

Salinas, Calif., since 1942—the year the Japanese cut the U. S. off from the natural rubber plantations of the Far East. Then, a few weeks after Pearl Harbor, Congress authorized 32,000 acres of guayule planting in California as an emergency source of rubber.

Not much rubber was obtained. It took until 1944 for the first plants to be harvested and the cost per pound of guayule rubber was very high. Synthetic rubber was developed meanwhile to meet America's need.

But the research on guayule continued. The Agriculture Department believes the plant may some day be grown profitably on some 2,000,000 acres of dust-dry land in Texas.

Test plantings have been carried out with the aid of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station. Other plantings have been made in California on Government-owned range land.

One of the new hybrids developed by the scientists is reported to breed true from seed and to carry first-generation vigor into succeeding generations. It is believed that seedlings of the productive new strains will produce about 1,200 pounds of rubber per acre in five years of growth.

Guayule will probably never supply all the natural rubber this country needs. But with the tropical rubber belt of Indonesia and Malays under increasing Communist pressure, the U. S. is once again eyeing this desert shrub as a possible "living reserve" of rubber here at home.

Science News Letter, November 4, 1950

GENERAL SCIENCE

UNESCO Gift Stamps Help Teach Science Overseas

► YOUR quarter can help send film equipment or medical and scientific books to institutions in countries that cannot now buy these and other needed educational

materials because of their dollar shortages.

A plan by which school children, youth groups, adult organizations and all others can contribute to reconstruction overseas is being discussed in Washington. Known as the UNESCO Gift Stamp program, small contributors would buy stamps toward the purchase of \$10 gift coupons. These gift coupons are now being used to buy books, films and other educational, scientific and cultural supplies for countries overseas.

The United Nations Commission for UNESCO states in Washington that the Gift Stamps are expected to be available after the first of the year.

Specific projects for which the money may be used include equipping school laboratories, buying movie projectors for mass education campaigns, sending medical and scientific books to schools and professional societies and training programs for technical personnel in underdeveloped countries.

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ZOOLOGY

Losses Cut 75% with Rat Control Measures

► WITH warfarin, a new rat-killing poison, and with other new anti-rodent "ammunition," the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service believes the nation's annual loss to rats and mice can be cut by at least 75%.

On one dairy farm alone, warfarin killed 1,400 rats in two months, Walter W. Dykstra, rodent control official of the Fish and Wildlife Service, told the National Pest Control Association in Cincinnati.

Warfarin is a slow-acting poison which causes internal hemorrhages in housemice or rats, even if only a very small amount of it is consumed. And animals do not know they've been poisoned after eating warfarin bait; they keep coming back for more until they die.

Other tricks to keep away rodents and bird pests: Stringing charged wires along building ledges and over doorways to create an electrical field which will shock pigeons or starlings. And sending out high-frequency sound waves, above the audio limit of the human ear, to scare away both birds and rats and mice. This method, said Mr. Dykstra, has even caused rats to jump overboard from ships.

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