

# • New Machines and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **COLLAPSIBLE CARRIER** can be used to carry cartons of milk home from the store or beverage glasses outdoors. The lightweight carrier is made from aluminum and has a plastic carrying handle. It weighs approximately one pound.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1958

⚙️ **GOLFING TUBES** are designed to separate and protect each club in a golfer's bag. The 33½-inch-long tubes of vinyl plastic can be used with any type golf bag. Each tube is snapped into position in a rigid plastic template made in various sizes and shapes to fit the bags.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1958

⚙️ **WHIRLING TOY** has a variable pitch propeller for either vertical or curving flights. The toy is made in two parts: a flexible plastic ring to which are attached four propeller blades and a launcher. Power is supplied by rubber bands attached to a pull-knob and nylon cord.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1958

⚙️ **PLASTIC BLINDERS** help bowlers avoid distraction from adjoining alleys. The blinders, shown in the photograph, are essentially frames with extensions forward on



either side. They have no lenses. The bowling aids are molded of an acetate plastic.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1958

⚙️ **HALF-GALLON CONTAINER** for hot or cold liquids has graduation markings in pints and quarts. Made of a polyethylene plastic, the container is non-breakable and

can be sterilized by boiling. A cover for the spout is attached to the container by a molded-in tape.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1958

⚙️ **UNDERWATER SPOTLIGHT** for skin-divers has a sealed beam spot of 40,000 candlepower and a double-powered battery power pack. The unified battery-and-case has been pressurized so it can function to depths of 250 feet. Two screw caps attach the battery unit to the removable headlight and its handle.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1958

⚙️ **RANGE-TOP SET** made of a polyethylene plastic is described as resisting heat distortion. The set consists of a grease cup and shakers for salt and pepper. The grease cup is designed to hold an empty tin can.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1958

⚙️ **GARDEN SPEAKER** for high-fidelity fans can be connected, if you have an outdoor outlet, to any set, radio or record player. The mushroom-shaped top, molded of unbreakable fiber glass, holds the speaker. The unit is water-proofed and garden green in color.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1958



## Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

► A COMMON "fault" of mankind in dealing with nature is the tendency to interpret the world of plants, animals and non-living things from the "human point of view." That is, man ascribes human traits or motives to the non-human objects of nature. The progress of science can, to a large extent, be measured by the degree to which he has been able to lay aside his own human preconceptions to look at nature objectively.

For example, we almost instinctively want to say a plant kept in the shade bends toward greatest source of illumination because it "is seeking light." This is giving the plant credit for reasoning power that it totally lacks.

Actually, the plant bends toward light because plant growth hormones are more active on the darker side of a stem than on the lighter. The darker side therefore grows faster than the lighter side, and the stem

### Nature's Point of View



bends towards the light after a few hours. This purely chemical and mechanical response benefits the plant by helping it to get into the best light for growth. However, this is a far cry from saying that the plant "seeks" light.

A similar situation is that of plants whose blossoms open in the daytime but close at night. This does not happen because a plant "wants" to protect the blossoms at night or expose them to sun or pollinating insects during the day.

What happens is that, with the coming of day, temperature changes affect the growth rate of cells in the petals. An increase in temperature is followed by faster growth of cells on the inner side, thus opening the petals. Cooling leads to faster growth of the cells on the outside and the petals curve in, the space for their growth is limited, closing the blossom with night.

"Cheery," "sweet," "singing for joy," "bursting with exuberance"—these and a thousand expressions like them have been used to talk about and explain the nature of bird song. But closer to the fact of the matter would be "belligerence."

Objective study has shown most birds apparently sing to stake out their private, inviolate territory and advertise their unpleasant intentions towards interlopers. This seems to be the major function of bird song, a function hardly expected until man learned to observe nature from nature's point of view.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1958