



South for Evergreens

► EVERGREENS, to most people, mean needle-leaved, cone-fruited trees that grow in northern lands. So general is this concept that when Kipling wrote of "dominion over palm and pine," the phrase was taken as an obvious though striking metaphor picturing the tropics-to-polar sweep of the British Empire.

However, had Kipling taken the trouble to look about the tropical parts of the Empire a bit, he would have found plenty of pines growing in them. To take a nearby example: if you were suddenly set down on the coastal plain of British Honduras and asked to guess where you were, you might well answer Florida or Georgia. For large parts of that definitely tropic land are dominated by a close approximation of the same pine forest that we have on our own Gulf coast.

Popular impression is mistaken not only about the geographic distribution of the needle-leaved evergreens, but also in the meaning of the word evergreen itself. It is true that pine and spruce and fir and cedar are evergreens, but they are not

the only evergreens. Any tree or shrub, or even herb, that holds onto its green leaves, or at least a good part of them, throughout the year is an evergreen. Thus, the bearberry and club-mosses that carpet the soil under the pines in the North are evergreens as much as are the trees themselves. So are such non-woody plants as Christmas fern, polypody and hepatica.

In regions where winters are relatively mild, there are many evergreen trees and shrubs that are not needle-leaved conifers.

Ready examples can be found in our own South: magnolias of several species, liveoaks, holly, rhododendron, mountain laurel, leucothoe, jasmine, catbrier—the list might be extended almost indefinitely. And of course the palms themselves are evergreens par excellence: very few plants hang onto their leaves so persistently. In fact, it might fairly be said that the nearer you get to the equator the more kinds of evergreens you will find.

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MEDICINE

Warning for Allergists

► WHEN THE PATIENT says the spell of extremely cold weather has caused him to have an attack of asthma, he is right but so is the allergy specialist who says it is not the cold but feathers that are the cause of his asthma, as shown by scientific tests.

Feathers in such a case are the primary cause but cold weather may be a secondary or predisposing factor, Dr. Samuel M. Feinberg, of Chicago, explained in a report at the Seventh Annual Forum on Allergy, held in Pittsburgh.

The secondary factors which may aggravate or bring on allergic symptoms "are usually given too much importance by the public and general medical profession and too little importance by allergists," Dr. Feinberg declared.

"Their proper role should be appreciated because frequently the specific cause of the allergy cannot be found and then only the secondary cause can be managed," he said. "Even when the primary cause is known, benefit can be derived from the attention given to the predisposing causes."

Some of the common secondary factors, he said, are chemical, mechanical, thermal, nervous and mental, weather and climate and infections.

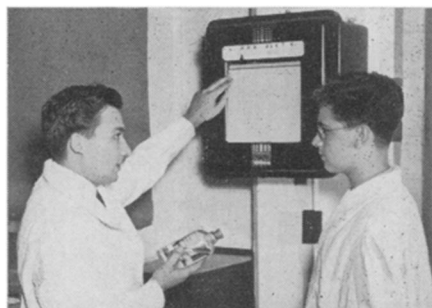
A common cold, for example, will make the allergic nose more troublesome. So will the mechanical action of chalk dust which school teachers with nasal allergy usually think is the cause of their allergy.

Inhaling soft coal smoke, gasoline fumes, paint odors and the like may be a chemical factor that brings on an attack of asthma though the primary cause is a food or pollen.

Emotional upsets, excitement, worry and similar nervous disturbances may

precipitate or aggravate allergic symptoms, though in Dr. Feinberg's opinion it is doubtful whether such nervous factors by themselves are able to cause diseases such as asthma, hives or eczema.

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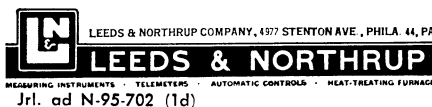


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