



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The Great Trees

Mrs. William Starr Dana

Most people seem surprised to learn that all kinds of trees have flowers. In March and April they go to the woods in search of the trailing arbutus, the violet, the anemone; and when they have picked a quantity of these, they come home and say, "These are the only flowers we saw to-day."

But if they had looked overhead, up into the trees, they would have seen many more; for each tree has its own flower, and most of the trees blossom very early in the year, before they put out their leaves. There is a good reason for this, which I will tell you by and by.



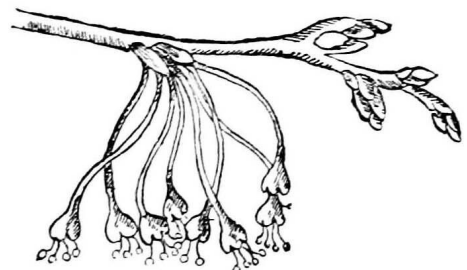
One of the early trees to flower is the swamp maple. In March or April its bright red blossoms tinge the wet woods with warm color. Sometimes the snow lies thick on the ground at this season, and the little red flower clusters fall, and look wonderfully pretty against the smooth white sheet which is drawn beneath the trees.

At the same season, in our city parks and streets, sharp eyes will discover the yellowish blossoms of the silver maple. Both of these trees flower before they leaf.

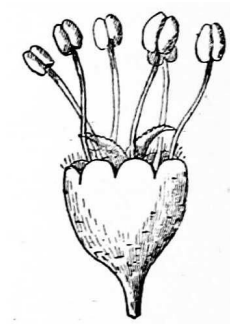
The building plan used by maple flowers is rather confusing. In one flower you will find both calyx and corolla, but not in another. One blossom will have both stamens and pistils, another will have no pistils.



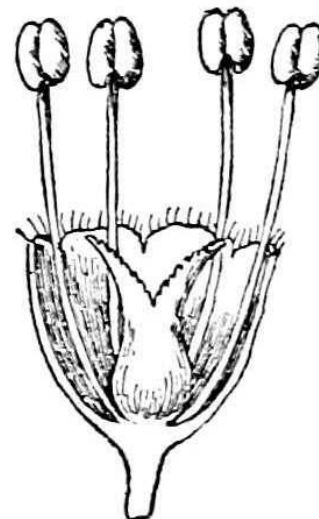
The picture above shows you a blossom from the sugar maple. It has stamens, but no pistils. Next you see what was once a flower containing both stamens and pistils. The withered stamens can still be seen; and the pistil is turning into the well-known maple key.



The great elms also put out their flowers before their leaves. Here you see a flower cluster from the white elm. The picture above shows you one of these little flowers enlarged; and in the picture below you have the blossom cut open so as to display its pistil, which grows into the winged fruit you saw on a previous picture.



In some of our city streets grows the poplar. Its flowers are crowded into long green tassels. Many of these fall to the pavement below, and lie there, looking like great caterpillars. These tassels are those which bear the flowers with stamens. Now, if we were in the woods, we should be pretty sure to find near by another poplar whose tassels do not fall so quickly. This is because these are made up of flowers with pistils. They cling to the tree not only till they have been powdered with pollen from the neighboring poplar, but till their tiny seeds have had time to ripen and are ready to start out on their life journey.



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