

Nature Note

Jack-in-the-Pulpit



As late spring spreads through the deep woods and thickets of the eastern United States and Canada, one of the most welcome wild flowers to appear is Jack-in-the-Pulpit, *Arisaema triphyl- lum*.

Almost every child knows this pe- rennial member of the arum family that stands so stiffly in the shadowy moist woodlands. Its most distinctive feature is the striped green and purple hood that bends over the "preacher" or "Jack" like the canopy of a pulpit. This hood, called a spathe, is not a petal but the outside cover of the flower's bud.

The "preacher" is a club-shaped ex- tension of the plant's stem that bears tiny, petalless flowers hidden near its base. Small insects, especially gnats and tiny flies, buzz around the plant and fertilize it. In late summer the fruit appears—a cluster of bright red berries.

The flower is sheltered by one or two stalks bearing dull green leaves in three segments.

Jack rises from a short bulblike fleshy stem with scale leaves and roots called a corm. This corm stores food so the plant can get an early start in spring before the trees have so many leaves they block out the sun- light. The corm is very irritating to the tongue, for it contains thousands of needlelike crystals of oxlate of lime. The Iroquois and other American Indians used to dry this bulb carefully and cook it for food.

Jack-in-the-Pulpit goes by other names also—Indian turnip, bog onion, brown dragon and starchwort. It can be found from Nova Scotia to Minne- sota all the way south to Florida and Texas. In some states it is so rare it is protected by law.

LETTERS

To the Editor

Manufacturer's View

Dear Sir:

Barbara Culliton's article on the generic drug question (SN : 4/22) is extremely well done and should be most helpful to your readers.

C. Joseph Stetler, President
Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Assoc.
Washington, D.C.

WAHM! NIGYSOB!

Dear Sir:

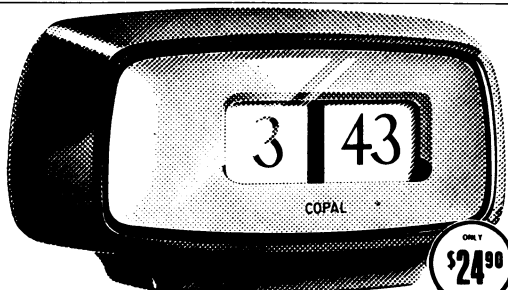
With regard to Patricia McBroom's article on the theories of Eric Berne (SN : 4/1); the article was generally accurate. There are some remarks though to which I take exception. You write, "If the Berne technique is super- ficial and ignores the complexity of human nature, as its critics charge, that may be all the better for some patients." Eric Berne does attempt to clarify some aspects of human relation- ships with game analysis. Such simplifi- cation should not be equated with superficiality. Transactional analysts are acutely aware of the depth and com- plexity of behavior. A clear statement, a concise description of the nature of the interaction is the first requirement for any analysis and interpretation of the meaning of interpersonal behavior. To be a competent behavioral scientist one must be a good observer of the human scene.

The criticism by Dr. Shaskan that TA is "... too structured and makes group therapy less interesting," is a banal misunderstanding. We attempt to teach people a means of understanding behavior so that they can achieve greater self-control and more efficient social control (activate the adult). The process of therapy should be interesting and engaging for both patient and therapist, not just an intellectual exer- cise for the therapist. Berne's game analysis, which is only one part of the larger theory of Transactional Analysis, should not be confused with mathe- matical game theory which has a right- ful place of its own in the psychology of human relationships.

Finally TA practitioners can be their own best critics. The system is an open one, always available to inspection and self-correction. In all of the TA semi- nars around the country members are continually and openly exposing their own practice for scrutiny, criticism and refinement.

Ira Z. Schiller, School Psychologist
Concord, Calif.

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