

## PSYCHOLOGY

# Toys Help Child Learn

► FOR THE children on your Christmas gift list, select toys with care. Of course, you want to give safe toys, so avoid any with lead paint, sharp pointed toys for young children, toys small enough to be swallowed in the case of babies and small children who will put things in their mouths.

Remember that a child learns and develops through his play. One authority on the subject advises giving the child a well balanced diet of toys and play equipment to help him to good all round development. The four main courses on this balanced toy diet are:

1. Active physical play. Push and pull toys, wheel toys, balls, sports and gym equipment are typical playthings which aid physical development.

2. Manipulative, constructive, creative play. Blocks, construction toys, drawing and painting equipment and hobby kits are typical aids to this type of play. Such play

is important because it gives opportunity for expression of ideas, for trying out all kinds of new ideas. It allows for the use of initiative, stimulates observation and develops resourcefulness.

3. Initiative, imaginative, dramatic play. Dolls, housekeeping equipment, train systems and dress-up costumes are typical of the kind of equipment which stimulates imitative and dramatic play. This type of play also encourages imaginative expression and helps the child to understand the world around him through imitating and dramatizing adult activities.

4. Social play. Games in which several children can take part are essential aids to social development. By sharing play activity, children learn a great deal about how to get on with each other. They acquire basic understanding of fair play and good sportsmanship. They learn the value of concentrating and thinking quickly and accurately.

Science News Letter, December 8, 1951

exploit it as a means of controlling wild ones. Early attempts resulted only in mild local outbreaks among infected wild rabbit populations, this being the first time that the disease has spread far and wide as a virulent infection.

Australian scientists are now waiting to learn whether the virus has survived the Australian winter and will reappear now that spring is bringing out a new crop of mosquitoes down under.

The report on this work appears in the agricultural journal *WORLD CROPS*.

Science News Letter, December 8, 1951

## SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

VOL. 60 DECEMBER 8, 1951 No. 23

The Weekly Summary of Current Science, published every Saturday by SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc. 1719 N. St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C., North 2255. Edited by WATSON DAVIS.

Subscription rates: 1 yr., \$5.50; 2 yrs., \$10.00; 3 yrs., \$14.50; single copy, 15 cents, more than six months old, 25 cents. No charge for foreign postage.

Change of address: Three weeks notice is required. When ordering a change please state exactly how magazine is now addressed. Your new address should include postal zone number if you have one.

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Printed in U. S. A. Entered as second class matter at the post office at Washington, D. C. under the act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at the special rate of postage provided for by Sec. 34.40, P. L. and R., 1948 Edition, paragraph (d) (act of February 28, 1925; 39 U. S. Code 283), authorized February 28, 1950. 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 the Engineering Index.

Member Audit Bureau of Circulation. Advertising Representatives: Howland and Howland, Inc., 393 7th Ave., N.Y.C., Pennsylvania 6-5566 and 360 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago, State 2-4822.

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## VETERINARY MEDICINE

# Fight Rabbits with Virus

► THE RABBIT, world-wide menace to agriculture, is now being successfully attacked in Australia by artificial infection with an American virus which causes a deadly rabbit disease, myxomatosis.

Introduced into the Australian wild rabbit population by means of spring traps with virus-smeared prongs which cause infected punctures without otherwise hurting or restraining them, the virus has already spread over some 100,000 square miles of territory in New South Wales, where it is killing large numbers of the pest.

The virus is carried by mosquitoes and other bloodsucking insects from infected animals to healthy ones.

As this is reported by Sir Frank Burnet, internationally known Australian virus expert, to be the only recorded instance in which a man-planted disease has spread among wild animals, it may have the greatest economic significance in the control of rabbits and other destructive animal pests.

Myxomatosis was first discovered in South America as a disease of tame rabbits and scientists have since been attempting to

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