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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

About Stamens

Mrs. William Starr Dana

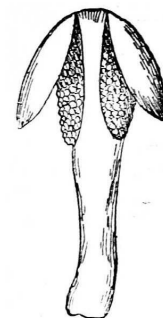
Let us take a good look at the stamens of the Easter lily. There are six of these. Each dust box is fastened to the tip of a tall stalk. The picture below shows you a single stamen from the Easter lily. It is drawn somewhat larger than life. Its box has opened, and is letting out some grains of dust.



There are many different kinds of stamens. I will show you some pictures that will give you an idea of their great variety. Here is one taken from the flower of the shin leaf. The dust makes its escape through two little openings at the very top of the box.



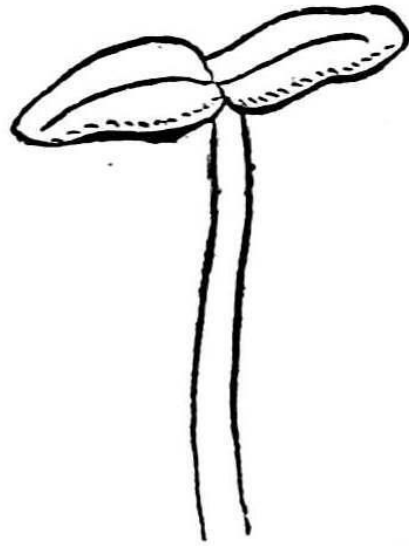
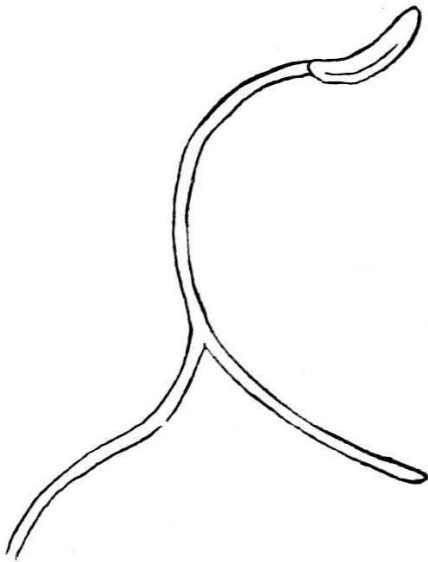
That shown in the picture below is from the barberry. The sides of the box open like a door which is hinged on top. This arrangement lets out a quantity of dust.



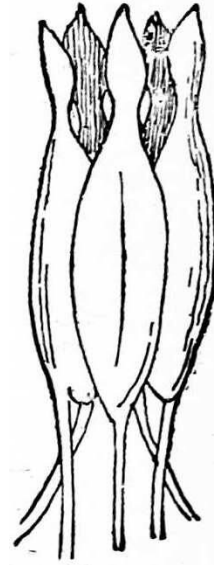
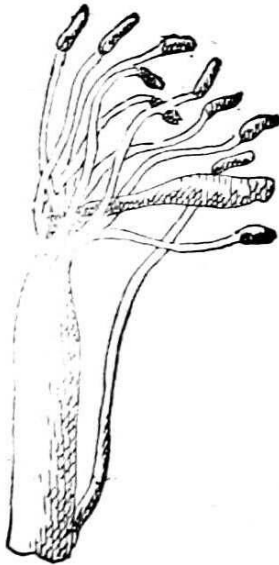
Here is a collection of stamens of different sorts. The picture below has two boxes at the top of its stalk, and so has the other picture a crosspiece, with a good-sized box at one end, and only the little beginnings of a box at the other. The picture below has a similar crosspiece, with a box at one end only.



You see that flower faces show quite as much variety as do the faces of the people you know. You must not expect to find stamens all alike, any more than you would expect all the boys and girls you know to have noses of the same shape, or hair of the same color.



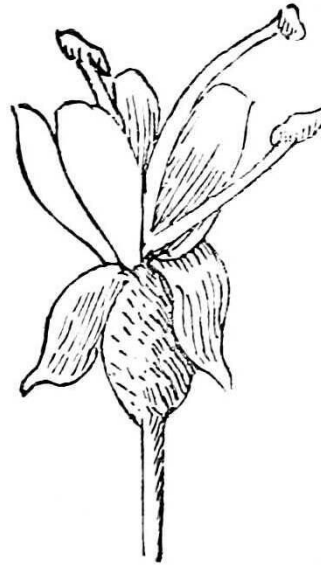
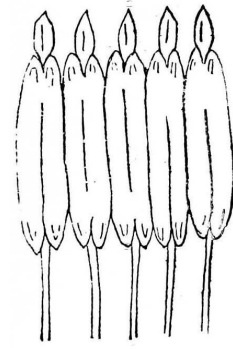
This picture shows you all the stamens of the pea blossom. Do you notice that quite a number of these (nine, in fact) grow together close about the pistil, while the tenth one stands alone? That is a strange custom always observed by the stamens of the pea.



Next we see all the stamens from one of the tiny flowers of the golden-rod. These are very much larger than life. There are five of them, fastened together in a sort of tube. Split open this tube and flatten it out. Now they look like five little sisters, arm in arm.

And here, again joined in a tube, we see the stamens of the mallow. From the hollow of this tube stand out the tops of the mallow's pistils.

Some flowers have so many stamens that you would find it almost impossible to count them. This little blossom, the enchanter's nightshade (drawn much larger than life), has only two.



I hope that you children, from now on, will be unwilling to pass by a flower without looking to see whether its stamens are few or many; and I hope you will try to carry away in your minds a clear idea of the size and shape of their dust boxes.



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