This month a collection of miscellany:

I have, unfortunately, received only one more dye plant catalogue. It is, however, a good one on perennials from Garden Place, 6780 Heisley Road, Mentor, Ohio 44060. The catalogue is free, very well organized and easily read. I counted over 15 dye plants among their listings.

The Weavers Guild now has 3 chemicals for use in natural dyeing. Our recent addition is alum at 40 cents per pound (yes, that is the correct price!). We also have tin at $1.25 per ounce (a little goes a long way) and sodium hydrosulfite for use in dyeing with indigo at 25 cents per ounce (hard to find). If you wish to purchase any of these just give me a call (822-8358) and arrangements can be made to pick them up at my house (5245 Colfax Ave. S.) or at the Guild (I'm there Mon., Tues., and Wed. evenings from 6-8 p.m.).

I have often read that cochineal, until very recently, was used as a food coloring and was perhaps the red used in maraschino cherries, hot dogs, lipstic, etc. While browsing through a recent acquisition to my cookbook collection, I came upon a recipe that brought this suggestion to reality. I don't anticipate anyone actually using those adorable little bugs in their next batch of turkish delight, but I thought you would enjoy reading it if only for curiosity's sake.

Turkish Delight
(a soft cherry candy)

1 envelope gelatin (6 leaves, if leaf gelatin used)
½ cup cold water
juice of 2 lemons, strained
2 cups granulated sugar
1 teaspoon rose essence
1 cup almonds, blanched and slivered
cochineal (or red food coloring)
1 cup confectioner's sugar
2 tablespoons cornmeal

First: Add gelatin to water and dissolve over hot water. Add lemon juice and sugar; allow to melt slowly. When melted, boil quickly for 5 minutes. Add rose essence and almonds; pour ½ of the mixture into a greased soup plate. Second: Color remainder with cochineal and pour into second greased soup plate. When quite set and cold, turn out onto pastry board, cut in squares and roll in confectioner's sugar to which some cornmeal has been previously added.

Cooking cue: If mixture is difficult to remove from plate, dip in hot water to loosen.

Makes 45 1½-inch rectangles.


Perhaps we should add this experiment to our curriculum in Natural Dyes III!