

Nature Note

Voodoo Lily

➤ THE VOODOO lily is one of those strange flowers that does not have a sweet smell—on the contrary, it emits a disagreeable odor somewhat like carrion or decaying blood.

With this smell, so highly unpleasant to humans, the lilies attract flies and some scavenger beetles which slip into the flower calice and inadvertently pollinate the lilies.

This plant, *Sauromatum guttatum*, belongs to the arum family which includes the calla lily, jack-in-the-pulpit, and skunk cabbage. A leaflike structure called the spathe enfolds a long thin central shaft, or spadix, which is the reproductive organ of the plant. On the top of the spadix is a ring of male flowers and on the bottom are the female flowers.

When the lily is ripe for fertilizing the spadix begins to heat up, reaching temperatures 25 degrees F. or more above the surrounding air. For several hours the heat vaporizes amines and ammonia from the plant, and these produce the unpleasant odor which attracts the insects. When the flies arrive, the upper parts of the flower are so slippery with oil droplets that the insects slither down through bristles on top into the enclosed female flower chamber. There they feed upon a sweet sticky fluid exuded by the female flowers. At the same time, they become covered with the fluid.

During the night, the male flowers ripen and cover the insects with pollen grains.

After the male flowers have performed their essential duty, the bristles begin to wilt, thus permitting the night prisoner to escape.

TECHNOLOGY

Computer to Unsnarl London's Air Traffic

➤ HANDLING the air traffic snarls over London should become easier in 1969, when a massive, computer-controlled flight handling system goes into operation.

Installed at the new London Air Traffic Control Center near Heathrow Airport, the system will replace the present interim equipment and will handle flight plans and control data for all aircraft under en-route air traffic control in the southern half of Britain.

Three computers will automatically process the vast quantity of traffic information in a fraction of the time required by present methods. This will simplify the task of the air traffic controller and provide the additional capacity needed to handle the expansion of air traffic into the 1970's, and

the introduction of supersonic aircraft.

A "touch" display system will be used widely throughout the installation. This consists of an electronic image tube with a grid of very fine wires embedded in the lower half of the face. The computer writes details of the traffic on the tube in such a way that those items which the controller may wish to modify, or about which he may require more information, fall under the grid of touch-wires. The controller can then request information from the computer, modify flight plans or make decisions, by simply touching the relevant items on the display.

The system will be capable of being linked in the future with similar control centers throughout Europe and the

rest of the world. Advanced plans have already been formulated by the International Civil Aviation Organization for a fully integrated, worldwide, air traffic control system to provide the degree of international automation which will be essential in the supersonic age.

CLASSIFIED

Classified advertisements are accepted for the following classifications: Books, Business Opportunities, Camps, Colleges, Micro Ads, Personals, Positions Wanted, Services, Travel. All advertisements must be consonant with the character of Science News. Rates . . . single insertion 25¢ a word. Minimum charge is \$5.00. Count 2 extra words for Box and Numbers. Classified advertising is payable in advance. Closing date 3 weeks prior to publication (Saturday).

Employment opportunities are accepted at regular display rates, subject to agency commission. Minimum size 1 inch. Minimum charge \$21.70 per inch. Rate cards available upon request.

To speed up insertion, address classified advertising . . . Classified Ads. Science News, 1719 N Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036

BOOKS

BUILD YOUR ZOOLOGICAL LIBRARY—Big Selection, Mammal, Bird, Reptile Books. Imported and American. Free Catalogue. Curtis Books, 2633 Adams, Hollywood, Fla. 33020.

HOW TO FIND INDIAN ARROWHEADS. New book tells How, Where, When to look. Fully illustrated, \$2.00. Canyon Publishers, Canyonville, Oreg. 97417.

C&N WRY STEAM POWER. COMPLETE PICTORIAL HISTORY OF THIS GREAT RAILROAD IN ACTION. 208 generous 8½" x 11" pages, hardbound, beautifully jacketed. A must for those interested in History, Photography and the progress of STEAM POWER from 1848 to 1956. \$10.00 postpaid or at your Book Dealer. Write for Free Pictorial Brochure. Knudsen Publications, 3539 N. Lincoln Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60613.

THE PESTICIDE JUNGLE by Laura Tallian dedicated to influencing officials to make mandatory nontoxic pest control. Box 33, Sunnyside, Calif. 92079. \$1.50.

MICRO ADS

FAIRCHILD SEQUENCE CAMERA \$75.00. Cost government \$650.00. Send 25¢ for our surplus optics-electronics 82 page catalog. Meshna, Nahant, Mass. 01908.

GAME-THEORY-GAME! Learn to win, beat the odds in conflicts, business, life. Play Match-Me. Fun for all ages. Postpaid anywhere, standard model \$2.98, new wood model \$5.95. Cybernetic Developments, Box 2136, La Jolla, California 92038.

GERBILS—ideal animals for schools—\$9.95/pair, express collect. Booklet, "Gerbils," \$1.00. Twenty simple, humane experiments, 25¢. Details. Robinson, 940-SN General Stuart, Virginia Beach, Va. 23454.

CHEMICALS, BIOLOGICALS, apparatus, glassware, microscopes, accessories, and science books. New illustrated catalog only 25¢. Dover Scientific Co., 663 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10022.

PERSONALS

INTELLECTUALS: RELAX AND ENJOY: Large selection of "brain" games available. Free brochure. Flaghouse Inc. Box 202-J, New York, N.Y. 10003.

IF YOU KNOW A SAD EDITOR whose publication could use some laughs—send publication name and circulation to Cartoons, Dept. 158, Roslyn, New York 11576. (We have the antidote.)

FRUSTRATED?

Earning *just* a salary? Want to share in profits of *your* new ideas and inventiveness?

Client outside U.S.A. seeks *new* processes and equipment in the Re-programmatic field. All replies in strictest confidence.

Write to: **CRADCO, Inc.**
100 North Fifth Avenue
Highland Park, N.J. 08904

If you change your address . . .

or have questions about your subscription, please include your Science News label to insure prompt service.

ATTACH LABEL HERE

To change your address please give 3 weeks notice. If you have any question about your subscription please clip this form with label to your letter.

Effective date of change of address

New address label: Name

Local address

Town or City

State and Zip Code

Mail to Subscription Department

SCIENCE NEWS

1719 N Street, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20036

11-5-6