

MY FRIENDS THE MAPLES

by Mrs. Mary Cairns, Lower Freetown, P.E.I.

Over my years in Lower Freetown, three maple trees on our farm came to intrigue me. Questions arose in my mind as to why two of the trees bore seed, while the third did not. These questions led to five to seven years of taking close-up pictures of the flowers on each of these maples.

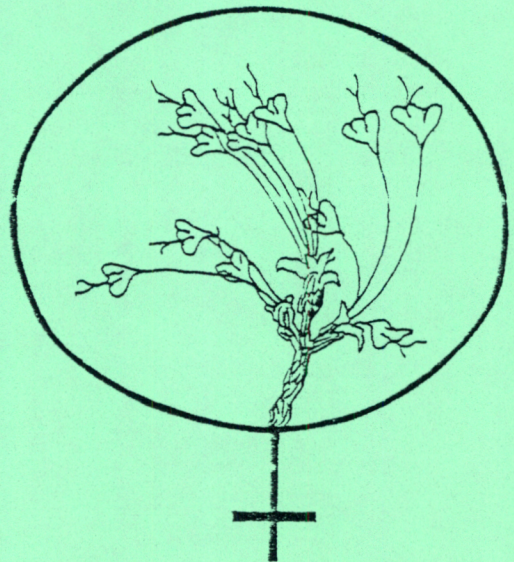
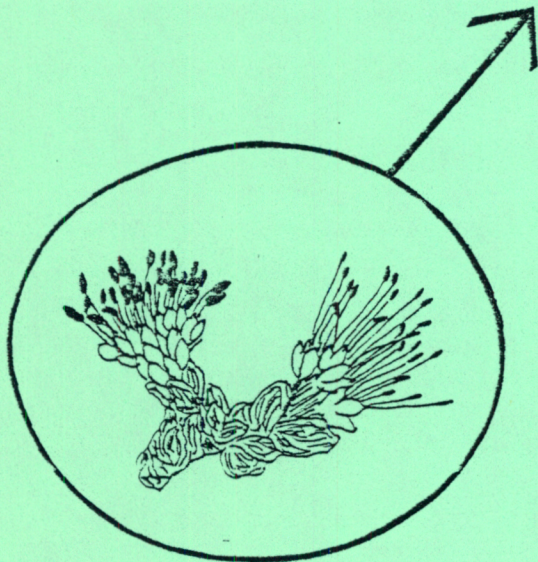
Tree no. 1. Leaves turned gold in fall, never red. Flowers yellow, bell-shaped with black stamens, had keys.

Tree no. 2. Leaves turned red in fall. Flowers almost star-shaped, bronze colour, had stamens, never displayed keys.

Tree no. 3. Located across the path from tree no. 2. Leaves turned red in fall. Flowers bright red, grew in clusters, had a structure which looked like two miniature red pipe cleaners twisted together, had keys.

I decided that tree no. 1 must be bisexual, for there was no other tree like it within reasonable distance, and that trees number 2 and 3 must be a male and a female of the same species. Having no text books on trees available, I set out to prove to myself that my deductions were correct. My theory on numbers 2 and 3 seemed to make sense so I photographed them for future use. But it was not until three years later (no flowers one year) that I finally found a female flower on tree no. 1, a tiny greenish structure hiding in a cluster of yellow bells.

Later when I obtained a book on trees and shrubs I was able to identify the trees as sugar (no. 1) and red (nos. 2 and 3) maples and to verify my conclusions. But nothing will ever take away the satisfaction of what I discovered by doing my own research.



* * * * * SPRING IS SPRUNG! * * * * *
* The first report of Mayflowers in bloom this season comes from *
* Peter's Road on April 18. Spring peepers were heard in the same *
* area on April 16 and a hardy comb jelly was seen in the Montague *
* River on April 20. Early dandelions were in bloom at U.P.E.I. *
* on April 25 and a farmer was ploughing in Cherry Valley on the *
* same date. *
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