



Neglected Treasures

➤ GARDEN enthusiasts will go to all kinds of trouble to induce rare and delicate native plants to grow under their care. It is really something to be able to boast of a good clump of moccasin flowers or a bed of dogtooth violets or a veil of maiden-hair fern over a moist rockery. Maybe we value things in proportion to the trouble they cause us. In any case, there seems little inclination to cultivate some of the stout and lusty flowers of late summer and early autumn, that anybody can grow. Only a few gardens can show goldenrods and wild asters, liatris and cardinal-flower.

Fewer still have members of the horsemint group, though these are perhaps the most easily grown of all. About

all they require is to be pulled up by the roots, stuck in a hole and have dirt tramped on them. They do like good soil and reasonably abundant moisture, but like all late-summer flowers they can endure a considerable degree of drought.

Perhaps one reason why they have not been more generally accepted is the rather strong colors of their flowers. Oswego tea, otherwise known as bee balm, is about the most bumptious red-head you can find among flowers. It just doesn't match with anything. But it can be used very effectively if you have a mass of rather dark foliage that needs lighting up.

Similarly the wild bergamot is hard to fit into most orthodox garden color schemes. Its tousel-headed flowers are variously described as lilac and purple, but a closer characterization would be a blazing electric blue. Yet in the wild state, growing along roadsides or in field corners with goldenrod or wild senna or other yellow-flowered plants, it fits into the sunlit picture very harmoniously. Perhaps that would be the way to handle it in a garden: massed with yellow-flowered plants at an open vista's end.

The horsemints are true members of the mint family, all right; their leaves have something of that strong, aromatic odor that is associated with all mints. The "horse" part of the name is probably a reference to its strong, lusty growth; horses certainly do not go after them the way cats go after catnip.

This group of plants is as American as cornbread and baked beans. The only suggestion of foreignism is in their generic name, *Monarda*, which commemorates a sixteenth-century physician, Nicolas Monardes. However, Monardes was much interested in New World botany and wrote a good deal about American plants, so it is fair enough that he should have an American botanical monument in this plant name.

Science News Letter, September 7, 1946

TEXTILES

"Azlon" Is Newest Protein Base Fiber

➤ ADD TO rayon and nylon, "azlon."

A conference called by the Federal Trade Commission has agreed that "azlon" will be the official name for protein base fibers used as a textile product in making garments.

Man-made, natural protein base fibers, or "azlon," are manufactured principally from casein of milk, soybeans and other sources of natural protein.

Science News Letter, September 7, 1946

INVENTION

Refrigerator with Two Temperatures for Homes

➤ A TWO-TEMPERATURE refrigerator, with ice-cube freezer in a compartment entirely separated from the food-cooling section, promises greater ease and efficiency in tomorrow's housekeeping. It is covered by U.S. patent 2,405,392, recently issued to Leonard W. Atchison of Schenectady, N. Y.

The freezing compartment, at the top of the cabinet, receives full benefit of the mechanical refrigeration. The food compartment below, which is to be kept at a somewhat higher temperature—40 or 45 degrees Fahrenheit—has its own cooling coil, which is filled with a mixture of oil and an easily evaporated refrigerant of the Freon type. Extensions of this coil into the upper compartment are connected with a condenser that functions as a heat exchanger. When the lower compartment tends to warm up, some of the refrigerant in its coil evaporates. The vapor rises into the heat exchanger, where it is condensed and re-cooled, flowing back into the food-cooling coil. The process is thus one of extreme simplicity and fool-proof efficiency.

Patent rights have been assigned to the General Electric Company.

Science News Letter, September 7, 1946

GEOPHYSICS

Sub-Surface Explosions Make Greater Havoc

➤ THE ATOM BOMB is a much more formidable weapon when exploded under water than it is when exploded in the air. This was made apparent by comparative motion pictures of Able and Baker tests shown before an audience of returned Bikini correspondents.

Much of the footage was taken by automatic cameras on towers on the atoll's islets and on ships in the target array. The rest was "shot" from planes flying as close to the scene of the explosions as the pilots dared.

Within seconds after the explosion burst violently through the lagoon's surface, a dense white mist had risen to many times masthead height and completely engulfed the ships. Charged as it was with radioactivity of deadly intensity, this mist was far worse than any poison gas used in Flanders during World War I. No protective clothing or gas mask could prevent its lethal

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radiations from penetrating the flesh and bones of anyone on the decks.

At the same time, hundred-foot waves were started, that sent deluges of green water, also radioactive, washing over the ships. These waves subsided to a tenth of their height before they had traveled three miles, but in the meantime they did their mischief. And even before they struck, the wracking shock wave had sped through the water like an earthquake, ripping hull plates open and starting even the stoutest of warships towards the bottom.

But of all the effects of this triple-threat weapon, radioactivity is by far the worst, in the opinion of Vice Adm. W. H. P. Blandy, who met the correspondents in a press conference before the showing of the films. Terming the bomb a "most insidious weapon," he pointed out that its effects might be felt not only by its immediate victims but that its "untold harm" might extend into future generations.

Adm. Blandy reiterated his wish to see the atom bomb effectively outlawed, not by mere pious words of renunciation but with a ban backed up by effective international action. If we cannot get that, he said, he is in favor of keeping the weapon and continuing research on it.

Science News Letter, September 7, 1946

MEDICINE

Minibunnies Used To Test Injection Fluids

► A NEW RACE of minibunnies, known as "Polish" rabbits, are proving helpful in tests for the safety of solutions to be injected into patients' veins, Dr. Carl E. Georgi, of the University of Nebraska, reported.

The salt solution frequently given patients after operations, sugar solution given as nourishment for patients unable to eat, and perhaps even blood plasma are among those which might be tested with the bunnies' aid. Full-sized rabbits are now used in testing these solutions for materials that might cause fever in the patient.

The Polish rabbits are miniature animals bred from white New Zealand rabbits, Dr. Georgi explained. Those which cannot qualify for show purposes can be obtained from dealers. These animals, slightly larger than the show animals, weigh about two and one-half to three and one-half pounds.

They take half the space usually required to keep animals for such pur-

poses and eat less, so that they can be left unattended over week-ends and holidays.

Another advantage is that less of the solution to be tested is needed, since the amount used is based on the weight of the test animal. With the usual large,

well-fed laboratory animal this often becomes such a big dose it is difficult to give. The vein in the ear, used for injecting the test solution, is satisfactory; and it is easy, Dr. Georgi said, to get accustomed to the smaller-sized ear.

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Books of the Week

AIR AFFAIRS: An International Quarterly Journal—*Air Affairs, Inc.*, 130 p., subscription \$5. per year. Vol. 1, No. 1.

APPLE QUALITY AND ITS EFFECT ON PRICE AND RATE OF SALE—G. E. Blanch—*Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station*, 50 p., tables, paper, 5 cents. Bulletin 826.

APPLE-TREE PRUNING WOUNDS: Treatment and Healing in Sound and Winter-Injured Trees—D. S. Welch and L. H. MacDaniels—*Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station*, 23 p., illus., paper, 5 cents. Bulletin 821.

FIRST DENVER CONGRESS ON AIR EDUCATION: Held at Denver, Colo., July 23 to 28, 1945. *University of Denver Press*, 139 p., \$2.50.

FROM THE RESEARCH LABORATORY TO THE ARMED FORCES—*Mellon Institute of Industrial Research*, 32 p., paper, free. Talks by specialists in wartime research on medicine, synthetic rubber, radio, etc.

INVENTING FOR PROFIT: Louis Chayka—*Humbries*, 205 p., \$2.50. This book is a fascinating revelation of those people who anxiously try their skill on improving all kinds of ideas. The chapters discuss the patent system, the requirements of the Patent Office, the ways to exploit inventions, and many allied subjects.

OFF TO A GOOD START: A Handbook for Modern Parents—Irma S. Black—*Harcourt*, 256 p., \$2.50. A nontechnical book about the day-to-day problems which confront the parents of small children.

PLANNING PROGRAMS FOR VETERANS IN RURAL AREAS: Edwin R. Hoskins—*Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station*, 57 p., tables, paper, 10 cents. Bulletin 825.

PRINCIPLES OF DYNAMIC PSYCHIATRY—Jules H. Masserman, M.D.—*Saunders*, 322 p., illus., \$4. The book presents the fundamentals of dynamic psychology and clinical psychiatry briefly, clearly and systematically, and so prepares the student for clinical training in diagnoses and therapy through direct work with patients.

RESULTS TO DATE OF STUDIES OF THE DURABILITY OF NATIVE WOODS TREATED AND UNTREATED—C. N. Whitney—*Dept. of Agric., Northern Rocky Mountain Forest and Range Experiment Station*, 54 p., tables, paper, free. Station Paper No. 5.

SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS—Herbert J. Cooper, ed.—*Chemical Publishing Co., Inc.*, 305 p., illus., \$6. A discussion of a wide range of instruments designed for making physical measurements. Not only laboratory instruments but also those used in the field, in industry and commerce are covered.

THE SPECIES OF PLATYCOPIA SARS (COPEPODA CALANOIDA)—Mildred Stratton Wilson—*Smithsonian Institution*, 16 p.,

illus., paper, 15 cents. Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, Vol. 106, No. 9.

THE STORY OF THE THERMOMETER—Benjamin De Leon—*Science Learning Aids Pub. Co.*, 32 p., tables and illus., paper, 35 cents. Lessons in Science Series for School and Home Study No. 1. A booklet suitable for the 9th grade science student, giving a picture of the kind of relationship that exists between the subject matter and those men who have developed it.

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RESOURCES

Rich Cattle Land Found in Colombia

► NATURE, assisted slightly by man in modern times, is creating in the interior of Colombia, S. A., a rich grassland comparable to the American great plains or the Argentine pampas, says Dr. R. A. Stirton, University of California paleontologist.

Dr. Stirton says that this area, called the llanos, Spanish for "great plain," covers more than half of Colombia, and is still expanding. The paleontologist has just returned from making a geological study of the eastern flank of the Andes along the edge of this great plain.

He says that evidently there is now under way a gradual geological uplifting of the llanos area; at the same time the inhabitants of the area are constantly burning off the grass on the plain, which also burns part of the bordering jungle. Dr. Stirton says these two factors help expand the plain.

The area awaits only transportation facilities, such as highways and railroads, for its development as a rich cattle range. Dr. Stirton reports the soil appears to be good, and, though the area is just north of the equator, the climate along the Andean foothills is excellent.

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Cotton's importance in American economy is indicated by the employment it provides; in 1939, about one-quarter of the total farm population of the United States grew cotton, and 500,000 persons worked in cotton textile making.