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Lizard Feeds on Flowers

Zoology

It is not always the loveliest creature that feeds on the daintiest diet. The chuckwalla lizard of the Southwest, the second largest lizard in the United States, is not exactly a Ziegfield beauty among the animals, yet his choice appetite runs very strongly to flowers. A specimen recently in its stomach 118 flower-heads had in its stomach 118 flower-heads of three species of composite plants, and three flowers of the yellow bean bush. These represented the breakfast of the chuckwalla. In his second stomach—the fortunate reptile has two—was another mass of flower tissue, but more advanced in digestion.

The chuckwalla has for years been a favorite dish among the Indians, and many a lost prospector has overcome the white man's repugnance to eating "varmints", to find with surprise that this big lizard is made of good meat. After the recently captured specimen had yielded up its skin for museum purposes, its flesh was roasted, and eight persons had a chance to find out what chuckwalla meat tastes like.

Science News-Letter, August 17, 1929

Helium Atoms on Radio

Physics

A sound like hail pattering against a window pane was heard from the loud speakers of millions of radio sets throughout the country on Saturday evening, August 10. It was not static, but the sound of helium atoms leaving the radioactive metal uranium, and bombarding a small piece of metal. The experiment took place in a room of the General Electric Company's research laboratory and was broadcast over a nation-wide chain of 41 radio stations.

The apparatus used for the experiment is known as a Geiger counter, and was described by A. L. Hawkins, executive engineer of the Research Laboratory. The piece of uranium is no larger than a five-cent piece and the atoms leave it faster than the fire of a machine gun. Yet they are so small that more than a million million can rest on the head of a pin, and not until five thousand million years have elapsed would half of the uranium be used up.

Science News-Letter, August 17, 1929

The economic loss from automobile accidents in the United States is estimated at \$800,000,000 a year.

Chinese apartment houses have the storage rooms and laundries on the roof instead of in the basement.