



# The plant man

photos by Trevor Hopkin and Don Hall, AV Services

More than six decades after he established the herbarium that now bears his name, the former head of the University's biology department George Ledingham still drops in as often as his 95-year-old bones will allow.

**George  
Ledingham's  
60-year project**



**Lilium philadelphicum var. andicum - Western red lily**

The inconspicuous room, ripe with the smell of mothballs, is tucked into a remote corner of the University's Lab Cafeteria. The herbarium houses more than 50,000 dried vascular plants, 10,000 bryophyte samples, and 10,000 varieties of lichens. Most of them collected by Ledingham himself. Within the fading brown cabinets that fill the room you'll find *Anemone*



*Equisetum pratense* - horsetail

*patens*, *Lilium philadelphicum* and *Trifolium repen*. Then, of course, there is the *Astragalus ledinghamii*. But Ledingham is much too humble to talk of his 1966 discovery on a rocky Iranian hillside 12 kilometres north of Shiraz, an ancient capital of Persia.



**Cypripedium calceolus - yellow lady's slipper**

In addition to the Iranian gem, Ledingham has contributed much to the accumulated knowledge of the flora of Saskatchewan. His life's work has not gone unappreciated. He is an honorary member of the Ottawa Field-Naturalists Club and has received awards from Parks Canada, Environment Canada and the Canadian Nature Federation. As well, he was the



**Astragalus ledinghamii** - milk vetch

recipient of a Canada 125 Commemorative Medal, the Saskatchewan Order of Merit, and the Harkin Conservation Award. In 1986 he received an honorary degree from the institution he so faithfully served since 1945. **D**