The overflowing giggles and the vigorous applause, soon ceased as the class teacher entered. She found Raami and Shaami, the twin sisters being flocked by the other students in the class. Everyone’s face was glowing with glee. The girls hurriedly returned to their seats when they saw their teacher and soon the class order was restored. The Teacher enquired the reason behind their Merriment. One of the courageous girls stood up and said, "...Raami and Shaami were showing to us a strange flower. It is such an uncommon one and all of us were listening to them teacher..."

The teacher turned to Raami and Shaami in anticipation of a reply from them. Raami and Shaami stood up and said in affirmative, "...That is true teacher; last weekend we had gone for a short trekking at Devarayanadurga hills. It is a pilgrim centre in the midst of a forest area. We had collected some attractive and strange looking objects there and we were sharing our experience with our friends teacher..."

Nodding her head, the class teacher said, "...What are those strange objects?... let me see, if they are worth their strange looks, I urge you to contribute those things to the school’s science museum..." Agreeing to her teacher, Shaami said, "...That’s a good idea teacher, the objects we collected, my father told, are the flowers. This flower is an uncommon one and not found in the urban localities. The interesting thing about this is, it can be preserved for many months even after it is dried. My father told that such dried flowers are collected and sold in the florist shops and boutiques in the Cities. Look at these flowers teacher...". Saying so she pulled out from her bag a small bundle of dried flower stalks. Once again, all the students tried to peek at it while still sitting in their seats. The teacher with a tinge of disbelief on her face took the flowers in her hand and looked at it. They were like artificial flowers made out of wood shavings and starched paper. With much reluctance and hesitation, she sniffed the petals to find that the flowers lack any fragrance. Yet the flowers were attractive. She looked at it again and again and asked the twin sisters, "...Is this a natural flower grown on a plant?..." Raami jumped out

Continued on Page 16
My family and my names:
I belong to Sweet potato family (Convolvulaceae)

Botanists call me:
Argyreia cuneata

While my local names are:
English:
Purple Convolvulus
Kannada: Achhegida, Kallana hambu
Marathi:
Bondwail, Mahalungi

How do I look?
I am an attractive climbing shrub growing up to 1.5 m in height.
I secrete copious quantities of milky Sap when I am injured.
My leaves are Bright green and egg shaped with short stalks.
Leaves on the underside have soft hair.
Flowers are identical with the small bells in their size and shape. They are bright purple in colour and appear in dense clusters. Bumblebees and Beetles are my insect friends and they regularly visit me to Carry back the nectar. The dried fruit is made of a whorl of woody sepals and a marble sized centre.

How am I useful?
The flowers are used for decorations. The dried fruits are used for flower arrangement in vases. They are sold as “wood roses” or everlasting flowers. The leaves are reported to be effective in diabetes. Leaf paste is used to stop bleeding. Flowers also yield a Purple dye.

How can you grow me?
It is easy. You can grow me by sowing the seeds.

Where can you see me?
I am commonly seen in the wilderness, in the fallow lands, open fields and sometimes along The wayside fences.
of her seat and said in a confirming tone, "...that is what which attracted us teacher, it is indeed a natural flower. We have seen the flower in its original form on the plant. No doubt in it's genuineness teacher, It is just natural. My father mentioned to us that it is called Everlasting flower..." "Oooool..." the room filled with several exclamatory sounds.

"...How was the plant to look?...", The Teacher tried to know more about from Shaami.

Shaami said in a confident tone, "...It was a kind of bush with drooping and climbing shoots teacher. There were egg shaped leaves all over. Flowers were bell shaped and deep purple. My father told that it is a relative of Sweet potato"... Shaami Paused for a while to recollect the other features of it and continued. "...My father also said that these woody flowers are in fact the dried fruits of the plant. The petal like objects are the dried sepals while the central dome like structure is the core of the fruit, which contains the seeds. He also told that this is called Wood rose..."

"...Is it Wood rose or Rosewood?...", the teacher asked at once. "...NO teacher, It is Wood rose and not Rosewood...", Shaami corrected. "Oooool..." there was one more round of exclamatory sounds in the classroom.

Finally, the teacher appreciated the enthusiasm and the observations made by the twin sisters. Later Roami and Shaami wholeheartedly donated the bundle of wood roses to their school museum amidst the loud applause from their friends.

While coming back from the school on that evening, the beaming sisters slipped into their own world to find out more from the plant (what did the twin sisters find out from the plant? Turn to page14).