

# Queen-of-the-meadows

BY MARGARET E. MALLET



Queen-of-the-Meadow  
Filipendula Ulmaria  
x $\frac{1}{4}$

Driving through Mount Herbert on July 21st, I turned onto the Bethel Road (Route 215) and was confronted by a ditchful of tall plants about 3 ft. or higher with reddish stalks, topped by dense panicles of creamy white flowers whose delightful fragrance filled the air. Had I looked back across the Mount Herbert Road I could have noticed that the head of Fullerton's Marsh had great patches of the same flower. The plant must therefore be tolerant of salty water.

Next day I took a specimen to Diane Griffin of the Island Nature Trust, who recognized it as "Queen-of-the-Meadow" (*Filipendula Ulmaria*). The "Ulmaria" part comes from a fancied resemblance of the leaflets to leaves of the Elm (*Ulmus*) tree.

A hardy herbaceous perennial introduced from Europe, Queen-of-the-Meadow is a garden escape and is found from Newfoundland to Ontario, and in the Northeastern United States. Oil of meadowsweet is distilled from the flower buds and used in perfumery. The leaves of Queen-of-the-Meadow are canescent - tomentose beneath. Terminal leaflets are palmately lobed; all leaves are serrate.

Queen-of-the-Meadow is probably not found in a great many localities on Prince Edward Island, but where it gets a foothold in suitable habitat it grows in profusion. A damp ditch appears to be perfect habitat.

It was probably in flower in mid-July. At the end of August there were still a few blooms and an abundance of odd-looking little green fruit, each of which is formed of five to seven crescent-shaped indehiscent (not opening or splitting) carpels united into one small roundish object.

When the fruit has dried, slight finger pressure will cause it to separate into its 5, 6 or 7 carpels, each of which in suitable habitat may produce a new *Filipendula Ulmaria* plant.

Some books give "Meadowsweet" as an alternate name of "Queen-of-the-Meadow". However, the Meadowsweet that we see more often is "*Spiraea Latifolia*".

## Natural History Society news

About 40 people attended the October 4 meeting of the Natural History Society, and members managed to combine a lot of business with a pleasurable talk and slide show on nature conservation.

Bruce Smith of the Nature Trust gave a report on the Greenwich hearings before the Land Use Commission, which will resume in December. Your support for this issue, whether in the form of donations to help offset the Nature Trust expenses or letters to the editor of Island papers are still welcome and necessary.

Plans are underway for the Canadian Nature Federation's annual meeting, this year to be held in June in Charlottetown. "Century of Change