

• New Ideas and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **ACTION TOY** enables children to play more than a dozen different indoor or outdoor games. When a plastic ball is rolled into the toy, it is popped back by a 50-throw clock spring mechanism adjustable to long and short throws. The ball can be caught on the fly or aimed at a target. Package includes a target and instructions.

• Science News Letter, 80:80 July 29, 1961

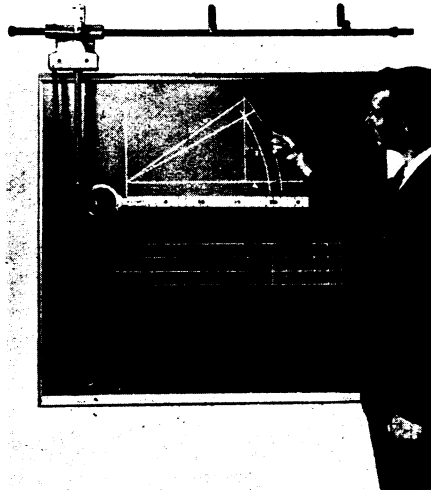
⚙️ **NUTMEG MILL** grinds whole nutmeg for use as needed, providing the full strength and rich aroma of the pure spice. The mill is of colonial design and finished in mahogany.

• Science News Letter, 80:80 July 29, 1961

⚙️ **PLASTER GUARD** of polyethylene plastic with prongs that fit into the switch mounting protects an electrical outlet during plastering by tightly sealing it off. A pointer projecting from the brightly colored guard serves as a locator after the job is finished.

• Science News Letter, 80:80 July 29, 1961

⚙️ **CHALKBOARD DRAFTING MACHINE**, shown in the photograph, for teachers of math and science is a combination protractor, T-square, triangle, scale and straightedge. Intricate diagrams and continuous horizontal and vertical lines can be



easily drawn with this instrument. It can be mounted to any chalkboard by adding a horizontal guide rail across the top.

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⚙️ **GRADUATED FLASKS** for measuring liquids have hexagonal bases to prevent tipping or rolling. The hard borosilicate glass

flasks come in four sizes with dram graduations for checking contents of packaged liquid commodities.

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⚙️ **MAIL OPENER** that works like an automatic machine ends ripped checks and mail contents. Suitable for home or office, the opener cuts along only one side of an envelope for easy removal.

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⚙️ **OPTICS-MICROWAVE DEMONSTRATOR** for science classes illustrates the basic laws of light, measures electromagnetic radiation, and can also send radar signals across a 30-foot classroom. The portable 33-pound unit contains all necessary components in one package. An instruction manual and demonstration accessories come with the machine.

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⚙️ **WET MOP-DRY DUSTER** has a telescopic handle for cleaning high walls and ceilings. The 10-inch-square polyurethane plastic foam head can be used dry as a duster or wet as a sponge mop. Made of aluminum and cadmium-plated steel, the tool will not rust. One model extends from 3½ feet to 9½ feet.

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Nature Ramblings



Do You Know?

► **DONKEYS** have the peculiar habit of gulping down thistles without batting an eye. Such an act provides evidence that the beast is a practical botanist, for the thistle is a relative of lettuce and has a similar flavor. Both belong to the large plant family known as the Compositae, and both are members of the same major subdivision of that family.

The kinship of the two also can be seen by examining lettuce in its wild state. Unmodified by generations of selective breeding, wild lettuce is, like the thistle itself, a decidedly prickly and scratchy plant. But wild lettuce is far less tasty than the thistle, having a very bitter taste.

The thistle also resembles another well known composite, the dandelion. But the difference is also obvious. In the dandelion the plumes are attached to a sort of stalk, technically termed a beak, extending out from the end of the seed covering. In the thistle they spring directly from the fruit itself.

All three of these plants—lettuce, dande-

Thistle



lion and thistle—are alike in the manner of seed distribution. All use the downy parachute that rides the wind as a conveyance for their lightweight seeds.

Most thistles, notably the big, coarse, hearty bull thistle, are biennials or short-lived perennials. But the spreading, straggling pestiferous Canada thistle is a full-fledged perennial, spreading by millions of seeds and holding on by means of an astonishingly deep and well-developed root system.

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The curve of *corn* plant conversion of solar energy on a bright day literally follows the sun, upward as light intensity increases and downward all afternoon as intensity falls away.

Lightning is one form of energy that man has yet to harness for his own purposes.

After inhalation of 100% *oxygen*, the extra oxygen taken up by the body is rapidly depleted when air breathing is resumed, falling to previous levels within two minutes.

A tiny shrimp-like animal, the *Cyathura polita*, is an index to water purity according to a recent study, its presence indicating normal and healthy conditions for growth along coasts and its absence, pollution.

Steroid *hormones*, such as cortisone and sex hormones, can alter the activity of an important enzyme within an organ by changing its physical structure.

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