

# • New Machines and Gadgets •

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☛ **SOLAR CAMERA** is billed as the world's first in which light energy alone supplies the power to generate the electric current that adjusts the lens. The electric eye sets the lens for proper exposure through its full range of stops. The camera is an automatic 8mm movie camera.

Science News Letter, August 10, 1957

☛ **LINT FILTER** can be attached to washing machines without the aid of tools. Made of stainless steel and aluminum, the filter is designed to be slipped over the sud-saver hose. The filter can be used with any sud-saver type automatic washing machine.

Science News Letter, August 10, 1957

☛ **POWER DIVER** permits an underwater enthusiast to skim along at depths up to 100 feet for as long as an hour. It can pull a 200-pound diver at two miles per hour underwater. The 43-inch-long device is powered by either a 6- or 12-volt aircraft-type rechargeable battery. The diver can skim on top of the water or use the device to descend, bank, roll, turn, and ascend.

Science News Letter, August 10, 1957

☛ **EGG BEATER BLADES** molded of a nylon resin are said to beat 50% to 60% faster than conventional egg beaters. The nylon blades, shown in the photograph, can



be safely inserted in boiling mixtures. Besides the blades, the gears and bearings are also made of the nylon resin. No oiling is needed for the beater, which is available in six colors.

Science News Letter, August 10, 1957

☛ **WORKSHOP LIGHT** can be moved from one work area to another by means of a quick-coupler mechanism built into the light's base. A turn of the coupler sleeve

locks the light on a small mounting bracket placed where light is needed. The workshop lamp is available with either 18- or 24-inch arms and two or three cords.

Science News Letter, August 10, 1957

☛ **STARTING DEVICE** for all types and makes of diesel engines is a double-action air pump which enables the operator to prime the engines. Made of aluminum castings, the device can be installed on a vehicle's instrument panel. It is described as starting engines within 15 seconds.

Science News Letter, August 10, 1957

☛ **WORD-BUILDING GAME** is played like dominoes. The game has 48 domino-like pieces, each bearing a prefix and a word ending, no two alike. Words are built by combining an ending and a prefix. More than 1,200 words can be constructed. The game can be played by two or more players.

Science News Letter, August 10, 1957

☛ **SWIVEL MAGNIFIER** is designed especially for hobbyists. The four-inch diameter, plus five Diopter, eight-inch focal length magnifier is mounted on a heavy metal frame with a swivel for one-hand operation. It can be mounted on a workbench, swing-away light or over a fly-tying vise.

Science News Letter, August 10, 1957



## Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

► **WOODPECKERS** are supposed to stay in trees and on poles. Furthermore, they should typically perch not on the ground but on the steep vertical side of a tree trunk. Then, too, you expect them to feed by pecking insects out of the wood with their wonderfully adapted bill.

Now the flicker has all of the standard equipment of a good woodpecker: massive, sharp bill; hard, pointed tongue; stiff, elongated tail feathers to support him in the vertical position; and toes placed two in front, two in back for clinging to bark.

But the flicker is a most disturbing woodpecker. He is a non-conformist. You may see him on the side of a dead tree, busy hammering for insects. On the other hand, you are quite as apt to see him standing flat-footed on the ground eating berries.

Ants seem to be the flicker's caviar, and most of his activity on the ground is in

### The Non-Conforming Flicker



pursuit of these delectable insects. He has found his hammer-like woodpecker's bill serves quite adequately as a pick for digging into ant nests. When insects are hard to find, he takes his fill of berries.

The common flicker, *Colaptes auratus*, is easy to recognize on the wing by his deeply undulating flight and flashing white rump. Also, the flicker is the only brown-backed woodpecker.

The first sight of a flicker on the ground, however, is liable to send you hurriedly thumbing through your field guide. He just does not look like a woodpecker as he stalks along under a bush. The give-away is a broad black band which cuts across his breast. This identifies him immediately.

From the limit of trees in Alaska and Canada southward to the Gulf of Mexico and from the East Coast to the Rockies, the common flicker is an abundant bird. He is perhaps the most familiar woodpecker to Americans and has acquired some 123 popular names over the country. Next to flicker, he is best known as the golden-winged woodpecker or the yellow hammer.

The flicker is a large bird, about 12 inches in length and with a wingspread of some 18 to 21 inches. An average of five to nine eggs are laid in the nest, which is usually excavated in a tree, the hole as deep as 24 inches.

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