

its status. The afternoon will focus on regional environmental issues, and on communication between the Canadian Nature Federation and its affiliates. This is the first time the CNF regional fall meeting has been held on Prince Edward Island, so we are hoping for a strong attendance from Natural History Society members as well as all others concerned about nature and the natural environment.

ON CRANBERRIES

A favourite fall outing of many Islanders is the annual expedition to pick cranberries. With pots, buckets, bags, and sometimes even pillowcases, they select one of those lovely Indian summery afternoons of October and head off to their traditional patches. Such spots are usually tucked away among the dune slacks of a remote beach, as far as possible from the maddening crowd; otherwise all the year's crop would have been long since harvested by others.



There is nothing quite like an afternoon in the cranberry patch. Squatted down low to the ground, sheltered from the chilly wind, the cranberry picker feels the mellow warmth of the golden fall sunshine and listens to the chirping of the crickets and the rhythm of waves in the distance. The only other sounds are the hollow plunks of cranberries thudding into the pot in rapid succession and the occasional "scrunch scrunch" of footsteps moving on to pick in a new spot.

Meanwhile, the cranberry picker luxuriates in the tranquility of the afternoon, free to dream idly of the days of summer past and winter to come. And all the while the berries accumulate one by one, two by two, handful by handful.

Back home again, cranberries can be turned into many delectable creations: pies, tarts, loaves, sweet breads, muffins, jams, sauces, jellies, or juice. And they go even further when mixed with other fruits such as apples and raisins.

For those who don't make it out to pick cranberries in the fall, there is still another chance in the spring. In fact, winter in the wild gives spring berries an even deeper red and an extra tang of flavour never quite matched by fall-picked berries.

With the gradual warming of the damp bogs in spring, the little trailing plants soon surge ahead in a new season's growth. By July, tiny pink flowers poke out from among the evergreen leaves. Each flower forms a miniature "Turk's cap" of four petals, with a "beak" of stamens extending below.

By fall a new crop of shining red cranberries once again lies nestled away here and there behind the dunes, awaiting the efforts of an enterprising harvester.

By the way, cranberries were originally called 'crane berries' by the early settlers to this continent. The flowers nodding in the wind reminded them of the head of a crane. In

addition, 'cranes' frequented the wetlands where cranberries grew, and were often seen there feasting on the ripened berries.

