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Wildflowers of Cape Breton i' by Robert Dann One of the most common and distinctive wildflowers to be found on Cape Breton in Autumn is the Pearly Everlasting (*Anaphalis margaritacea* • margarita is Latin for pearl) common throughout North America. It is a member of the Compositae Family (which is to say, very simply, that what appear to be individual flowers are in fact flower-heads composed of many florets). Some of its other common names are Ladies* Tobacco, Poverty-weed and Silver Button. But Pearly Everlasting most closely describes this delightful flower for it looks like a pearl and is everlasting as it will not wilt. This herbaceous perennial is 1-3 feet high and is found growing in bunches in old fields and along roadsides. The narrow linear leaves are 1-3 inches long and about 1/4 inch wide. The leaves and stem are covered with wooly, tiny white hairs, giving a grey-green sage-like color to the leaves. At the top of the plant is found a cluster of round, white pearl-like flowers with miniature petal-like white scales. The male flowers are yellow in the center. The male and female flowers grow on separate plants. They are cross-fertilized by moths and butterflies, though many other insects are common visitors. The Pearly Everlasting blooms from July until the frost. The everlasting flowers can be found into the winter. It was the custom of Cape Bretoners to gather the flowers to be used as stuffing for their pillows and mattresses. I am gathering the flower heads now to stuff a winter pillow. Pearly Everlasting is used in domestic medicine as an astringent. The leaves and blossoms are chewed to relieve irritations of the mouth and throat. The bruised leaves are said to aid the healing of local irritations. The astringent tea made by infusing a teaspoon of dried flowers and leaves to a cup of boiling water is healing to those afflicted with diarrhea. I always pick a few bouquets of Pearly Everlasting after the frost to keep in the house over winter to remind me of their season. The everlasting flowers are a joy. In the language and poetry of flowers a gift of Pearly Everlasting symbolizes never-ceasing remembrance. Perhaps the most ornamental of our Cape Breton wild Fall fruits is the Highbush-Cranberry (*Viburnum opulus*, variety *americanum* or *Viburnum trilobum*, the Old World variety). It is a member of the Honey Suckle Family and is related to the elderberry. Highbush-Cranberry is also known as Cramp bark, Guelder Rose, Snowball Tree, Cranberry Tree and Squawbush. It grows in wet, rich lowlands " along streams and in thicket borders of low woods, by walls and fences. It is a shrub or small tree growing to 12 feet, with 3-lobed leaves suggestive of maple leaves and bark ash-brown in color. In late Spring it has cream-white flower clusters 3-4 inches across. The drooping shiny-red berries appear in the Autumn and hang on the bushes all Winter. The berries soften and become better after the frost. Birds like these berries but rarely touch them until all other wild fruits are gone. The Highbush-Cranberries were used by the earliest settlers. With its more bitter taste than the true Bog-Cranberry, it is an excellent accompaniment to meat dishes. The fruit is antiscorbutic with a high vitamin C content. For a good, healthy winter drink make some Highbush-Cranberry juice: Put the berries into a kettle and just cover them with water. Simmer until soft,



about 5 minutes, and mash them. Then strain the juice (the stones are flat and almost circular) and pour into a sterilized bottle and seal with a crown cap. To make a beautiful colored, appetizing jelly, take the above juice, add sugar to taste and pectin to jell and put it up in preserving jars. As a domestic medicine, Highbush Cranberry bark or Cramp Bark (as it is called) is listed officially in the National Formulary as an antispasmodic used as a uterine sedative to relieve menstrual pains. Another name for this plant is Squawbush. The tea is made by infusing a tablespoon of the pulverised dried bark in a pint of boiling water and drinking it cold by ta-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 It is easy to dry-press flowers especially if you use an old telephone book. Merely arrange the plant the way you want it on a page and close the book. Put a board and a rock on top to evenly distribute the weight. It will be ready in four or five days. Have at least three pages between each plant to soak up the moisture.