



BREEDING STUDIES — Close-up view shows flower of a selected strain of Bermuda grass being emasculated for breeding studies at the Georgia Coastal Plains Experiment Station in Tifton.

In California one cantaloup introduced from India appears resistant to a new strain of Downy Mildew that has attacked the cantaloup industry in that state. From New York we have reports that beans introduced from Turkey show resistance to bean anthracnose, a disease that so far we have had little success in combating. In North Carolina plant breeders have recently found nematode resistance in lespedeza. The recently introduced Roan variety is the first lespedeza with nematode resistance. The source for that resistance was an introduction from the Orient.

Castor beans look like a possible crop for replacing cotton on some lands in Oklahoma, western Arkansas, and northern Texas. Castor beans are a source of oil for many industrial uses. Research is under way on breeding and selecting high-yielding, shatter-resistant varieties adapted to mechanical harvesting. About 90,000 acres are being grown this year.

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R. P. CARGILLE

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Safflower is a promising new oil crop adapted to the wheat areas of the Western Plains. Safflower seed yields are of very high quality for cooking or for paints and varnishes and meal of high protein content for livestock feed. Seed of high-oil-content varieties was available for planting about 150,000 acres last year.

Sesame is under study as a possible vegetable oil crop in the Coastal Plains area from North Carolina to east Texas. The development of non-shattering high-yielding varieties of sesame is far enough along that the first seed may be offered to farmers within relatively few years.

And if you like sweetened jujubes, you can get a superior American variety of this centuries-old Chinese fruit, thanks to plant explorer Frank N. Meyer who in 1908 brought large-fruited varieties to the Southern Great Plains Field Station at Woodward, Okla. Although the jujube may never be a major crop, it meets the Southwest's needs for a fruit tree that thrives in hot, dry weather and withstands winter freezes without injury.

Science News Letter, November 3, 1951

MEDICINE

Aid for Childless Women Seen in Hormone Chemical

► RESEARCH FOR couples wanting children and for others wanting to postpone parenthood was reported at the New York Academy of Sciences conference in New York on world population problems and birth control.

A hormone chemical from the pituitary gland in the head, which has given the famous anti-arthritis ACTH, will be the answer to the problem of the woman who cannot have children because of ovarian failure, in the opinion of Dr. M. Edward Davis of the Chicago Lying-In Hospital and the University of Chicago.

For the woman blessed with enough children, there is a gel which has provided effective birth control in 98.2% of 704 patients. This was reported by Drs. G. Wilson Hunter, C. B. Darner and J. B. Gillam of Fargo, N. D., and Dr. William B. Stromme of Minneapolis, Minn.

The gel is a "smooth, white, odorless preparation" containing the sperm-killing chemicals, Ricinoleic acid and p-Diisobutylphenoxy-polyethoxyethanol. It is non-irritating, spreads readily and has been found acceptable as well as effective.

"The marked improvement in maternal and infant mortality and morbidity (sickness) statistics in the last 20 years," the North Dakota and Minnesota doctors stated, "is due to the widespread availability of contraceptive information as well as the improved methods of treating these patients."

Their studies were designed to test a method which besides being effective would be easy to use, non-irritating, inexpensive and do away with mechanical devices.

The discovery of ACTH, hormone chemical from the pituitary gland which stimulates the adrenals to produce cortisone, should spur scientists to find a similar hormone that would stimulate growth and rupture of the egg-containing sacs in the ovaries and production of corpus luteum which produces the pregnancy hormone.

ACTH has been tried in the hope of correcting ovarian failure in childless women, but the results have been irregular and not sustained.

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ACOUSTICS

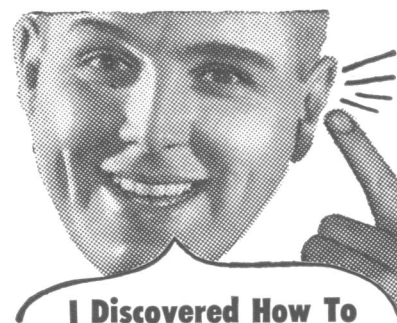
Hearing Aid Automatically Suppresses Loud Noises

► A HEARING aid with a self-regulating noise suppressor to dull sudden, loud sharp noises is the latest help to hard of hearing persons.

It also has a finger-tip control that dims background rumble, designed to help in listening to conversation in a busy restaurant or on the street.

In this last respect, the new aid is "an improvement on the human ear," says Dr. Irving I. Schachtel, president of Sonotone Corporation of New York which manufactures it.

Science News Letter, November 3, 1951



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