

New Machines and Gadgets

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⊗ **PORTABLE OAR LOCKS** holding paddle-shaped oars can be strapped to opposite sides of an inflated inner tube to provide simulated boat for children. The child sits in the center of the ring and rows in the conventional manner.

Science News Letter, February 28, 1959

⊗ **PAPER PLATES** have bottom tabs of transparent gummed tape that keep plates from blowing away, tipping over or sliding off the table. The tape adheres to wood, plastic, cloth, glass or metal and pulls away easily when the plates are picked up. The plates come in an adult size and in a children's size, the latter with nursery rhymes printed on in four colors.

Science News Letter, February 28, 1959

⊗ **ONE-PIECE WRENCH**, designed to ease and speed removal and replacement of hex filler plugs in automobile differentials, is used with a ratchet or hinge handle. It is said to save mechanics time, effort and bruised knuckles in working on hard-to-reach parts.

Science News Letter, February 28, 1959

⊗ **ROLLER SKATES** have front foot guards of polyethylene that are shaped like rabbits, as shown in the photograph, and protect shoes from being scuffed. Plastic



wheels allow the skates to be used indoors or outdoors. Adjustable buckles on front and back plastic straps are used to attach skates to shoes.

Science News Letter, February 28, 1959

⊗ **SPINNING FISH LURES** in the form of dice or billiard "eight" balls are designed for use when every other lure in the tackle box has failed to catch a fish. They are available in three weights,

equipped with three-way hooks, and reportedly attract fish.

Science News Letter, February 28, 1959

⊗ **AUTOMATIC EXPOSURE CONTROL** for professional cameras and lenses is battery powered with transistorized control circuits. A small, motor-driven control head connected to a lens diaphragm continuously adjusts the f/stop of the lens to provide correct exposure even in changing light conditions.

Science News Letter, February 28, 1959

⊗ **CERAMIC ASH TRAY** has cigarette rest equipped with a heat-sensitive spring. When a cigarette is left burning on the safety rest it heats the spring that tilts the rest, automatically dropping the cigarette into the bottom of the tray. The device is intended to keep burning cigarettes from falling onto a rug or table top.

Science News Letter, February 28, 1959

⊗ **FILM LOADERS and Reels** for developing tanks provide for self-loading of 35 mm, 127, 120 and 620 films. Film is inserted into a guide and wound by turning a handle. In this way it is unnecessary to feed in the film by hand and risk kinking or scratching it. All parts are of stainless steel.

Science News Letter, February 28, 1959



Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

➤ **DESPITE PESSIMISTIC** weather reports, snowbound cities and frost-nipped noses and ears, there is good reason to believe that spring is racing in on us. For already the first woodland wildflowers are rising from the forest litter in the southern states, probing the cool air with tender stems and new leaves.

The beautiful three-leaved Trillium rears its foliage as early as January, and these and the atamasco lily bloom in the Gulf states early in February. Of course the violets are also up there.

Following the sun northward will be a host of other woodland flowers, each trying to outdo the other with the earliest appearance. This seeming haste on the part of the wildflowers has more behind it than sheer exuberance, however. The very survival of the species depends on their early germination, growth, blossoming and seeding long before springtime takes over the forest completely.

Signs of Spring



These typical woodland spring flowers are not able to flourish where sunlight is restricted. When the forest trees spread their new canopy of leaves over the ground after spring arrives, the woodland is placed in shade that is detrimental to the wildflowers. Thus, they must have their day in the sun early in the year, before the trees come into full foliage.

Others of the spring wildflowers must put in an early appearance so that later-

developing plants will not compete with them for water, nutrients and even growing room.

From time to time, an early blooming wildflower that represents a southerly pioneer may appear. Farther northward this flower may be seen later in the year and even lasting longer in the season, since it is adapted for life in this cooler home. In the south, however, it must take advantage of the short period between rigorous winter and early spring, when conditions are favorable.

As spring wears on into summer, the woodlands will lose their blossoms, except for some shade-loving plants such as honeysuckle. Then the fields will have the gay summer flowers, such as the daisies, the buttercups, and the dandelions, those robust lovers of sunshine.

It is hard to think about daisies in this frigid weather, but the signs are out. Just take a look, no farther away than the nearest patch of woods.

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