



### Attack Ragweed Now!

➤ 2,4-D WAS ONE of a thousand or so chemical compounds on which experiments were conducted during the war, with the idea of ruining enemy crops by spraying them with it, from low-swooping airplanes. Hostilities ended before this particular kind of biological warfare could be put into practice.

Because it had been discovered that 2,4-D kills broadleaved plants but does little harm to most kinds of grass, it was first touted as a lawn-weed eradicator. It does very well at that, too. Then its virtues as a slayer of massed weed patches began to be discovered, and it is being used this season in combating poison ivy, Jap honeysuckle and similar pests.

Last season enough tests were made on the ragweeds with it to show its great usefulness in subduing these causes of most of American hayfever sneezes to demonstrate its practicability in this field of weed combat also. It has been put to

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large-scale use this season, and should be in every place where ragweed or other hayfever pests grow.

Foresighted city fathers who 2,4-D'd their ragweed patches a month ago were able to save a good many dollars, for when the weeds are young they will succumb to very dilute solutions. Now that the weeds have grown tall and tough-leaved a stronger solution will be required—the regular one-to-a-thousand formula that is considered strong enough medicine for practically all weeds. This may not kill all the ragweed outright, but it will prevent it from coming into bloom and shedding pollen; which of course is the important thing.

No time is to be lost now. Both tall and low ragweeds come into bloom early in August in our northernmost states, and the wave of pollen-shedding (and sneezing) rolls southward, reaching the Gulf states after early frosts have checked ragweed growth in the North.

This is an especially opportune year for an all-out attack on ragweed growth in communities that recently had their troubles with high water. Low-lying land in railroad yards and "the bottoms" generally, which is normally a great place for tall ragweed, has had its weed crops pretty well drowned, leaving only the upland areas to be mopped up by the sprayer crews.

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#### PHYSICS

### "Seeing Eye" Fuze Used On Rockets During War

➤ A "SEEING EYE" fuze, that operated on daylight instead of the radio waves of the proximity fuze, was used on rockets during the war, it is now disclosed. This optical proximity fuze is described in detail by Frank A. Zupa of the Bell Telephone Laboratories, *Army Ordnance* (July-Aug.).

Essential parts of the device were a ring-shaped lens built into its nose, a photocell, an amplifier and a selective switch. When the rocket was fired, the selective switch armed the fuze by throwing the amplifier into circuit.

While the rocket was in flight, daylight entering through the lens and striking the photocell maintained a certain level of current that did not activate the detonating mechanism. As the missile approached its target, however, some of the light was cut off by the target itself, and the resulting change in current level served to set off the explosive charge.

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#### MEDICINE

### Pyribenzamine Ointment Relieves Itching Skin

➤ ITCHING SKIN can be relieved in most patients by an ointment containing one of the new hayfever remedies, Drs. Samuel M. Feinberg and Theodore B. Bernstein, of Northwestern University Medical School, report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (July 5).

Pyribenzamine is the chemical they used on some 50 patients. Other of the new anti-hayfever remedies might be equally useful in ointment form, they state. None of these chemicals, including pyribenzamine, is a cure for hayfever, but they give relief of symptoms to some.

Eczema was the cause of the itching in 33 of the patients treated with the new ointment. The itching was consistently relieved in 24 of them. Some had more relief from the pyribenzamine ointment than they had had from anything they had used on their skins, including local anesthetics.

Eight of nine patients with another kind of itching, technically known as pruritus ani, were also relieved by the ointment.

The ointment does not cure the underlying condition, which may or may not be an allergy, but it does relieve the itching which is often the most distressing symptom and in some cases the skin inflammation improves.

The idea of using pyribenzamine in an ointment for relief of itching came from finding that when given by mouth it greatly relieved the itching of hives due to allergy. Before having the chemical put into an ointment, the Chicago doctors soaked cotton in a solution of the chemical and tried that. This gave relief of an itching nose and upper lip which was the only unrelieved symptom of a patient they had been treating for ragweed-caused hayfever for years.

*Science News Letter, July 19, 1947*

#### CHEMISTRY

### Wetproof Paper Process

➤ WETPROOF PAPER, impervious to most oils as well, is made by a process on which patent 2,423,555 has been issued to C. D. Ender of Wilmington, Del., assignor to the Hercules Powder Company. Chlorinated rubber is the principal ingredient applied to the paper as it is run through the machine in a continuous web.

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