Government botanist retires

Department of Agriculture, Western Australia
MR CHARLES AUSTIN GARDNER, West Australian Government Botanist since 1927, retired from active service with the Department of Agriculture on July 5, 1960.

Mr. Gardner was born in Lancaster, England in 1896. As a boy he was keenly interested in botany and this interest was maintained when his family migrated to Western Australia in 1910. In 1920 he obtained his first Governmental appointment as botanical collector with the Forests Department and in the following year was a member of the Kimberley Exploration Expedition which investigated the north-west portion of the Kimberley Division of Western Australia.

In 1924, Mr. Gardner joined the staff of the Department of Agriculture and was appointed to the position of Government Botanist in 1927.

In 1937 he was appointed as the first Australian Liaison Officer to the Kew Herbarium in England and on his return to Western Australia in 1939 he commenced the task of re-organising the Perth Herbarium on scientific lines together with the preparation of a Flora of Western Australia.

One volume of the Flora has already been published and a mass of information has been collected which will be incorporated in the succeeding volumes. Mr. Gardner will continue his work on the Flora, after his retirement.

An energetic and enthusiastic field collector for many years, Mr. Gardner has travelled throughout the length and breadth of Western Australia covering many thousands of miles on foot in carefully-conducted botanical surveys of remote areas.

He has made many outstanding contributions to technical literature and has written a large number of articles of a more popular nature for "The Journal of Agriculture" and other publications.

His contributions to books on the wildflowers of Western Australia have aroused keen interest in our unique flora throughout the world, and he was co-author with Dr. H. W. Bennetts, of the book "Toxic Plants of Western Australia" which contained 45 line drawings and 15 watercolours by C. A. Gardner.

Western Australia has been particularly fortunate in having as its Government Botanist, a man who—in addition to possessing a wealth of scientific knowledge and the physical ability to range far afield in the pursuit of further knowledge—is a
talented artist. Through his drawings and paintings, which represented thousands of hours of pains-taking work, Mr. Gardner has been able to record for posterity much of the information garnered during a long and active career.

A keen photographer, he has also accumulated a magnificent collection of colour photographs of West Australian plants.

Stockowners throughout the State, and particularly in the northern pastoral areas are deeply indebted to Mr. Gardner for his research into stock losses from poison plants.

In 1940-44 he investigated the cause of extensive mortalities among animals travelling along the North-West stock routes and successfully identified a number of toxic species.

When in 1949, a co-operative investigation into Kimberley Horse Disease, the so-called “Walkabout Disease,” was inaugurated, the C.S.I.R.O., the Animal Industry Division of the Northern Territory and the West Australian Department of Agriculture collaborated in a huge survey of the distribution of the disease.

An important feature of the research was the botanical survey by Mr. Gardner of the plants on affected and non-affected areas which led to the incrimination of a species of Crotalaria (“Wedge-leaved Rattlepod) as the cause of the disease. This was subsequently proved by feeding tests and analyses.

Readers of “The Journal of Agriculture” who have shown keen interest in Mr. Gardner’s illustrated articles on “Trees of Western Australia” will be pleased to know that he intends to continue the series and that the illustrations will subsequently be used in a special section of the Flora of Western Australia.

A confirmed bachelor, Mr. Gardner prides himself on his cooking ability and despite an almost life-long addiction to strong-smelling pipes he has retained a discriminating palate and is a good judge of wines.

Officers of the Department of Agriculture who gathered to bid him farewell, paid him many sincere tributes and presented him with a number of records to augment the already extensive collection of musical classics which is another of his hobbies.

---

**TRACTOR SAFETY**

Only one person—the operator—should be permitted on the tractor platform when tractor is in operation.

The rate of tractor travel on hillsides and curves should always be such that there is no danger from tipping.

Refuel your tractor only when the engine has been shut off. Do not smoke or use an oil lantern while refueling.

When refilling the radiator be sure there is no steam pressure behind the cap to cause scalding when it is removed.

Be sure power-take-off shields and guards are in place and in good order before starting field work.

Tractor brakes should be properly adjusted.

Do not oil, grease or adjust a farm machine that is in motion.

Clothing worn by tractor or machine operator should be fairly tight and belted.

Loose jackets, skirts, shirts, or sleeves should not be permitted because of the danger of them getting into the moving parts.

All women operators should wear trousers or slacks.

Never drive a tractor too close to the edge of a ditch or creek.

Never operate your tractor in a closed garage or shed.

Be sure the gear shift lever of your tractor is in neutral before starting the engine.

When your tractor is hitched to a heavy load, always hitch to drawbar and never take up the slack in chain with a jerk.

Always keep tractor in gear when going down steep grades.

Never ride on drawbar of tractor or drawn implement.
Don’t wait – Act now
Nip weeds in the bud...

Control WILD TURNIP
Control RADISH & MUSTARD

SPRAY EARLY
FOR BUMPER CROPS

for
SPEEDY – ECONOMICAL
and
RELIABLE SERVICE

CONTACT

Elders

PERTH
BRANCHES, AGENTS
OR
MIDLAND JUNCTION STORE

Please mention the "Journal of Agriculture of W.A.,” when writing to advertisers