

Protection of the Philippine Wild Flowers and Plants*

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Good Evening, ladies and gentlemen
of the Radio Audience:

The Bureau of Forestry is charged by law, among other things, with authority over the granting of licenses for the taking of forest products from all public forests or forest reserves. The granting of licenses to collect and remove forest products from public forests is so designed as to utilize and perpetuate the products of our forests by wise use. The basic law on forest conservation and utilization has, from time to time, been supplemented by specific laws to protect and conserve specific classes of products of our forests. One of these laws is Act No. 3983, entitled "An Act to Protect Wild Flowers and Plants in the Philippine Islands," approved on December 3, 1932.

The products of our forests are not only timber and other minor products to provide us shelter and countless things to make life more pleasant, but also wild flowers and plants which can easily provide for our aesthetic requirements and wants.

It is reported that the forests of the Philippines contain a large number of species which are decidedly ornamental, and are suited for cultivation. These usually occur in the forests as widely scattered individuals.

Some of the rarest orchids bearing some of the most beautiful and showiest groups of flowers found anywhere else in the world are found in the Philippine forests. Though growing in wild state, many

of these orchids have been cultivated and are successfully grown in the green houses of Europe and America. Orchids owe popularity to their unusually fascinating shapes, delicate color tones, and the lasting freshness with which the blossoms can keep on the plant.

Waling-waling (*Vanda sanderiana*) is the showiest of all Philippine orchids and is easily the aristocrat of the orchid world. Maybe the *Phalaenopsis* (*mariposa & tigre*) come next and a host of other beautiful orchids which adorn the homes of flower lovers in the City and in the provinces. There are still a great number of beautiful ornamental plants from the forests, aside from orchids, which can make our homes and yards pleasing to the eyes.

All of these are ours to possess or own under certain conditions. We can not just go to the mountains to collect them without restrictions and regulations, otherwise, they are bound to disappear forever. To this end, there was promulgated by the Secretary of Agriculture and Natural Resources on September 15, 1934, Forestry Administrative Order No. 10-1, otherwise, known as Regulations covering the collection, possession, transportation, sale or export of protected wild plants in the Philippines. Protected plants refer to all classes of species of the rare and flowering plants including

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orchids, ferns, lycopoda or club mosses, or other wild plants in the Philippines.

The Director of Forestry is the Executive Officer charged with the duty of supervising the enforcement of the provisions of Act 3983. He is empowered to issue four (4) kinds of licenses, as follows:

(a) Collector's license authorizing the holder thereof to collect twenty-five (25) or more wild plants for commercial purposes.

(b) Dealer's license authorizing the holder thereof to purchase, transport, sell or export protected plants.

(c) Gratuitous licenses authorizing the collection of protected plants for public uses by a government agency or for semi-public purposes by associations or organizations, or the annual collection of not more than twenty-four (24) protected wild plants for personal purposes by an individual: *Provided, however,* That no gratuitous license for personal purposes shall be granted to an individual for the same species of plants already collected without submitting sufficient reason therefor.

(d) Special permit authorizing the holder thereof to collect specimens of protected wild plants for scientific or educational purposes.

Licenses or permits, with the exception of dealer's license may be issued to:

(a) Citizens of the Philippine Islands or of the United States.

(b) Associations or corporations that are duly registered and authorized to transact business in the Philippine Islands and of which sixty-one per centum of the capital stock or interest in said capital stock is owned wholly by citizens of the Philippines, or of the United States.

(c) An individual applicant for license must be at least 21 years of age. A married woman must first obtain the marital consent of her husband.

Plants given away or donated to others by the owners shall, upon being transported to another place or municipality, be accom-

panied by a permit issued by a forest officer or any person duly authorized to issue such permit, otherwise, such plants shall be seized and forfeited, unless the holder thereof is willing to pay the regular and additional charges hereon.

However, permit to export protected wild flowers and plants is only granted by the Director of Forestry, Manila. Protected plants of all kinds shall be presumed to belong to the Government unless the contrary is proven.

What I have attempted to bring out are the important regulations which the Government has adopted to protect and conserve our wild ornamental plants. Details can be secured from the field and Manila Offices of the Bureau of Forestry. If each one of us will abide by the regulations it is believed that there are enough to go around for everyone who loves beautiful products of our forests and still have more for those who will come after us. I would, therefore, sound a general call for the conservation by wise use of forests and the products therefrom for our present use and for the use of the generations yet unborn.

"I am wondering what would have happened to me if fifty years ago a fluent talker had converted me to the theory of the eight-hour day, and convinced me that it was not fair to my fellow workers to put forth my best efforts in my work. I am glad that the eight-hour day had not been invented when I was a young man. If my life had been made up of eight-hour days I do not believe I could have accomplished a great deal. This country would not amount to as much as it does if the young men of fifty years ago had been afraid that they might earn more than they are paid."

—THOMAS A. EDISON.

As we walked about among the immense columns—columns that rose through a gray-green twilight until they disappeared in the clouds of the upper branches—we talked in low, hushed tones of the simple majesty of the great trees, of their long endurance. There is, as John Muir has pointed out, a strange air of other days about them. They are the same, century in and century out; they are life in its most permanent form.

—EDWIN WAY TEALE