

Along The Trail

by

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Down in Texas they split "cedar" posts. The rather rare and somewhat restricted golden-cheeked warbler is found up in the hills in the "cedar" brakes and when depicted in art is usually perched on a "cedar" twig. In Nevada and Arizona "cedar" telephone poles line the roadways. Lumber literature will tell you that "cedar" posts have the edge on redwood for durability in the ground.

Over in West Virginia when I was a kid, the "cedar" tree was the Christmas symbol. No one ever cut a pine tree for a Christmas tree when I was a kid and until I was 30 years old I never saw a redwood. They can sell firs and pseudo firs, redwoods and pines until the end of time but to me there will always be but one Christmas tree.

When we got a "cedar" Christmas tree, we got not only one that looked Christmasy, but we got one that smelled Christmasy, too. When you opened the door of anybody's house around Christmas time in those days you knew the season of the year even if you never saw the tree, and for weeks afterward the yuletide aroma continued to permeate the house.

Then a disease came by and settled on the "cedars." They got warty-looking brown galls on them. The apple growers tied them in with the rust on their apples and the agriculture men decided hte "cedar" tree had to go. They undertook an eradication program much of the magnitude of the Sierra ribes eradication form and whole fields and woods were cut and burned. But they never got them all and today a lone "cedar" tree stands here and there in the country where I was born. The beautiful red wood with its spicy moth repellent odor, of "cedar" chests comes from Virginia.

Here in this country where I now live we have so many cedars that it is hard to keep up on them all. The men who work in the woods have a "white cedar" and a "red cedar." One can buy "cedar" shingles — they are the best! One is called "canoe cedar" and the north coast Indians made their dug-outs from these trees.

Everybody knows "cedar." The funny part of it all is, there are no cedars native to the United States. The old World cedars; the Atlas cedars, the "Cedars of Lebanon" are the true cedar trees.

Then what is it we have been calling "cedars"? The golden-cheeked warbler sits in a juniper tree in Texas, the telephone poles in Nevada come from juniper, and our "cedar" chests are made of juniper wood.

In the northwest the cedar shingles come from an arborvitae and the early Indian hollowed out an old arborvitae log

to use in floating down to the sea.

Perhaps we learned about cedars from the Bible! We had to have a cedar tree, so the people of each region picked their own. The juniper is not even a conifer; its fruit is a berry. The fruit if the western "red cedar" is like a cluster of brown flowers; we call them cones. Look at the cones of some of the true cedars some day. The Atlas cedar grows in Santa Cruz — in someone's yard, but had its origin in Asia. The cone reminds me of a fir cone. It sits upright on the limb, I believe. Anyway it is a "real" cone — not a berry.

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