



### Live Christmas Trees

► A CHRISTMAS TREE can serve for several Christmases, and be better and bigger each year, if we take the trouble to get a live one and see that it stays alive. And there's no great trick to that, either. Just get a good little fir or spruce, with its roots protected by a compact ball of earth and set it in a tub or heavy basket. Keep it indoors as long as the Yule season lasts, then move it outside until it is needed again next year.

Contrary to a widespread impression, such live Christmas trees are not expensive. John H. Derby, a fire prevention engineer of New York City, states that for several years he has had charge of Christmas decorations in large office buildings, and has been able to secure live five-foot trees at a quantity price of \$2.50 each, including the red-painted tubs or baskets in which they stand. Presumably the retail price per single tree would be higher; but there is still a considerable spread between the figure of \$2.50 and the \$3.50 to \$5 which New York dealers charged for cut Christmas trees of the same size last year.

When the live Christmas tree has served its immediate purpose, it is taken care of by being set in a previously dug pit outdoors, with the burlap-wrapped ball of earth left undisturbed about its roots, and the top guyed against wind pressure. Soil well mixed with manure or compost should be packed in around the ball, and a four-inch depression left at the top, to be filled with water once a week for two weeks, if outdoor temperature remains above freezing.

A tree thus treated is practically certain to survive, and may be brought indoors again a year hence. Or it may be left where it is, to become a part of the permanent plantings around your home. Either way has its own appeal. There is

something intriguing about the idea of having a pet tree that grows up with the children, like a pet dog or pony. On the other hand, if you have space enough in your yard, the family might like to have an outdoor "family" of former Christmas trees, each with its own crop of pleasant memories.

*Science News Letter, December 23, 1944*

### MEDICINE

## Rabbit Fever May Yield To New Chemical Remedy

► HOPE THAT rabbit fever, or tularemia, may be successfully treated by a new chemical remedy of the same general type as penicillin appears in a report by Dr. F. R. Heilman of the Mayo Clinic.

The new substance is called streptomycin. It comes from a living organism that is halfway between a fungus and a bacteria, *Actinomyces griseus*, instead of from a mold as penicillin does. Streptomycin was discovered by Dr. Albert Schatz, Dr. Elizabeth Bugie and Prof. Selman A. Waksman of Rutgers University.

After test tube experiments showed that rabbit fever germs were very sensitive to the action of streptomycin, Dr. Heilman and associates, Miss Nellie Greenburg, Miss Mary Knutson and Miss Beatrice Bennett, gave it to mice that had killing doses of rabbit fever germs in their bodies. Of 30 untreated mice, all died of rabbit fever within 96 hours after being infected. The 30 mice which got daily doses of streptomycin for 10 days all survived.

The results of this study, Dr. Heilman says in his report, suggest "that this drug may be useful in the treatment of tularemia (rabbit fever) in man."

Tularemia, he also points out, is a widespread disease, killing from 3 to 5 of every 100 persons it attacks. Even when it does not kill its victims, they are sick from four weeks to several months. A serum has been developed which helps in some cases, but the serum itself has caused illness in as many as half the patients. Neither penicillin nor sulfa drugs has been effective as a remedy.

*Science News Letter, December 23, 1944*

### ZOOLOGY

## Old-World Chameleons Arrive at Washington Zoo

► THREE OLD-WORLD chameleons, with parrot toes and monkey tails, have

been added to the collection in the reptile house of the National Zoological Park in Washington. They come from the province of Algarve, in Portugal. They arrived by air express, having been sent by George Constantinides, formerly head gardener at the Zoo, now employed by the American embassy in Lisbon. Director William M. Mann of the Zoological Park stated that they seemed a trifle chilled and stiff at first, but soon perked up and made themselves at home.

Old-World chameleons are quite unlike the little lizards that are sold to Florida tourists as chameleons. They are much larger, and belong to a different reptilian family. They are especially well adapted to hanging onto things. The four toes on each foot are paired, two pointing backward, two forward, like a parrot's. The tail is prehensile, like a monkey's. The lightning-like tongue is extraordinarily long; it can snap up an insect about the animal's whole body-length away.

Most extraordinary feature, perhaps, are the chameleon's eyes. They are swivel-mounted, turning freely in any direction. More than that, they are independent of each other: one eye can be trained dead ahead while the other is looking squarely on the beam, directly overhead, or even astern.

*Science News Letter, December 23, 1944*

### WANTED

#### AN UNUSUAL PERSON FOR A VERY SPECIAL JOB

The Director of THE MESA VERDE EXPLORERS' CAMP FOR BOYS needs a secretary—someone specially qualified by temperament and experience to fill this unique post. Applicant must be proficient in shorthand, typing, and simple bookkeeping; should be able to frequently write letters following sketchy memos, to build up and maintain contacts with young explorers and their parents, to meet the public well during the summer months in Mesa Verde National Park.

It is important that the person chosen for this assignment be enthusiastic about outdoor life and capable of enjoying living in a small mountain community in Colorado during the winter months and in Mesa Verde National Park during the spring and summer. Please don't apply unless you are perfectly content to substitute hiking, horse-back riding, reading, etc., for the more artificial urban types of recreation.

Applicant must be ready to start service immediately helping with Explorers' Camp 1945 membership campaign and remaining at least until end of next summer for service in Mesa Verde and the La Plate Mountains. Beginning salary \$125.00 per month plus board and room during summer months in Mesa Verde National Park.

This assignment demands someone with unusual talents, a spirit of adventure, and personal initiative. If you qualify, please send photo and description of qualifications to:

ANSEL F. HALL

Director, Mesa Verde Explorers' Camp  
for Boys, Mancos, Colorado