

• New Machines and Gadgets •

For addresses where you can get more information on the new things described here, send a three-cent stamp to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, 1719 N St., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for Gadget Bulletin 638. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

☛ **CHECK PROTECTOR** punches tiny holes in personal checks to keep forgers from altering the payee's name, the amount of money, or the signature on the check. Made of plastic, the device measures 3¼ inches long and is 1 inch wide.

Science News Letter, September 6, 1952

☛ **PERSONAL DOSIMETER** for the layman who some day may be exposed to damage-causing rays of an atomic bomb is small and light enough to fit into a vest pocket easily. A fluid inside the case changes color as the bearer becomes more severely irradiated, the color indicating the dose of irradiation received.

Science News Letter, September 6, 1952

☛ **WATCH BEARINGS** made of a special metallic alloy instead of usual synthetic jewels reduce friction in the watch works. Design engineers say the new alloy bearings help the wrist watch to survive much of the slam-banging treatment Junior often deals his timepiece.

Science News Letter, September 6, 1952

☛ **OVERHEAD GARAGE door kit**, shipped complete with all the hardware needed to assemble and install the door, shown in the photograph. It features red-wood paneling and pine framing pre-cut



and pre-drilled to fit standard openings. Instructions tell how to reframe for odd-sized garage doors.

Science News Letter, September 6, 1952

☛ **DUAL TAPE recorder** records on two tracks separately or at the same time. Each track can be handled just as a regular single-

track tape recording, or both can be played back simultaneously to yield "third-dimensional" sound when properly recorded and reproduced.

Science News Letter, September 6, 1952

☛ **ACCESSORY BAG** for women is slung over the shoulder and is roomy enough to accommodate several books, magazines and personal articles often carried on trips. Made of plastic, the bag comes in colors of green, blue, gray, palomino and red. It resists scuffing and rain.

Science News Letter, September 6, 1952

☛ **PROTECTIVE COATING** for interior walls can be scrubbed time and again to remove dirty handspots or other smudges. Based on a vinyl resin, the colorful sprayed-on coating resists mildew, spattered fats, greases and inks. It dries to surfaces resembling leather grain.

Science News Letter, September 6, 1952

☛ **STROBOFLASH LAMP**, easily attached to most types of cameras, provides a portable flash unit operated from two 225-volt dry batteries. The device can be fired every 3 or 4 seconds and about 2,000 flashes can be obtained from one set of batteries. The power pack can handle up to three lamps.

Science News Letter, September 6, 1952

• Nature Ramblings •

➤ **AUTUMN SEES** a steady, finally a rapid, diminution in the bright show of flowers that has delighted our eyes and noses ever since spring.

The brightness has not all departed, however; it remains with us in the tawny gold of hawthorn and persimmon and false bittersweet, in the reds of coralberry and honeysuckle fruit, in the purples of wild grapes and woodbine berry and viburnum, in the gleaming white of the snowberry. Many of these persist after the last brilliant leaves have fallen from trees and shrubs, holding fast all winter, or until some hungry bird or squirrel nips them off.

That, of course, is the secret of their brightness. As the fair color and sweet scent of the flowers tempted bees, moths and other insects to sip nectar and thereby made possible the necessary function of pollination and fertilization, so the bright hues of the berries and fruits are invitations to animals, especially birds and mammals, to come and eat their fill and thereby disseminate and plant the seed.

That is what gives an advantage to those

Bright Invitations



shrubs and trees that keep at least a part of their fruit until deep into the winter: their offerings may be passed up in the abundance of autumn, but will be taken gladly when glazed snow covers the ground and food is harder to find.

Most of the bright fruits, no matter how diverse their botanical kinships, are alike in having a more or less pulpy flesh surrounding one or more hardcoated, indigestible

seeds. The pulp is the reward for swallowing; the tough seed is constructed for survival through the vicissitudes of digestion, emerging finally undamaged and ready for germination when warmth and moisture give leave.

Indeed, it is quite probable that some seeds are even prepared for germination by the chemical action of their animal carriers' digestive juices on the resistant, impervious coats.

What the fruits may taste like to human tongues is no criterion of their acceptability to birds and other animals that may act as agents of distribution. Birds seem to have either no sense of taste or else a very strange one, for they will swallow without hesitation berries and small fruits that are bitter or nauseous to us, or at best insipid and tasteless.

If there is a little sugar or starch in the pulp that is all the bird or beast cares about. Niceties of flavor are luxuries that man can afford, but they are not for the hungry beaks and teeth of the snowy woods.

Science News Letter, September 6, 1952