter's hair and cried, "There must be something wrong with your eyes, Peter. You are looking at a whole bunch of them right now."

"I'm not!" retorted Peter. "I am looking at this Dandelion."

"Look closer, Peter. Look just as close as you can. What you call a single blossom is made up of dozens and dozens of tiny flowers all growing together so as to look like one big flower," cried the Merry Little Breeze.

"What?" cried Peter. Then he looked very closely, as he had been told to do, and sure enough he discovered that the Merry Little Breeze had told him the truth. He was so astonished that for a few minutes he could do nothing but sit and stare at that Dandelion. At last he found his tongue. "And all the time," said he, "I have thought there was nothing wonderful about a Dandelion."

"Ignorance, Peter, ignorance," chuckled the Merry Little Breeze.

“There is nothing in all the Great World more wonderful than some of the plants that people call common. You think it is wonderful because what you thought a single flower is made up of ever and ever so many tiny flowers. But there are other things just as wonderful about the Dandelion. At night all those little flowers are closed up in a little green house, for the Dandelion opens only after the sun comes up and closes before dark. By and by each one of those little flowers will become a seed on the end of a little feathery stem, and in the place of what you call a flower will be a feathery, little silver ball. Then I will come dancing along and blow, and away will go those little seeds, sailing far across the Green Meadows as if each were carried by a little balloon. It is great fun to blow them this way and that way. From each little seed will spring a new plant, and that is the way the Dandelions are spread. Have you noticed anything queer about that stem?”

“No,” said Peter. “It is rather big, but that is all that I see queer about it.”

“Well, it is hollow,” replied the Merry Little Breeze. “If you should break it off you could blow through it. I suppose you know that the Dandelion got its name because some one imagined that those queer leaves with the notches on them are like a lion’s teeth.”

Just then Peter remembered the Chickweed. He wondered if that, too, were in bloom. Perhaps the Merry Little Breeze would know. So he asked. You know Peter never hesitates to ask questions.

“Certainly. Of course,” replied the Merry Little Breeze. “You probably have seen it a dozen times since the snow left. I must say that for real pluck and bravery I know of no flower to equal the Common Chickweed. I’ve seen it in bloom in bare sunny spots in the middle of winter. There are some blossoms right over there now.”

Peter looked, but at first all he saw was a mass of little plants a few inches high and having smooth little leaves growing in pairs along the stem and shaped something like the ear of a Mouse. Of flowers Peter saw none at all. Once more the Merry Little Breeze told him to look closely. Peter hopped over and put his nose right down to those little plants. Then for the first time he discovered the tiniest of white flowers, so tiny that always he had quite overlooked them. But they were real flowers. Peter counted the petals. There were five. Then he made a discovery. Each tiny white petal was notched so that it looked almost like two. Tiny as it was, it was really a beautiful little flower.

Peter noticed that the plants were branched and spread over the ground. They looked too delicate for cold weather, yet the Merry Little Breeze had told him that even in the middle of winter blossoms of the Chickweed sometimes were to be found. The wonder of it filled Peter's mind as he once more turned towards the dear Old Briar-patch. He had made but a hop or two when he saw another little flower that caused him to stop again with eyes round with surprise.

“Gracious!” exclaimed Peter. “Here is one of those little flowers grown to be a giant.”

It is not surprising that he thought so, for the flower at which he was looking, though small, was several times larger than the others, and in form was much like them. But presently Peter noticed that its stem was straighter and the leaves were a darker green and of different shape. Then he knew that this must be a different flower, but he was sure that it must be related to the other.

Peter was right. He had found the Larger Mouse-ear Chickweed, a cousin of the Common Chickweed.

For more about the Dandelion see The Handbook of Nature Study

-- Wildflowers, Weeds and Cultivated Crops p152-157.

MOUSE-EARED CHICKWEED.



IV. SHY BLOSSOMS AND FAIRY BELLS

Trailing Arbutus – *Epigaea repens*

Yellow Adder's-tongue – *Erythronium americanum*

PETER Rabbit had climbed up the hill in the Green Forest to see once more the Saxifrage in bloom. Where, the first time he had visited that place, there had been but one cluster of blossoms there were now many peeping out from amongst the rocks. For awhile Peter sat and admired them. Then he started down the other side of the hill. He wasn't headed for any particular place and he had nothing in particular on his mind. As always, his wobbly little nose was continually in motion, trying to pick up news from the Merry Little Breezes.

"Ah!" said Peter, stopping very suddenly. Then he wriggled his wobbly little nose faster than ever; it had caught the sweetest of sweet perfumes. Peter sniffed long and hard. "Ah!" he exclaimed again. Then slowly he began to go forward in the direction from which that delightful scent came.

Little thrills of delight ran all over Peter. This was real fun. It was exciting. He knew that only a flower could give off that sweet fragrance, but he hadn't the least idea what flower was doing it. The wind was still cold, for it was early in April. But jolly, round, red Mr. Sun was doing his best to warm the brown earth.

Slowly Peter hopped along, looking eagerly ahead and to right and left in quest of a flower. But no flower did he see, nor any plant that looked as if it might have a flower. Still the sweet perfume grew stronger, and Peter sniffed and sniffed. Then just by chance he happened to look down at his feet. There, peeping out from the carpet of dead, brown leaves, was a beautiful little flower of the most delicate pink. It lay right on the ground. At least, that is the way it seemed.

Peter's first thought was that it had been dropped there. He always thought of flowers as having stems that stood more or less upright. He reached forward and brushed aside the dead leaves. Then he gave a little squeal of pleasure. You see he had uncovered a cluster of these beautiful, pink, fragrant little blossoms, and he saw at once that they were growing on a stem that, instead of standing upright, trailed along the ground. Peter had found that loveliest of spring flowers, the Trailing Arbutus.

The stem of the plant was tough and woody. The leaves were thick, smooth on top, and somewhat hairy underneath. They were oval in shape,



TRAILING ARBUTUS.

alternated along the stem, and were a dull, rather dark green with rusty spots on them. They looked old. Peter thought of that right away. The truth is they were old. They had grown the summer before and had remained green all winter. The new leaves wouldn't appear until the flowers had gone.

It seemed to Peter that he would never get tired of looking at those dainty, delicate little blossoms. They gave him a wonderful feeling. Somehow they made him sure that sweet Mistress Spring truly had arrived. They seemed to have in themselves the very spirit of Mistress Spring.

Peter hunted for more, and presently he found them. They grew in little patches here and there all over that sunny hillside. Some peeped shyly out from under the brown, dead leaves which had kept them warm all winter. Others were tucked away in patches of dead grass. Some of the loveliest grew beneath pine trees. Some were the most delicate pink, and others were a deep pink, while still others were pure white.

Lovely as were the Hepaticas, now blooming all through the Green Forest, and dainty as were the Spring Beauties down near the edge of the Green Meadows, these Arbutus blossoms seemed to Peter the loveliest and daintiest flowers he had seen. And with their beauty was that wonderful fragrance. It is no wonder that Peter kept exclaiming, "Ah!" and "Oh!" as he found the shy little blossoms modestly hiding in the grass or beneath the leaves.

Peter went back there again the next day. At once he discovered a boy and a girl there, and it didn't take him long to find out that they, too, were in search of the Arbutus. They were picking them, and, because the stems were short, they often tore whole plants up by the roots. Peter was so indignant he didn't know what to do. Once he actually stamped with anger. This was a mistake, for the boy heard him and promptly came to look for him. Peter had to take to his heels while the boy shouted and chased him for a short distance.

Of course it was easy enough to get away from that boy, and the latter soon gave up. Then Peter stole back to watch the boy and the girl. They kept on hunting for the Arbutus and tearing them up by the roots. Peter grew angrier and angrier.

"Haven't they any sense at all!" cried Peter to himself. "Don't they know that if they tear those plants up by the roots there won't be any here next year? I never saw such stupidity!"

Probably next year they will come here and wonder why they cannot find any flowers. Why don't they think a little? If they can't pick them without pulling them up by the roots, they should leave them alone."

Peter was right. Flowers are never so beautiful as when growing, and to take them by the roots is to rob the Green Forest and the hillsides of some of their greatest charms.

Peter finally left in disgust and wandered down to the Laughing Brook. As he hopped along the bank he came to a sunny spot where he found something which for the time being drove all thought of that boy and girl from his head. All about were little nodding yellow bells. At least, this is what they looked

TRAILING ARBUTUS.





YELLOW ADDER'S TONGUE.

like. They looked as if they might be the bells of fairyland. Of course they were not. Of course they were not bells at all. They were flowers. Each hung from the top of a quite long, straight, slender, smooth stem that rose from between two large, oblong, grayish green leaves that were streaked and spotted with brown. They seemed to love the company of each other, for they crowded together along the bank and back and part way up the slope of a hill.

Peter had found the Dog's-tooth Violet, or Yellow Adder's-tongue, sometimes called Trout Lily. The latter is really the better name, for it is a Lily and not a Violet. It is the first Lily of the year. Though Peter didn't know it, he had found another flower that follows the light, turning on its stalk so as to always face jolly, round, bright Mr. Sun.

Peter looked for his friend, the little Bee, but he couldn't see her. In fact, those dainty little flowers appeared to have no visitors. Peter wondered if there were no nectar in them. It didn't seem possible that such lovely little flowers could be lacking in sweetness. That afternoon he returned for another visit and right away he discovered yellow Butterflies very busy among those nodding blossoms, and a number of small cousins of Bumblebee. Then Peter knew that the sweetness which is called nectar was in those flowers just as it was in the other flowers he had found.

Peter remained there watching the busy workers until the first hint of the Black Shadows warned of the approach of night. Then those dainty little Lilies began to close and the Butterflies and Bees departed. Remembering that he had found several colors among the Hepaticas, and that on this very day he had found both white and pink Arbutus, Peter made a careful search among the little Lilies to see if all were alike. They were. Each little bell was of a pale yellow, and Peter concluded that this was the only color of the Adder's-tongue. But in this he was wrong, for in some parts of the country it is white instead of yellow.

It was some weeks later that Peter returned to that place. Then he looked in vain for the fairylike flower bells. Not one was to be seen. What was more, he had hard work to find a trace of those big, spotted, grayish-green leaves. It was as if those beautiful little plants never had been. You see, shortly after the flowers withered and the seed was formed, those leaves began to wither also, and presently disappeared. The Adder's-tongue comes just to gladden the spring. Then, its duty done, it goes into a long sleep, to be awakened only when sweet Mistress Spring once more returns.

*For more about the Yellow Adder's Tongue see The Handbook of Nature
Study -- Wildflowers, Weeds and Cultivated Crops p24-28.*

YELLOW ADDER'S TONGUE.

