

Wildflowers
of
Western Australia

"I do think something should be done to make the Wildflowers of Western Australia better known!"

With these words Mrs. H. E. Wimperis, the wife of the former Director of Research at the British Air Ministry, when interviewed in Perth, W.A., last year, sowed the seeds for an idea which will soon result in coloured photographs of some of Western Australia's 6,000 species of wildflowers being sent to London for exhibition there and in other parts of the British Isles.

Mrs. Wimperis made her comment following a visit to an exhibition of wildflower photographs in the Perth windows

of Kodak (Australasia) Ltd., and it was a visit to the same exhibition that first interested Mrs. E. H. B. Lefroy, of Cranmore Park, Walebing, Western Australia, who is now arranging the show of the photographs abroad.

The photographs which depict the flowers' natural size, are the work of Miss Hilda Wright, a young West Australian, who, by profession, is a teacher of dresscutting at the Perth Technical College. Since earliest childhood Miss Wright has been interested in the wildflowers of her home State, but it was not until comparatively recently—about three years ago—that she commenced to transfer some of the natural beauty

of the bush to paper, first with the aid of a small folding camera and, later, with a stand camera loaned (and finally given) to her by an interested friend.

She commenced very modestly, photographing botanical specimens and experiencing the amateur's customary delight when an experiment turns out satisfactorily. By degrees she discovered that while her photographs were capturing the true spirit of the flowers, something was lacking—their vivid beauty was lost in the cold black and white or sepia of the usual photograph. She therefore got to work with her paint brush and in no time was achieving the end she desired—realistic

reproductions of the beauty of Western Australia's bush flowers.

Showing her work one day to a medical friend, Miss Wright was delighted to find him sufficiently interested to commission her to prepare a set of over 300 pictures (post card size) for his library. Her friends and students have generously co-operated, sending her specimens from many country districts and now, whereas once she divided her Spring week-ends between searching for specimens and photographing, developing and painting them, now she can devote her whole time to the technical processes, her supporters keeping her well-supplied with blooms.

The actual photographing of the flowers is no simple task. Sometimes as long as an hour will be spent in arranging the blossoms to suit the artist's taste, turning one flower to the left, another to the right, arranging a suitable background and generally making a study that is not only naturally perfect but artistically pleasing as well.

Each bloom must be perfect of its kind and in this manner Miss Wright has captured in her collection the glory of the blue leschenaultia, the dignity of different types of kangaroo paws, the delicate grace of a great variety of orchids and the subtle charm of innumerable tiny blossoms frequently over-

looked by the layman. No flower is too insignificant to escape her attention and, as her collection will show, her camera can discover rare beauty in the meanest of bush flowers. All the best-known varieties have found their way into her collection, as well as many of the more isolated types. With the co-operation of the Government Botanist she has appended the botanical as well as the common names to her photographs, thus making her collection a valuable one both scientifically and artistically.

Mrs. E. H. B. Lefroy, through whose interest the collection of photographs will go to Europe this year, will sail for London

during August. She will take with her a specially prepared portfolio of photographs which she intends exhibiting shortly after her arrival, not only to give people overseas an opportunity of learning more about the natural beauties of her home State, but also to try to encourage them to visit Western Australia to further their knowledge on the spot. As an ardent supporter of the Country Women's Association—which is affiliated with the Women's Institutes of Great Britain and the Associated Country Women of the World—she hopes that Miss Wright's Wildflowers might also form part of the West Australian display at the specialised exhibition at the Inter-

national Conference of Country Women to be held in June, 1939, in London.

Orders for individual pictures or collections of wildflower photographs will be taken by Mrs. Lefroy on Miss Wright's behalf, it being anticipated that museums in various parts of the British Isles will be interested in adding the pictures to their exhibits.

Mrs. Lefroy's address is:

C/o. Messrs. Dalgety & Co. Ltd.,
65-68 Leadenhall Street,
London, E.C.3.