

Every one is familiar with the Cinnamon vine (*Dioscorea Batatas*), its clean, glossy foliage and rapid growth rendering it a universal favorite. The so-called Air Potato, however, a tropical species of the same genus, is apparently not well-known outside of Florida, where it is often grown for the sake of the large, edible tubers that form in the axils of the leaves. During the past summer this vine has covered a post in my garden with its luxuriant green foliage. The leaves are almost orbicular in outline, and fully three times as large as those of the cinnamon vine; and there are now several tubers hanging from the main stem.—*C. L. Pollard*.

According to Professor Joseph LeConte of the University of California, a vigorous vegetation, as for example an average field-crop or a thick forest, makes about 2,000 pounds of dried organic matter per annum per acre, or 100 tons per century. But 100 tons of vegetable matter compressed to the specific gravity of coal and spread over an acre would make a layer less than two-thirds of an inch deep. Yet vegetable matter in changing to coal loses on an average four-fifths of its weight, and therefore vigorous vegetation at present could make only about one-eighth of an inch of coal per century. To make a layer one foot thick would require nearly ten thousand years, but the aggregate thickness in certain coal basins is 100 or even 150 feet, and this would require, the former nearly a million and the latter a million four hundred thousand years.

In September last, while operating in southwestern Kansas, near Belvidere, Kiowa county, Mr. C. N. Gould of Southwest Kansas College, Winfield, Kansas, who was in my party, informed me that some nine miles southeast of Belvidere, on Elk Creek, near the northeast corner of Comanche county, he had seen a little thorny bush bearing bean-pods, that no one could name for him. I at once suspected it to be the mesquite, but had never heard of its growing north of Texas, the boundary line of which is some 300 miles south of that point. On the 15th we visited this place, and Mr. Gould pointed out the bush. It was only four feet high, and fruiting profusely. My suspicions were fully sustained, as it proved to be the *Prosopis juliflora*, at least that form of it in which the leaflets are set far apart, and which was called *P. glandulosa* by Torrey, who considered it distinct from the form in Arizona and westward. This is almost certainly the most northern point at which this genus has thus far been found, and it does not occur in any of the books that include only the State of Kansas in their southern range. Its low, stunted character further shows that this little straggler was out of its normal habitat and had reached its extreme northern limit. The spot is about twenty-five miles north of the Kansas-Oklahoma line.—*Lester F. Ward, U. S. National Museum*.