

• New Machines and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **ARTIFICIAL SNOW FLAKES** give a wintry look to evergreens, Christmas trees, gift wrappings and other holiday decorations. Available in a 16-ounce, pushbutton container, the snow flakes are easy to apply or remove, flame resistant, and can be used indoors or out, the makers state.

Science News Letter, December 15, 1956

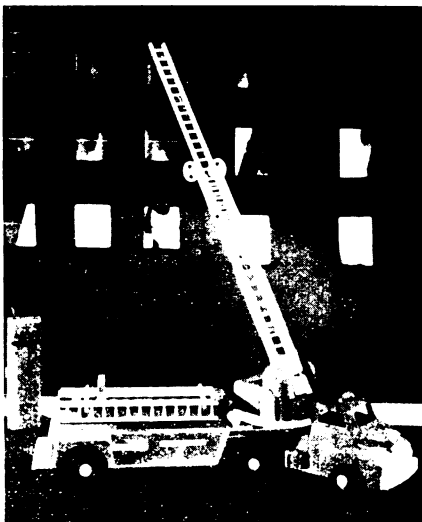
⚙️ **STOCK MARKET GAME** comes in regular and advanced versions. It consists of instructions, playing cards, stock certificates, play money and a stock market indicator, numbered on four sides. There are 16 special occasion cards for use with the advanced version of Bulls 'n' Bears.

Science News Letter, December 15, 1956

⚙️ **CHRISTMAS TREE APRON** dresses up the bottom of the tree stand and also catches the needles that invariably fall from Christmas trees. The holiday designs decorating it are an appropriate background for Christmas presents placed under the tree.

Science News Letter, December 15, 1956

⚙️ **FIRE ENGINE** for junior, shown in the photograph, gets into action at the push of a button. Powered by standard flashlight batteries in a separate control case, the remote-controlled toy is molded of an acetate



plastic. It has an 18-inch extension ladder, removable ladders, a flashing dome light, a sounding siren and dual rubber wheels.

Science News Letter, December 15, 1956

⚙️ **AUTOMATIC BIRD FEEDER** protects seeds from weather and bird-feed robbers, yet makes food available on a self-service basis. The perch serves as a trip lever to

dispense a limited quantity of seed upon a tray when a bird alights or leaves. The all-metal device holds up to five pounds of seed and can be suspended by chain from a tree branch.

Science News Letter, December 15, 1956

⚙️ **HOLIDAY APRON** is printed in gay, indelible holiday colors on a white background of heavy washable cotton. The festive design includes a song, holly leaves and the inscription, "Happy Holidays."

Science News Letter, December 15, 1956

⚙️ **PLASTIC ADHESIVE** saves stitching decorations to fabrics. The liquid adhesive can be applied by brush, squeeze bottle or machine and dries completely transparent. It can be used to attach flowers, ornaments, beads, linings, ribbons, etc., to cotton, rayon, acetate, metal, straw or other materials.

Science News Letter, December 15, 1956

⚙️ **SNOW SHOVEL** works on the principle of a bulldozer and is said to clear snow faster and easier than it can be shoveled. Sliding on sled runners, the shovel throws the snow in front of it. Only pushing is needed to remove snow from sidewalks and driveways. The device can also be used for leveling and grading dirt, sand or gravel.

Science News Letter, December 15, 1956



Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

➤ "I'LL TAKE that one," you say, as you point with your finger to the Christmas tree of your choice. But what kind of Christmas tree are you choosing?

The great favorite in this country, in terms of numbers bought, is the balsam fir. Fir trees can be told by their soft, blunt-pointed needles that curve upward slightly. Also, fir cones sit upright on the branches like short, fat candles.

The Douglas fir is the second most-bought American Christmas tree. In spite of its name, however, this tree is not a true fir, but belongs technically somewhere between spruces and firs.

You can identify the Douglas fir by its cones, for between each of the scales on the cones is a little three-pronged projection, found on neither firs nor spruces.

Third most popular Christmas tree is the little black spruce, the typical "grocery store" Christmas tree. Although only two

Christmas Trees



or three feet tall, these black spruces may be 25 to 50 years old. The large group of spruce trees can be told from firs and Douglas firs by their small, sharp-pointed, prickly needles. Also, spruce cones are small and hang downward from the branches.

Pines are easy to identify, since their needles always come in bundles of two or more, joined at the base by paper-like tissue.

Spruce, fir and Douglas fir needles are attached singly to the branches. White pines always have five needles in the bundle. Yellow pines have a varying number of needles per bundle, but two is usual.

The Christmas trees described above all have one thing in common—cones. Two other popular Christmas trees, redcedar and arbor vitae, have berries instead of cones.

The redcedar is especially beautiful, but its small, delicate needles fall off too easily for it to be welcome in the house.

Arbor vitae has "fern-like" branches and small, scaly leaves. It is known more as an ornamental than as a Christmas tree, although its popularity at Christmas-time is increasing.

Last year, an estimated 35,000,000 were used in American homes at Christmas. Of this number, some 11,000,000 were imported from Canada, with the remainder coming from native forests and nurseries.

Science News Letter, December 15, 1956