

• New Ideas 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 1081. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

❁ **PAPIER MACHE MIX**, the latest convenience for hobbyists and artists, is prepared simply by adding one quart of water to a pound of mix and kneading till it is the right consistency. Finished work can be drilled, sawed, sanded. It will take water-color or oil paints and may be weather-proofed with shellac or fixative. It is non-toxic, clean and odorless.

• Science News Letter, 79:144 March 4, 1961

❁ **FAUCET SEAL** with solid-brass bearing eliminates drippy faucets in five minutes and can be installed by any housewife. It replaces all flat washers from size $\frac{1}{4}$ inch to $\frac{3}{8}$ inch and lasts several times longer because built-in bearing eliminates wear and tear in use.

• Science News Letter, 79:144 March 4, 1961

❁ **REAR-VIEW MIRROR** is king-size and clamps easily on an ordinary car mirror to triple the field of vision for auto drivers. The 15 by 2½ inch mirror, with rounded steel frame, gives a panoramic rear view and eliminates blind spots in watching traffic behind a car.

• Science News Letter, 79:144 March 4, 1961

❁ **MINNOW BUCKET TRAP** of molded plastic simplifies catching and transporting live bait. The clear plastic trap, shown in the photograph, has funnel openings at both ends and an exclusive bottom construction that keeps it riding water currents. Plug-



ging the openings with corks converts the trap into a carrying bucket. The bright red snap-on cap of plastic attracts minnows and provides easy access to contents.

• Science News Letter, 79:144 March 4, 1961

❁ **CITIZENS BAND WALKIE-TALKIE** is a 9-transistor, portable radio transmitter-receiver. The 18-ounce unit has two controls to provide fast, efficient operation—on/off volume and push-to-talk. The unit

receives and transmits from 1.5 miles up to 7 miles and may be operated without a license.

• Science News Letter, 79:144 March 4, 1961

❁ **PATCH AND REPAIR KIT** has adhesive and sealant for permanent repair of furniture, ceramic tile, pipe leaks, china, gutters, downspouts, fabrics, aquariums, and boats. Adhesive is waterproof, oilproof, nonflammable and resistant to chemicals. Kit includes self-measuring tubes, one each of resin and of hardener, and an applicator.

• Science News Letter, 79:144 March 4, 1961

❁ **FISHING LURE** has heart-shaped eyelet to which treble hooks are mounted, instead of a circular attachment, to prevent twisted lines. The off-center hook arrangement acts as a stabilizer and eliminates twisting even when trolling. The lure comes in seven weights from 1/16 ounce to 1½ ounces in orange, yellow, white and black with contrasting patterns, and spinners in gold, zebra or chrome.

• Science News Letter, 79:144 March 4, 1961

❁ **HEADBAND WITH SUNGLASSES** has a snap-apart feature so either one may be worn separately. The wrap-around band that holds hair in place is of hand-loomed wool in vibrant colors secured by a plastic bandeau. The glasses feature the new Continental frames.

• Science News Letter, 79:144 March 4, 1961



Nature Ramblings



➤ **IN SPITE OF** winter winds and frozen sod, the catkins of the willow trees will soon be out.

The catkins are actually compact flower buds. The willows are early blooming trees and must prepare their flowers during the previous growing season. Through the winter months the buds are covered by thin scales that protect them, not so much from the cold as from dehydration.

About this time of year, the bud begins to expand and finally breaks the waterproof seal between the scales and the twig. Eventually the scale case falls off, and there is the downy catkin. The fine catkin hairs are not a wool blanket but they do protect the bud from further drying and from bright light.

If the twigs are cut and kept dry, the catkins will remain in this stage of development, but if put in water they expand and flowers grow out from their hairy coverlets.

Each willow tree bears only flowers of

Pussy Willows



one sex. Winds or bees carry the pollen from one tree to another. And different species are easily crossed.

The staminate, or male, flower clusters are dotted with golden yellow pollen masses, and the pistillate, or female, flowers are a darker, reddish color.

The individual flowers of both sexes are simple in structure. The male has two or

more stamens per flower, each of which looks like a long-stemmed mushroom. The female has only one pistil per flower, which resembles a slender vase with a narrow neck and a wide mouth.

Inside this "vase" are the ovules, the seeds or fruit of the willow. Before summer has arrived, the fruit matures, and the "vase" splits in two and curls downward to expose the seeds. Each seed has a tuft of silky hairs that help it ride the wind, much like the seeds of the cottonwood tree or the milkweed pod.

All the willows have catkins, from the large, wet-footed weeping willow to the alpine or arctic willow, which is so small that a full-grown specimen can be covered with one hand. The birches also have a type of catkin.

But the most popular catkin bearers are the two tall willow shrubs commonly known as pussy willows. —GLORIA BALL

• Science News Letter, 79:144 March 4, 1961