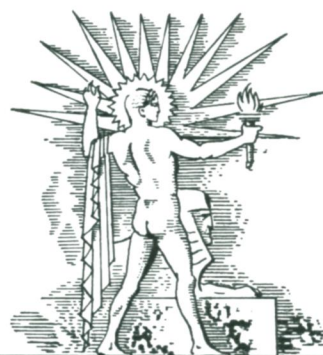


PRICE  
15¢

# SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

THE WEEKLY SUMMARY OF CURRENT SCIENCE •



December 2, 1939

Beauty From Waste

See Page 358

A S C I E N C E S E R V I C E P U B L I C A T I O N

## Do You Know?

There are more than 100 types of soil in Florida, says a state experiment station chemist.

The New Mexican hairless cat, exhibited at cat shows 30 years ago, may have become an extinct breed.

Before the World War Germany depended on imports for 20% of her food; now she has reduced this dependence to 18%.

Real topaz is not always yellow: the crystals may range from an almost colorless clarity to red, yellow, brown, green, or blue.

Owners of privately owned trucks who are still allowed to operate them in Germany have been ordered to convert them to consume gas.

That the United States should buy Iceland and Greenland from Denmark was proposed by Secretary Seward after the United States bought Alaska from Russia.

To test wearing qualities of different kinds of wool in Navajo Indian rugs, six rugs have been placed on the floor of a busy corner of the Department of the Interior cafeteria in Washington.

Government engineers are at work in seven states to investigate possible sources of such strategic minerals as chromium, tin, manganese, tungsten, and antimony.

## QUESTIONS DISCUSSED IN THIS ISSUE

Most articles which appear in SCIENCE NEWS LETTER are based on communications to Science Service, or on papers before meetings. Where published sources are used they are referred to in the article.

### ASTRONOMY

How has the testing of telescope mirrors been simplified? p. 357.

How is the largest star Mira like an egg? p. 359.

### BOTANY

What effect has radio on corn seedlings? p. 361.

### ENGINEERING

What keeps you from getting 450 miles to the gallon? p. 360.

Where are automobiles likely to be run on illuminating gas? p. 361.

### GENERAL SCIENCE

What complaint have scientists to make about British censorship? p. 360.

### MEDICINE

How can an individual be made "immune" to poison ivy? p. 355.

How did Dr. Sabin locate the body's factories for making germ fighters? p. 355.

What discovery has facilitated the administration of sex hormone pills? p. 360.

What drug relieves hay fever and asthma? p. 356.

What should you use to take paint off your hands? p. 364.

### ORNITHOLOGY

Where was the unicorn bird found? p. 360.

### PALEONTOLOGY

What sort of beauty has been found in the waste of coal pits? p. 358.

### PHYSICS

How could a magnetic mine be made to work? p. 358.

What use have physicists for a searchlight? p. 365.

### POPULATION

How do census takers know that their methods will work? p. 362.

### PSYCHOLOGY

Can truthful propaganda be effective? p. 367.

The modern homing pigeon is different from the pigeon used by the Greeks to release names of Olympic game winners.

Rich resources of gas with high content of helium are reported to have been found in the Greater Donetz Coal Basin of southern Russia.

Arsenals and Federal munition depots in the United States are rated capable of producing only 10% of the war materials for an emergency; the other 90% would have to be produced by civilian industrial plants.

Pelicans in the London Zoo are being taught to eat a meat diet instead of their accustomed fish, due to wartime shortages.

Regardless of the kind of feeding given, about one newborn baby in three will lose five to eight per cent. of birth weight in first two weeks of life, a Chicago physician reports.

More than half the cases of fractured spines are not accompanied by paralysis, and with adequate treatment most patients may recover and return to normal life, says a Birmingham physician.

## SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

Vol. 36 DECEMBER 2, 1939 No. 23

The Weekly Summary of Current Science, published every Saturday by SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc., 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington, D. C. Edited by WATSON DAVIS.

Subscriptions—\$5.00 a year; two years \$7.00; 15 cents a copy. Ten or more copies to same address, 5 cents a copy. Back numbers more than six months old, 25 cents.

In requesting change of address, please give your old address as well as the new one, at least two weeks before change is to become effective.

Copyright, 1939, by Science Service, Inc. Reproduction of any portion of SCIENCE NEWS LETTER is strictly prohibited. Newspapers, magazines and other publications are invited to avail themselves of the numerous syndicate services issued by Science Service.

Cable address: Scienservc, Washington.

Entered as second class matter at the post-

office at Washington, D. C., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Established in mimeographed form March 18, 1922. Title registered as trademark, U. S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, Abridged Guide, and in the Engineering Index.

Members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science have privilege of subscribing to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER at \$3 a year.

The New York Museum of Science and Industry has elected SCIENCE NEWS LETTER as its official publication to be received by its members.

Advertising rates on application. Member Audit Bureau of Circulation.

SCIENCE SERVICE is the Institution for the Popularization of Science organized 1921 as a non-profit corporation, with trustees nominated by the National Academy of Sciences, the National Research Council, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the E. W. Scripps Estate and Journalistic profession.

Board of Trustees—Honorary President: William E. Ritter, University of California. Representing the American Association for the Advancement of Science; J. McKeen Cattell, Edi-

tor, Science; Henry B. Ward, University of Illinois; Edwin G. Conklin, President, American Philosophical Society. Representing the National Academy of Sciences: W. H. Howell, Vice-President and Chairman of Executive Committee, Johns Hopkins University; R. A. Millikan, California Institute of Technology; Harlow Shapley, Harvard College Observatory. Representing National Research Council: C. G. Abbot, Secretary, Smithsonian Institution; Harrison E. Howe, Editor, Industrial and Engineering Chemistry; Ross G. Harrison, Yale University. Representing Journalistic Profession: John H. Finley, Editor, New York Times; Neil H. Swanson, Baltimore Evening Sun; O. W. Riegel, Washington and Lee School of Journalism. Representing E. W. Scripps Estate: Harry L. Smith-ton, Treasurer, Cincinnati, Ohio; Warren S. Thompson, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio; Karl Bickel, Scripps Howard Newspapers.

Staff—Director, Watson Davis; Writers, Frank Thone, Emily C. Davis, Jane Stafford, Marjorie Van de Water, Robert Potter; Correspondents in principal cities and centers of research. Photography: Fremont Davis; Librarian: Minna Gill; Sales and Advertising: Hallie Jenkins, Austin Winant, Howard Bandy.