

LOOK AGAIN !

To anyone who is perplexed by the multiplicity of Aster species the Fleabanes (Erigeron) are a welcome relief, since only five kinds are to be encountered in the western Carolina mountains.

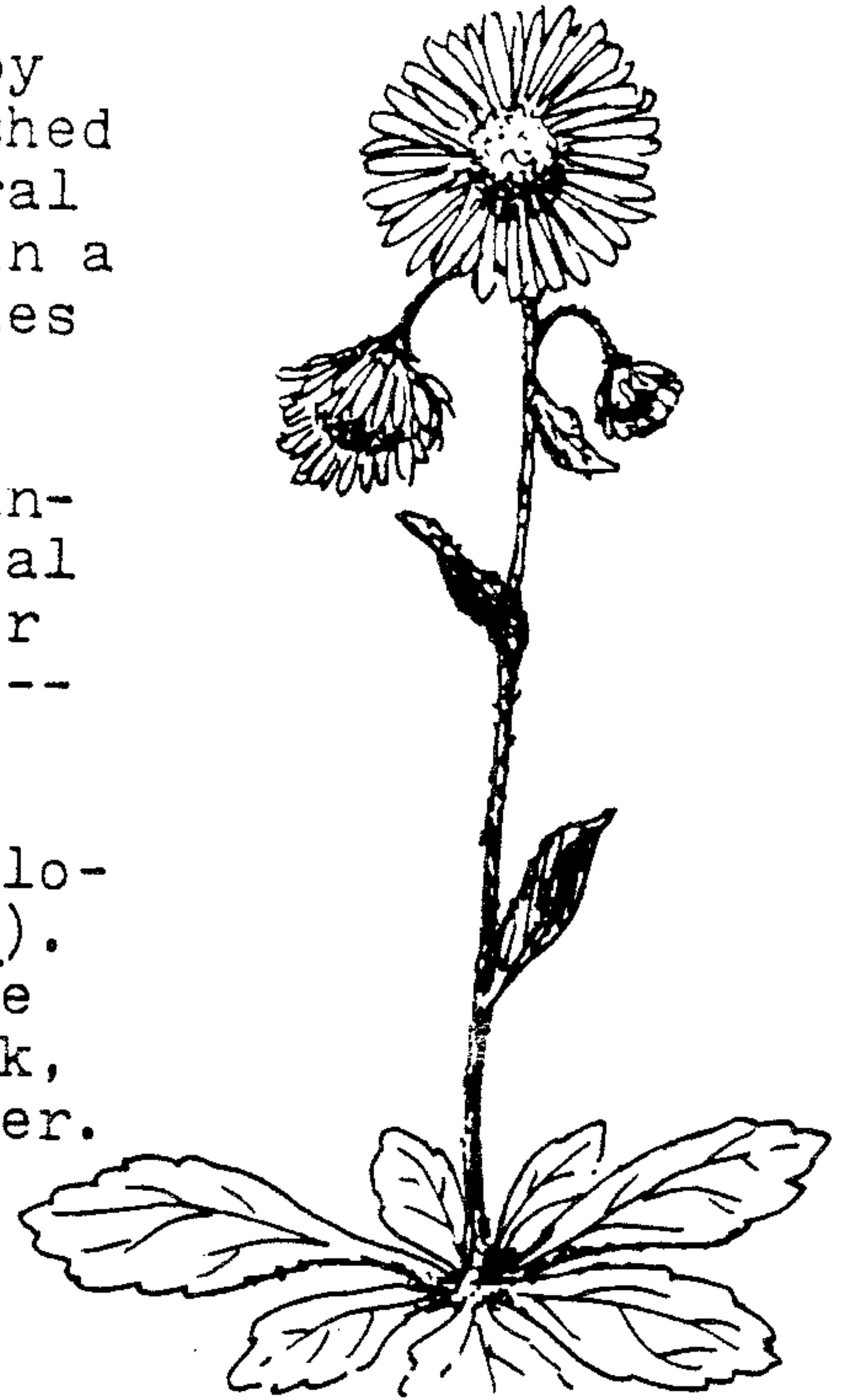
As a group, they are recognizable by their many ray-flowers, and can be distinguished from the Asters by the fact that the involucre bracts are of uniform size and are arranged in a single row instead of overlapping like shingles on a roof.

Erigeron pulchellus, or Robin's Plantain, is a hairy plant that arises from a basal rosette of leaves in early spring. Its flower heads are the largest--up to 1½ inches across--with white rays often tinged with lavender.

Following this at widely scattered locations is Common Fleabane (E. philadelphicus). This species is notable for having 100 or more exceedingly fine rays, usually a delicate pink, making up a head less than one inch in diameter. Its upper leaves clasp the stem.

Two others, with slightly smaller inflorescences, white or flushed with pink, bloom from late spring or early summer until fall. Daisy Fleabane (E. annuus) has sessile leaves with sharp teeth, and spreading hairs on the lower stem. In the similar Lesser Daisy Fleabane (E. strigosus) the leaves are mostly untoothed, and the hairs are appressed.

In contrast to these attractive wildflowers, Horseweed (E. canadensis) is a rank, diffuse weed. It has multitudes of tiny flower heads each of which has a few very short white rays.



E. ANNUUS

E. STRIGOSUS

Dick Smith