

## IN PRAISE OF WEEDS

Seldom does one hear words of praise for weeds. The word *weeds* spells drudgery for most boys and girls living on farms. Many of us "older boys" can still hear mother's words ringing in our ears: "Get up, lad, this is a good day to hoe out the weeds, the pesky things are getting ahead of us." So we carry a hatred of weeds, one acquired early in life. Yet, Nature must love weeds, she created so many of them and gave them such hardiness and perseverance. Lincoln's remark about the common people applies to them: "God must love them, He made so many of them."

It is not possible now to gather weeds from the field for our observation, but your school library has pictures of them. Select a picture of a weed that has a deep-diving root, like pigweed, lamb's quarters, ragweed, or even sow thistle. Have a Trailhitter draw the picture on the board so all can see root, stem, and foliage.

### we hit the trail

Some of our common valuable crops, like corn, have been pampered for so long that now they would vanish from the earth if left on their own. They have lost the ability to dive deep for food. Weeds, on the other hand, have had to struggle for their lives. Sweet clover is a good example of a weed, now grown for forage, that eats its way through hard soil. It is a soil restorer.

We'll discuss today how weeds have the ability to perform the following services: 1. by diving deep into the under-soil open up channels for roots of cultivated crops; 2. bring up food materials that reside in the under-soil; 3. loosen the under-soil; 4. build up a storage place for water used by crops growing on the surface layer (Haven't you noticed how crops growing on weedy soil go through a drought better than those on clean land?); 5. foliage and stems of weeds make excellent mulch; worn out land can be sweetened and enriched—brought back to productivity—by growing and plowing under weeds. So today, instead of lambasting weeds, we praise them.



Pigweed

February 25, 1952

## THE LARDER OF LIFE

A law on the statute books of our state requires the teaching of agriculture in the common schools. The intent of the law is not to make farmers of boys and girls, necessarily, but to give them a better understanding of farm work and rural living, that the hardships on the farm will not blind them to the many advantages; to help them to appreciate its joys, satisfactions, as well as its hardships, disappointments.

Half the young people living on farms today will not be farmers. But wherever they go and whatever they do, they will have an understanding of the work that feeds the nation, and cherish the memories of contacts with animals and soil, and the freedom of life in the open country. It is the most natural way of living that our civilization presents.

The basis of all farming is the soil. The soil is the larder that feeds the nation. 79 percent of the people of our nation are non-farmers, yet farmers and non-farmers alike must look to the soil for their food and fiber. In a glaring and complicated civilization we are apt to forget that it is soil, water, air, and sunshine and the labor of hands and brain that make a great nation.

### we hit the trail

The purpose of this broadcast is to teach the importance of farming. We will show that the millions of non-farmers, those who do not live on the land, extract their livelihood from the purchases, sale, processing, fabrication, and distribution of the products that came originally from the farms.

There are 550,000 retail stores for meats and groceries in our country, varying in size from the super-markets to the corner grocery. The average is about four employees per store—2,200,000 persons earning a livelihood by retailing products that originally came from the farms. That's only one type of employment. We'll spread on to packing industries, leather goods, bakeries, textiles, brewers and distillers, dairy products, canneries, etc. Is soil conservation a farm problem solely?

March 3, 1952