



areas where I have found it. I know of at least four areas where it can be found in the hundreds. In spite of this, many people have not seen the Pink Lady's Slipper in the wild.

This plant seems to be adapted to a wide range of environments. I recall one extensive area near Alberton where my companion and I had to wear rubbers. On the other hand I have found the plant on high, dry ground. The Biology Department at U.P.E.I. has an excellent colored slide of a Slipper growing among crowberries! The limiting factor seems to be that, to be successful, the Pink Lady's Slipper must be associated with a particular kind of mycorrhizal fungus. This is very likely the reason why people who have tried transplanting Slippers to their back garden have had little success. The plants may live as long as three years with a reduced number of flowers each year. The fungus referred to is also associated with the germination of the seed so there's little point in the amateur gardener trying to grow Lady's Slippers from seed.

I believe there is still much to be learned about the Pink Lady's Slipper in P.E.I. What is the range of ph within which the plant will succeed? What insect or insects are associated with pollination? What is the average population of these insects and how variable is it? These are only a few of the questions that I believe to be unanswered, there are many more. Would not this make an excellent project for a biology student at U.P.E.I.

## Group of Seven visits

Daily visitors to my bird cafeteria this winter have been a group of seven Hungarian Partridges. In fact the day of the first super storm there were seven scratching and pecking out front and a covey of ten hunkered down out back. The ten have travelled on in Littlest Hobo style but the seven have stayed for dinner. Their straight rows of three-toed tracks lace the lawn's snow blanket. Sometimes when we haven't noticed the little creatures all dug in they burst upwards in a blast of mutual alarm when we go to replenish the feeders. A half dozen feed like staccato pecking machines, their motor-propelled heads driving up and down, up and down picking up seeds. A sentry stands guard while the rest feed steadily. If slightly anxious they all stretch up tall and thin and scuttle to shelter under a nearby bush. If startled they take to the air as if from a catapult. Their friendliest habit is when they all cozy up together and snuggle down in the shelter of a snowdrift, where they create a dark feathery splotch, snoozing warmly together. After a storm another avian family of winter visitors, some rusty-capped American tree sparrows fly down to the ground near the partridges. It looks as if the smaller birds take advantage of the larger's snow scraping skill to find uncovered seeds.

Our group of seven may never set up easel and palette in artistic occupation but they do fill a corner of Winter's canvas with intriguing exhibitions of brushes with survival.

BY EVELYN MEADER

