



**VITAMIN C SOURCE**—Dr. Conrado F. Asenjo, discoverer of the extraordinary vitamin C content of the acerola, aided by nutritionist Maria Martinez, at work in his laboratory.

## NUTRITION

## New Vitamin C Juice

► A CHERRY a day keeps scurvy away, but it takes a particular kind of cherry to do it. It is a West Indian cherry known as acerola and only distantly related to the cherry family.

The acerola is said to be the richest edible fruit source of anti-scurvy vitamin C. But since it is a very perishable fruit, few of us could get our vitamin C from the cherry-a-day practice. We will be able to get it soon, however, in canned fruit juice.

Discovery of the very high content of the acerola was announced by Dr. Conrado F. Asenjo and Dr. Ana Rosa Freire de Guzman of the School of Tropical Medicine, San Juan, Puerto Rico, in 1946. (See SNL, March 9, 1946, p. 152.)

Now Harvey Greenspan, chairman of the board of the BiB Corporation, has announced in New York that his company has begun processing acerola juice and will soon market it blended with apple, pear, pineapple, tomato and other juices as a natural protective food for infants and children.

Small amounts of acerola juice added to fruit juices poor in vitamin C can produce blends with a vitamin C content well above the average orange juice, Dr. Asenjo states.

Although the small, bushy acerola tree has apparently grown wild in Puerto Rico for over 2,000 years, it is such a poor

germinator that it took almost eight years of experimental work before scheduled crops could be guaranteed on a large enough scale to enable BiB Corporation to start processing it for the market.

Dr. Arturo Roque and agronomist Enrique Molinary of the University of Puerto Rico's Agricultural Experiment Station did the experimental work leading to development of acerola as a cash crop tree.

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## GENERAL SCIENCE

## Interlingua Used at Adrenal Conference

► INTERLINGUA, THE new language for scientific communication, was used at the Symposium on Adrenal Function in Infants and Children held at the Upstate Medical Center of the State University of New York, Syracuse, N. Y., Nov. 3 and 4.

Abstracts of the papers presented were available in Interlingua to promote rapid diffusion of this specialized knowledge throughout the world. Copies of the volume of Interlingua abstracts will be deposited in medical libraries over the world to make available to medical scholars everywhere new advances described in a supranational language.

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## BIOCHEMISTRY

## Hint Chemical in Blood Plasma Makes Burns Hurt

► A CHEMICAL that could be the stuff that makes burns and blisters hurt has been discovered in blood plasma.

The chemical was discovered by Drs. Desiree Armstrong, C. A. Keele, J. B. Jepson and J. W. Stewart of Middlesex Hospital Medical School, London.

They call the chemical "pain-producing substance." They have not yet been able to isolate it in pure form nor to determine its chemical make-up, but it probably is a polypeptide.

When blood plasma escapes from the tiny blood vessels called capillaries, the pain-producing substances might develop and cause pain when it makes contact with damaged tissues, as in burns, the scientists suggest in *Nature* (Oct. 23).

They are at present studying its role in the production of pain due to burns and other disease conditions.

When applied to the exposed base of a blister, the chemical produces pain but does not cause itching, flare or wheal. In addition to this action, it causes contraction of the rat uterus when removed from the animal's body.

The chemical does not develop in plasma if contact with glass and metal is avoided in the collection of the blood and separation of the plasma. However, it does develop within a few minutes after the plasma is transferred to a glass tube. Its activity reaches a peak within ten minutes and decays to one-tenth or one-twentieth of peak value in an hour.

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## GENERAL SCIENCE

## People Above Average Are Valuable Resource

► THE SMALL number of people who are far above average are most important in defending freedom against ruthless totalitarianism, Dr. Joel H. Hildebrand, University of California chemist and president-elect of the American Chemical Society, stated in Birmingham, Ala.

The talents of our gifted citizens constitute a distinctly limited resource, he warned.

One of the most common mistakes is to deal with human beings in terms of averages, Dr. Hildebrand stated. We make matters worse, he said, by designating the average as "normal," as presenting a norm to which all individuals should try or, worse still, be made to conform.

Many people evidently regard anyone with outstanding intellectual achievement to his credit as abnormal, and therefore suspect, he said. They resent the thought that anyone else can be superior to themselves. Society sometimes behaves, Dr. Hildebrand suggested, like a farmer who would slaughter any cow that gave substantially more milk than the average.

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