



Chokeberry

THE bright berries of the chokeberry bush, ranging from red through purple to black, were ripe a month or more ago, but the fall of the leaves has made the shrubs more conspicuous. This ornamental wild plant with the unattractive name is one of the most widely distributed of our native species; it is found all the way from Maine to Minnesota and south to the Gulf of Mexico.

It is one of the plants that has proved a puzzle to the botanists. Some claim that the red and purple-black berries mark entirely distinct species, while others claim that they are all varieties of the same thing. Regarding their kinship, too, there is a deal of dispute, for they are assigned to the wild apple genus by one group of experts, while another school puts them in with the mountain-ash tribe. However, this is mainly a matter for doctors to disagree on, for wild apples and mountain ash themselves are pretty closely related.

The common name was probably suggested to the first incautious person who tried eating the attractive-looking fruits, for they are worse than a green quince for puckeriness. This violent astringency seems to be the property of the whole apple family; it is prominent in green apples and quinces, and survives in the mature fruits of a few of their kindred, of which the chokeberry is an outstanding representative.

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Mountain Park New Mexico

RADIO-METEOROLOGY

Good Radio Reception Seen For Fall by Astronomer

GOOD radio reception of broadcasting stations, accompanied by few su-spots, is predicted for the coming fall months by Dr. Harlan T. Stetson, director of the Perkins Observatory at Ohio Wesleyan University, Delaware, Ohio. A detailed report of his findings appear in the *Journal of the Franklin Institute*, published in Philadelphia. By the time winter commences, however, there will be a general increase in the number of sunspots, which will be associated with somewhat poorer reception of broadcasting stations.

But even though the spots will be slightly more numerous than now, we will then be so far past the maximum in 1928 and 1929 of the eleven-year solar cycle that radio will not be affected nearly as much as in those years. After that the spots will become still less frequent, and by "1934 solar activity should be as quiescent as at the last minimum in 1923."

The Blame On Sunspots

Dr. Stetson warns against trying to blame too much on sunspots, however.

"The mention of sunspots invariably raises the question of a possible connection between spots on the sun and terrestrial phenomena," he says. "Some statisticians with an insatiable appetite for correlations have attempted to connect with sunspots almost every cycle in world affairs from fluctuations in the New York stock market to the fecundity of rabbits in northern Canada. In the popular mind almost every world catastrophe has sooner or later been attributed to sunspots, from a Florida hurricane to the great World War, both of which, by the way, did culminate around a sunspot maximum."

However, Dr. Stetson points out, there are some phenomena which have definitely been shown to be related to sunspots, such as magnetism, displays of the northern lights and radio reception. By means of a series of measurements since 1926 of the reception of station WBBM, in Chicago, as received in Massachusetts first, and now in Ohio as well, it was demonstrated that "long distance night reception in the broadcast zone is in general poor when

sunspots are numerous, and good when the spots are few."

Dr. Stetson found that in addition to the eleven year cycle of sunspots there is a smaller period of about fifteen months, and that there is an exactly similar period of variation in the radio reception. In December, 1928, he predicted a marked increase in sunspots in September or October, 1929, a prediction which was entirely fulfilled.

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ARCHAEOLOGY

Ancient Art Forgery Dug Up in Italy

FAKING art works so as to make a cheap article appear rare and valuable is an old, old trade, and was practised by Phoenician traders to fool their Etruscan customers in Italy, over 2,500 years ago.

A vase, which is now recognized as one of these ancient art forgeries, was dug up recently in Italy, and for a time it has perplexed archaeologists at the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania. But the mystery is now solved.

The vase bears symbols which are apparently Egyptian hieroglyphics. But Egyptologists pronounced the markings meaningless. It appears that the Egyptians were famous as glass makers and workers in ceramics at the time this vase was made, about 700 B. C., and Egyptian ware was in demand among connoisseurs of Italy. Some Phoenician traders who sold such articles overseas, made cheaper vessels and covered them with designs and hieroglyphics to look Egyptian, and so cheated the Etruscans.

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