

New Machines and Gadgets

For sources of more information on new things described, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, 1719 N St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for Gadget Bulletin 1000. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

SALT AND PEPPER SHAKERS for outdoor barbecue chefs are 18 inches long so hands may be protected from heat and popping grease. Made of aluminum with an anodized copper-tone finish, the wand-like shakers hold a summer's supply of salt and pepper. End plugs are easily removed for refilling.

Science News Letter, August 15, 1959

HOT DOG ROASTER cooks three frankfurters in two minutes. The electric roaster, small and compact, is designed for snacks at office or home. It will work from any electrical outlet and automatically turns off when the lid is raised. The roaster is reportedly easy to clean.

Science News Letter, August 15, 1959

TOY GUN shoots soft polyethylene projectiles that neither dent nor crack. The balls, about the size of ping-pong balls, carry little sting and do not break household lamps or glassware if they should be struck. The plastic gun comes in three sizes and in various colors.

Science News Letter, August 15, 1959

RECORD-MAGAZINE RACK, shown in the photograph, made of polyethylene holds records or magazines firmly but easily re-



movable. The lightweight rack is durable and easy to clean. It is available in pink, parchment, copper, turquoise, or black.

Science News Letter, August 15, 1959

POOLSIDE DRESSING ROOM can easily be assembled or carried. With a framework of aluminum tube and vinyl covering, the room stands seven feet high and looks somewhat like a shower stall. Complete

privacy is provided by the plastic covering on the four sides and top.

Science News Letter, August 15, 1959

SOAP PUFFS for guests each last one-hand-washing. Every guest can have fresh, untouched soap. The scented puffs, when wet and rubbed between the hands, melt into a rich, creamy lather. They are available in pink, blue, green, yellow, violet, or white.

Science News Letter, August 15, 1959

STETHOSCOPE for the home is rugged but sensitive. The homeowner, using the stethoscope, can locate malfunctioning parts in machines or plumbing systems by their sounds. Children can listen to heartbeats of pet animals, insect footsteps, and the amateur scientist can use it in acoustical experiments.

Science News Letter, August 15, 1959

PLANT DIAGNOSTIC KIT teaches home gardeners to diagnose nutrient deficiencies in plants with the aid of an illustrated chart. After a deficiency has been identified, one of the eight chemicals supplied in the kit can be sprayed on the leaves of the plant and on the surrounding soil to correct the deficiency.

Science News Letter, August 15, 1959



Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

YOU MIGHT identify the creature whose picture is shown here as a woodchuck.

Others, according to the part of the country they come from, would disagree violently, saying it is obviously a ground hog, an animal made famous by his reputation as a weather prophet. Both sides are right, of course, with scientists taking a neutral course by calling it Marmota.

Such disagreement is comparatively mild and harmless, however, since everyone is thinking of the same animal. However, suppose you come from a section of the United States where Marmota is absent, though there is a burrowing rodent superficially like it often called the gopher or pocket gopher. If you call this pictured woodchuck a gopher, then you are wrong.

In any case, you say, I know what I mean when I say "gopher." If you were to go gopher-hunting in certain southern states, you would have a problem. You ask a native to lead you to the prey, and he agrees

A Question of Linguistics



readily since he knows where there are plenty of gophers, he has eaten scores of them. He takes you through a dense thicket, across a pine woods and finally to a little clearing where there is a large hole in the ground surrounded by a pile of newly dug earth.

The southerner cuts a long, stout limb, attaches a pointed steel hook to its end, and probes it far into the hole. He pulls out his gopher: a whopping big tortoise! Where the southerner comes from, that tortoise is a "gopher."

What on earth then does he call that large rodent that lives underground and persists in throwing up piles of sand on well-kept lawns? That is a salamander, of course.

(Perhaps the term "gopher" for this land tortoise came from its habit of burrowing, reminiscent of the burrowing rodents. It is fairly well-established that the term "salamander" for the burrowing rodent is a corruption of "sandy moulder.")

Ask what he calls that amphibian you know as a salamander. His answer: a scorpion. You have not the heart to ask him what he calls a scorpion!

Many other examples could be given of the confusion caused by different common names for the same animal. A woodchuck is even called another name—the American marmot in some areas.

In the western United States, the mountain lion also goes by the name of puma, cougar, catamount or panther. Some of these names are corruptions of Indian names.

Science News Letter, August 15, 1959