



Spring Baths for Trees

MARCH is a good time to give city trees and shrubs a good thoroughgoing bath, with soap and water, advises L. B. Sisson, industrial fellow at the Mellon Institute of Industrial Research, Pittsburgh. This is especially recommended in the case of evergreens, to rid their leaves of their overcoats of soot acquired during the winter.

"It seems not to be generally understood," he states, "that this coating is impervious to sunlight and that rain will not remove it. Therefore, unwashed plants may starve regardless of the amount of sunlight available to them."

"At the start of the growing season, evergreens depend on their older leaves to function as food factories. Sunlight being one of the necessary elements in the making of food, it is obvious that when these older leaves are sealed against sunlight they can not and do not operate as they should."

For small trees and shrubs, Mr. Sisson recommends a thorough sponging by hand, using a suds of pure soap and water, with the addition of a little sodium metaphosphate as a water softener. Larger trees of course require the use of a power spray pump, with a good hosing off afterwards.

Trees that will grow in smoky cities are a very small company. If your town is really thoroughly committed to a pall of industrial and domestic smoke, it is of little use to attempt evergreens. Favorite among harassed city foresters is the European sycamore, or more properly plane-tree. It seems to have very high resistance to soot.

Another fairly successful smoke-fighter is the ginkgo, known also as the maiden-hair tree because its leaves resemble those of the maiden-hair fern.

It has been a town tree for centuries in China and Japan, and it has been transplanted successfully into temperate countries everywhere. There are young ginkgos around the Battery in New York, and Washington, D. C., has many magnificent mature specimens.

The chinaberry, which grows everywhere in the South, is credited with being able to withstand city conditions, but it will not thrive in the colder northern latitudes.

A third smoke-resisting Oriental immigrant is the ailanthus. This will grow

where even the European sycamore is choked out; it is the last green thing left alive in the desolate backyard deserts of tenement districts. In one of his most poignant short stories, the late O. Henry made effective use of a description of one of these trees, whose name apparently he did not know. Perhaps it was just as well; it might have been just one more turn than the heart-strings of his readers could have endured, had he mentioned that the other name of ailanthus is "Tree of Heaven."

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ARCHAEOLOGY-SURGERY

Cutting Hole in Head Was Ancient Cure for Sinus

Evidence of Prehistoric Suffering and Surgery Revealed by Skulls Unearthed at Monte Alban

CURING sinus trouble by the heroic remedy of cutting a hole in the aching head was attempted by Indian surgeons in prehistoric American civilization, discoveries in Mexico reveal.

The operation was a technical success, perfect—slightly marred by the fact that the patient died.

Two cases of ancient skull surgery, one identified as a serious sinus case, have been found at Monte Alban, Mexico's prehistoric city famed for its treasure tomb revelations and other evidences of a remarkable civilization which Mexican archaeologists are now uncovering.

The prehistoric sinus sufferer's condition is shown by bony degeneration above the left eye, according to Dr. Daniel de la Borbolla, anthropologist of the Monte Alban expedition. The Indian doctor cut a small round hole less than an inch in diameter, whether to release pressure or to let out evil spirits, no one will ever know.

A second skull found immediately after the first discovery also bears marks of this prehistoric skull cutting known as trepanning. This patient, however, had better adjustment of bony tissue following the operation, suggesting that he survived for a while, at least.

Present explorations at the remarkable mountain top city of Monte Alban are about to end. Funds from private sources, with which Dr. Alfonso Caso, leader of the expedition, has attempted

to maintain the work, are exhausted. Dr. Caso, discoverer of the Monte Alban treasure of 1932, Dr. Borbolla, staff anthropologist, and other Mexican scientists, were relieved of their official positions when the present administration went into power in Mexico at the end of 1934. Largely through personal efforts of staff members, the Monte Alban explorations were carried on this year.

Important evidence—although not conclusive—has been found that the peak period of Monte Alban's history was about 300 to 500 A. D. This would make Monte Alban contemporaneous with the early era of the great Mayan empire, which lay farther south and east.

Another important discovery this year is a tomb with many hieroglyphs. These may throw new light on Zapotecan Indian script, which is a far greater mystery than Mayan or Aztec writing.

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Automobile horns and traffic whistles are banned in the streets of Rome.

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