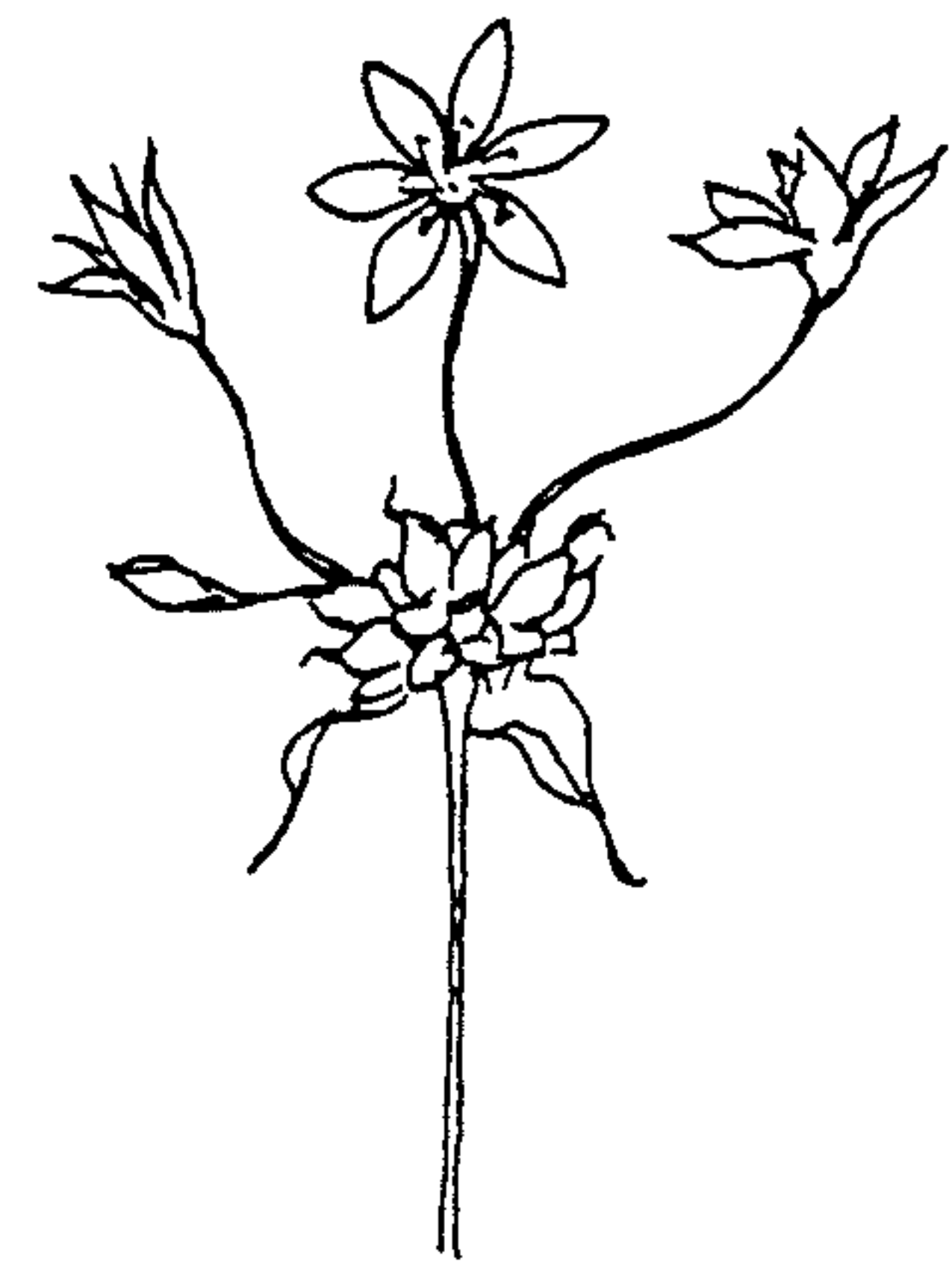


LOOK AGAIN !

Of all the herbaceous plants in the Lily Family, only the wild Onions (Alliums) seem to have earned our disapproval. But even this is attributable to a single species--the alien Allium vineale, or Field Garlic, which has become an obnoxious lawn weed.

The hollow cylindric (rather than flat) leaves of Field Garlic serve to separate it from our native species, which while sharing the distinctive onion odor are interesting, useful, and--like many other family members--have pretty flowers when seen at close range. Take the true Wild Onion (A. canadense) for example: Its umbels may contain only bulblets, but more often these are mixed with delicate, long-stalked pink or white flowers with widely spreading tepals, measuring one-half inch across. It will be found in open woods and fields, blooming in spring and early summer.

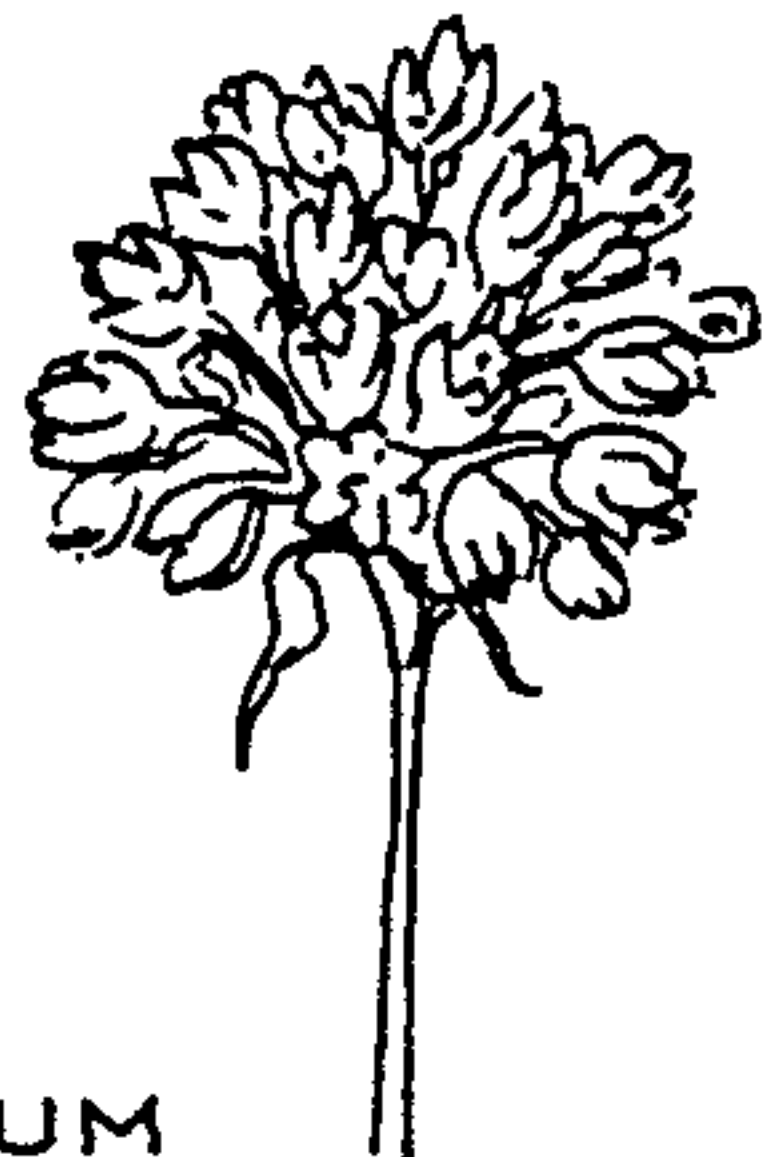


A. CANADENSE

This is followed by Nodding Onion, A. cernuum. In this the umbel consists wholly of flowers, which usually are an attractive purplish pink, with conspicuously protruding stamens. A curious crook in the flower stalk just below the inflorescence causes it to hang downward.



A. CERNUUM



A. TRICOCCUM

In spring, the broad strap-shaped leaves of A. tricoccum tell us where Ramps, or Wild Leeks, can be dug, but the flowers do not appear until summer, when the foliage has disappeared. The narrowly bell-shaped flowers are white or cream-colored, and are crowded into a rounded umbel atop a naked stalk.

Dick Smith