

MSU Has Bulletin

Termites -- the hidden enemy in many Michigan homes -- continue to eat away on an estimated quarter billion dollars worth of wood structures in the U.S. every year, reports Don Cress, Michigan State University entomologist.

"Check to see if they've infiltrated your property," recommends Cress.

Since termites can enter through cracks in concrete, slabs are no protection, he says. Termites also enter through weep holes between bricks.

For detailed information on termites and their control, get a copy of MSU Extension Bulletin E497, "Wood Damaging Insects in the Home," from your county Cooperative Extension Service office.

Or, get a free single copy on request from: MSU Bulletin Office, P.O. Box 231, East Lansing, Mich. 48823.

Suburban Gardener

All In The Family: Roses, Plums, Spirea

By BETTY FRANKEL

By late summer garden beds are bright with annuals-petunias, alyssum, marigolds, zinnias, asters, celosia, salvia and many more. Lilies, gladioli, canna, and dahlias are some of the bulbs and tubers now displaying their bold blooms, and among the perennials that flower at this season are delphinium, milkweed, wild lettuce and scores of other wildflowers.

Country roadsides are still ribbed with Queen Anne's lace and chervil. Fields are abloom with clover, thistles, milkweed, wild lettuce and scores of other wildflowers.

Early goldenrod makes yellow dabs that are a small preview. Soon whole fields and hillsides will be guided by the goldenrod, and spangled with the starchy blooms of asters in white, lavender and purple.

Nature is bountiful, and the number and diversity of the plants around us is truly awe inspiring. Plants come in so many sizes from microscopic algae to towering forest trees. Like, round, pointed, smooth, toothed, lobed. So many variations on a single basic theme.

Flowers, too, although all adapted to the single purpose of producing seed, show a fascinating diversity not only of color but of size and form--tubes, bells, discs. Some are born singly atop a stalk, others are clustered in spikes or balls or umbrella-like formations.

Thousands of different kinds of plants grow in our area. It seems as though it would be impossible to know them and be able to identify and name them. The task has been simplified because they have been organized and classified into related groups. As with people, if the characteristics of a particular family group are known, it's not hard to recognize members of that family.

Some families have characteristics that make them more prominent than others, and more easily recognized, too.

MODERN BOTANY got its start in 1753 when Carl Linnaeus, a Swedish botanist, published his system of classification based on the structure of the stamens and pistils (the seed producing parts) of flowers. He studied thousands of plants, and before his life was over he realized the importance of a more truly the relationship of each plant to all others.

Linnaeus's chief contribution to botany was his system of naming plants. He instituted the system of "binomial nomenclature" whereby each plant has two names, roughly corresponding to the first and last name of people. The names are in Latin, the universal scientific language, and are the same all over the world for a particular plant.

The common names of plants are like nicknames. The same plant may have several common names even in the same locality, or they may vary from place to place. Also, the same "nickname" may be used for more than one plant.

The scientific names are often descriptive, referring to the color or texture or form of a plant, but they can refer to the name of a person being honored or a geographic location where the plant was found. The first part of the binomial name is the "genus" name (plural "genera"). Plants that are alike in significant ways are grouped into the same genus. The second word is the "species" name. Each species is unique and differs from all others.

Plants are grouped into "families", with closely related genera making up a family. There may be few or many genera in a family.

ASA GRAY, who was a professor at Harvard University, is considered to have been the foremost American botanist. He studied and classified the plants in the Northeastern part of our country and published a manual in 1848 that is still used as the basic authority on classification and nomenclature. Gray recognized about 5,000 distinct kinds of wild plants which he grouped into about 500 genera, and 157 families.

The largest family of flowering plants (and perhaps the most recent to appear on earth) is called the daisy, or composite family. It is characterized by flower heads that are clusters of many small flowers growing together. Typical composites have many small tube-like flowers arranged on a central disk with flat strap-like flowers arranged in a circle around the disk. The family is important for both food and ornamental plants, as well as for numerous weeds. Lettuce is a composite, and so are asters, marigolds, zinnias, shasta daisies, cosmos, and dandelions and thistles.

The Rose family (Rosaceae) is another large wide-spread family. The flowers are generally showy, with five petal-like petals, five sepals, and numerous stamens encircling the center. In this family in addition to

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