

Do You Know?

California and Iowa rate first and second in U. S. *honey* production.

High temperatures are not pleasing to *desert reptiles* as commonly supposed; all of them will die if exposed too long to direct summer sun.

Several billion *bacteria* were found in a teaspoonful of scrapings from the hull of a boat that had been in the water 36 months.

Silicone rubber, a new synthetic, is as pliable as soft putty, but when rolled into a round mass will bounce like a natural rubber ball.

Dogs have proved valuable in the war because their keen sense of smell can detect a strange presence at distances up to 500 feet depending on weather and wind conditions.

Nearly 20,000,000 *fur-bearing animals* were taken in the United States and Alaska during 1943; the fur catch was worth approximately \$100,000,000 to the trappers.

As *animals* are not allowed in public air raid shelters in England, at the height of the London raids, 7241 animals which had been buried under debris were rescued in a single week.

Cabbage contains a substance, though not as strong as penicillin, that acts against bacteria, and its presence in sufficient quantity is believed to prevent the development of objectionable colors, odors, and flavors in sauerkraut.

The pine-looper, a forest pest known technically as *Bupalus piniarius*, is being killed in Sweden by spraying from a low-flying plane a preparation called gesarol which is harmless to humans and higher animals.

Long, narrow, irregularly-shaped *oysters*, found on uncultivated reefs in the South, are known as coon oysters, and owe their shape, it is thought, to soft, muddy bottoms and over-crowding of oysters in a narrow zone.

Largest and most prized member of the herring family is the *shad*, generally regarded as one of the best fishes of the Atlantic Coast; it is now a Pacific Coast fish since its transplanting there in the 1870's.



Evergreen Leaves

► EVERGREENS, we are rather prone to assume without thinking particularly about it, hang onto their leaves indefinitely. We see perennial green on needle-leaved trees like pine and spruce, or broad-leaved ones like magnolia and holly, and it seems as if they always kept the same set of leaves. When we walk under them we of course realize immediately the error of such an assumption, for the ground is always littered with brown, dead foliage—often carpeted with these discarded leaves.

Actually, each kind of evergreen has its own length of leaf-life and its own mode of letting go of dead leaves. Pines, for example, keep their leaves from two to half-a-dozen years, according to species. Magnolias generally lose last year's leaves during the current year's growth.

You can get a pretty fair indication of how long an evergreen tree or shrub hangs onto its leaves by looking at the twigs. If the leaves are bunched out near the ends, they don't stay on very long after their first season; if they clothe the twigs "way back to the elbows" they are more persistent. You can get a more exact notion by looking for the circling clusters of leaf-scars that mark the ends of each year's growth. Counting backward from the ends of the present shoots, you can easily tell how old a given twig is, until the bark grows so rough that the leaf-scars are lost.

As new leaves unfold from their buds in spring, there is a sharp color contrast between them and the persisting older leaves. New leaves are light green, even pale; old leaves are dark. As spring passes over into summer, however, this color difference is lost in the darkening of the maturing leaves.

Science News Letter, February 24, 1945

CHEMISTRY

Activated Clay Filter For De-Leading Gasoline

► DE-LEADING leaded gasoline is something soldiers very much want to do, when they need field-stove fuel or cleaning fluid and only ethyl gasoline is available. To accomplish this, F. E. Neef, Jr., of Detroit, has invented a process on which he has received U. S. patent 2,368,261. Rights to manufacture and use are assigned, royalty-free, to the government.

The process is quite simple. It consists merely in filtering the gasoline through a column of fine-grained clay (bentonite) which has been activated either by heating or by treatment with hydrochloric or sulfuric acid. The inventor states that the action is not a simple physical filtering one, but that there is a chemical reaction between the dissolved chemical and the activated clay.

Science News Letter, February 24, 1945

Facts ABOUT



SCIENCE AT THE BATTLEFRONT

— — — LISTEN — — —

"ADVENTURES IN SCIENCE"

WITH
WATSON DAVIS

and

Rear Adm. J. A. Furer, U.S.N.
SATURDAY, MARCH 3
2:15 EWT—CBS
Science Service Radio Feature