

Christmas Cheer.

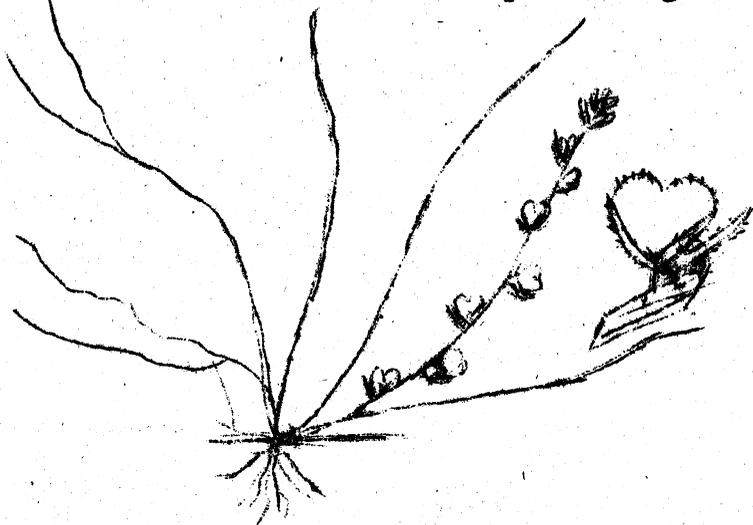
If you are to get any real satisfaction from the study of weeds, two things are essential - a hand lens and a flora. Now is the time of gifts, and if you want to make a gift to a botanical friend or put an idea in the heart of someone for yourself, here's your opportunity. Of course, a high class lens can be extremely expensive but you may get good ones for ordinary field work from 6/6 upwards. Generally speaking a X 10 will show you all the necessary details of small flowers, hairs, markings on seeds etc., that are requisite for identification. In addition you will be continually surprised and delighted at the sudden beauty springing to life in plant forms that unmagnified seem commonplace and uninteresting.

In addition to a lens, you must have a reference book of some sort. Unfortunately H.H. Allan's Naturalised Flora of New Zealand is unobtainable outside libraries. But luckily much help may be obtained from John Hutchinson's British Wild Flowers (Pelican Books, 2 volumes 6/6 each.) Over 800 plants are described and each is fully illustrated by the author's beautiful line drawings. Hutchinson does not include grasses in his book, but these are dealt with in another Pelican, Grasses by C.E. Hubbard - a profusely illustrated book of 428 pages (4/6).

Weeds In My Garden (Part 2)

The two Speedwells in my garden have merits as weeds,- they both branch loosely from tap roots and are readily removed.

The smaller, the little Eurasian Wall Speedwell (Veronica arvensis L.) has spreading slightly hairy stems up to about 8 inches long, and tiny modest little almost stalkless flowers (blue or sometimes white) in leafy racemes that are sometimes the full length of the stem. The fruits are heart-shaped fringed with gland-tipped hairs.



V. arvensis

(Flowers resemble those of V. tournefortii, but are much smaller.)