THE DROUGHT

The Arnold Arboretum has received practically no rain since September 2 when a generous 2.71 inches fell. During the month of August (with normally 3½ inches of rain) only about 2 inches fell. As a result of this, the plants in the Arboretum are suffering from the terrible drought which has struck New England and is doing such tremendous damage. The woods are tinder dry, but what is even more important (though less noticeable) to those who are interested in good ornamental plantings, the soil is extremely dry. In pulling some weed shrubs during the past two weeks, we noticed that the soil is powder dry for several feet below the surface. The foliage of the trees and shrubs started off to a splendid display of color this fall, only to be prematurely dried up by lack of sufficient moisture. This is the worst fall drought during the past thirty three years.

There are two very important things to keep in mind for those with gardens in the drought area. Any plantings made this fall should receive plenty of water if they are to be kept alive over winter. Secondly, and more important, is the plight of the evergreens, both narrow-leaved and broad-leaved. These plants depend upon absorbing their winter's supply of water just prior to the time the ground freezes in the late fall or early winter. With the unusually warm—actually hot—days which we have been having for several weeks, these evergreens have given off far more water than usual for this time of year, and there is far less available for them to absorb from the soil than there has been for decades.

If evergreens are to have any chance at all of coming through the winter in a normal condition, they must receive plenty of water from now until the time the ground freezes. This is of the utmost importance. If sufficient rains do not come, and these plants are compelled to go into the winter with no additional water, serious "winter injury" will result, not necessarily from any climatic condition brought about by winter cold, but because the plants do not have sufficient water before winter sets in. Consequently water all evergreens well, now, and do not allow the soil about them to dry out again before the ground freezes.
FRUITS THIS FALL

This has been a rather good year for the fruiting of woody plants, especially the conifers. Many of the shrubs have also produced their full complement of fruits as well. *Sorbus discolor*, for instance, with pure white fruits, was literally covered this fall. Many of the viburnums produced an abundance of fruits, as well as the *Malus*, *Lonicera* and *Taxus* species. It was a season when the fruits ripened fast. Many of the conifers opened their cones in record time, probably because of the effects of the drought, so that seed collecting had to be done rapidly in order to obtain everything desired. Fleshy fruits, especially those ripening in the fall, matured quickly due to the drought and the weeks of unseasonably warm weather.

One of the disconcerting things noticed in late October is that some of the dormant buds on certain shrubs are starting in to new growth. The dry and extremely warm weather has brought this about. Such young growth of course has no possible chance of survival when it appears at this time. With the warm weather predicted to remain for some time yet, this additional danger to shrubs will probably be increased. There is little that can be done about it, unfortunately.

Some of the more interesting plants with fruits this fall were *Decaisnea Fargesii*, with fleshy purple pods, somewhat similar to, but smaller than, those of *Akebia quinata*. *Callicarpa japonica* was covered with its bright purple fruits and some of the native deciduous hollies were also well covered with fruits. *Ailanthus altissima erythrocarpa* displayed its red fruits well, thus underlining the fact that it has more colorful fruits than the species growing immediately beside it with pale yellowish to almost colorless fruits. *Cotoneaster multiflora* and *C. racemiflora soongorica* were well covered with their conspicuous bright berries. One of the most interesting of all was the fruit of *Lonicera quinquelocularis translucens*, with white, translucent fruit through which the brown seeds are easily seen. The yellow fruiting *Viburnum dilatatum xanthocarpum* also was resplendent in its colorful fruits, and branches placed in water keep this bright display for many days. A splendid specimen of *Viburnum setigerum aurantiacum* growing on Bussey Hill, bore many clusters of its bright orange fruit, unique among the hardy northern viburnums.

One other plant bears particular mention, for it fruited unusually well this fall, namely *Celastrus angulata*. This has been growing in the Arnold Arboretum since 1924 and is apparently hardy. It has never been listed in our records of plants suffering winter injury. Its vigorous growth, large leaves and 6 inch long clusters of yellow to “Indian Orange” berries in late October and November, make it unusually prominent at this time of year.

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