

## FURTHER NOTES ON THE SKUNK CABBAGE IN MISSOURI

In a recent article by Erna R. Eisendrath (Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 56: 287. 1969), the matter is discussed as to whether or not *Symplocarpus foetidus* (L.) Nutt. is native to Missouri. As the present author is cognizant of the circumstances related to the appearance of this plant presently growing on the estate of Mr. Jay G. Rice in Jefferson County, the following information is presented.

The present author was an intimate friend of the late Charles Rice and was invited to visit the above-mentioned estate, approximately 8 miles south of Antonia, in 1935, during the time that the "Annotated Catalogue of the Flowering Plants of Missouri" (Ann. Missouri Bot. Gard. 22: 375-758. 1935) was being readied for publication. At that time Mr. Rice showed me a number of species of wild flowers he was attempting to introduce and cultivate on his property with the idea of establishing a wild flower sanctuary there.

The Skunk Cabbage was planted (several plants) in a wet habitat where a portion of the stream had been dammed. These plants had been obtained by Mr. Rice from a nursery outside the state. When discussion arose as to whether such plants should not be included in the flora of Missouri, I indicated that we could not include the large multitude of species grown in private and public gardens or those deliberately introduced through purchases or by other means. Only species could be included which were a part of the native flora or had become naturalized or introduced spontaneously as escapes from cultivation and persisting on their own. One could add literally hundreds of species to the flora of a given state, if all were included which were grown in private gardens and estates from plants purchased from out-of-state nurseries or obtained on travels away from Missouri. Therefore, it was concluded that the Skunk Cabbage could not be included in the flora of Missouri.

So far as the specimens collected in 1903 and 1907 by Mr. Kellogg are concerned, this matter was checked with Mr. Kellogg at the time of the preparation of the "Annotated Catalogue" published by Mr. Palmer and myself. And Mr. Kellogg stated that the herbarium specimens came from plants grown at the Missouri Botanical Garden.

To answer the questions submitted by Mrs. Eisendrath, it may be stated then that the Skunk Cabbage plants originally introduced by Mr. Charles Rice are still growing (as a single remaining plant) from the time the present author first saw them there planted, beginning in the year 1935.

As to why the plant has not spread, one can only conjecture that the Skunk Cabbage is not growing under optimum conditions and that it is merely surviving, rather than increasing at present. As is well known, some species of wild flowers, when grown outside their natural range, are easily propagated and thrive, reproducing themselves easily, whereas others are more difficult to grow or do not respond to either ordinary or especial treatment.—*Julian A. Steyermark, Instituto Botanico, Ministerio de Agricultura, Caracas, Venezuela.*

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