



Mountain Laurel

► CLOTHING THE slopes of the lower mountains of the East and running down into the lowlands wherever the soil is stony and poor enough to suit its hardy tastes, we find the mountain laurel.

It is one of the most glorious of our shrubs, ranking along with rhododendron and azalea, and indeed is a close cousin of theirs. Like them, it is one of those peculiar plants that thrive well only in acid soils, and one should know the chemical condition of one's yard, or else have it artificially adjusted to suit, before planting laurel.

The botanical name of the mountain laurel constitutes one of the most enviable of all monuments ever erected by one man in honor of another. When a botanist wants to pay high compliment to a friend, he names a plant after him. Naturally, the more beautiful the flower, the higher the compliment. Peter Kalm, contemporary and co-worker of the great Swedish naturalist Linnaeus, who first organized botany on a modern basis, has received perhaps the most flowery botanical compliment that has ever fallen to the lot of a scholarly collector of plants. For when Linnaeus was called on to give a name to this new handsome shrub from America, he thought of his friend and former pupil Peter Kalm, who had traveled in the New World, and called the beautiful flower *Kalmia*.

Kalmia, or mountain laurel, is a most attractive plant at any time, for its dark shining leaves are evergreen, relieving even the white bareness of the winter woods. But when spring brings its leaves to bloom, the laurel simply outdoes itself. Its clusters of closed star-flowers, pink, but by sheer miracle of vegetative good taste not too pink, are things for poets to write sonnets about.

Most of our fine flowers are in greatest danger from vandalistic gatherers when they are in bloom, which is what one might expect. But the mountain laurel is less troubled than it is in late autumn and early winter. Its evergreen leaves have found altogether too good a market in eastern cities, and the more accessible areas where it grows are rapidly being depleted by the market-hunters. Fortunately for future generations of American flower-lovers, mountain laurel is true to its name, and the higher slopes of the Appalachians still give it refuge, keeping green the memory of Linnaeus' friend, Peter Kalm.

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TECHNOLOGY

Hydrazine Fluxes Basic In New Soldering Method

► A LONG-KNOWN but, until recently, little-used chemical called hydrazine is responsible for a new soldering method which will give automobile radiators superior strength and less corrosion.

The superiority of the new soldering methods comes from the use of hydrazine compounds as soldering fluxes to promote fusing and prevent oxidation. A new series of soldering fluxes, bearing the trade name M.C.C., was discovered by McCord Corporation of Detroit, Mich., and developed co-operatively with Mathieson Chemical Corporation of Baltimore.

Called the "Coronol Soldering Process," the hydrazine fluxes used are suitable in joining most of the commonly used metals and produce solder bonds of highest strength, leave no corrosive residues and eliminate corrosion of plant equipment, Mathieson scientists state.

Hydrazine was made about 60 years ago by German chemists. It has interested research people ever since, and many hydrazine compounds have been developed. Only recently, however, has the parent material been manufactured.

In a method now employed by the Mathieson Corporation, hydrazine is made from ammonia and sodium hypochlorite. The process includes a low-temperature mixing in the presence of an accelerating agent called a catalyst. Another company is making hydrazine by reacting sodium hypochlorite with urea.

Many uses for hydrazine compounds have been developed in the past few years. Maleic hydrazide will stop the growth of plants for a limited time.

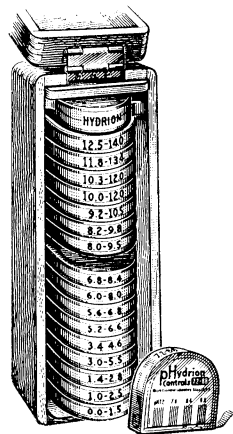
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MEDICINE

Operation for TB Patients

► HOPE FOR many tuberculosis patients who formerly would have been thought incurable is available through an operation for removal of the lung or parts of the lung, Drs. John S. Harter and Arthur J. Beland of Louisville, Ky., reported at the meeting of the National Tuberculosis Association in Cincinnati.

Of 75 patients given this operation at Nichols Veterans Hospital since October 1946, there were only three deaths.

The operation conserves the function of the lung better than either thoracoplasty, in which the lung is permanently collapsed by removal of sections of ribs, or pneumothorax in which the lung is temporarily collapsed, the Louisville doctors believe.

If the disease is localized to one lung or one lobe of a lung, long periods of sanatorium care are no longer necessary for

patients having the operation, Dr. Harter said. Patients at the Veterans Hospital were all given six months of bed rest following the operation, but in private practice, most patients could take this rest after the operation at home.

The true value of the operation will not be known, the Louisville doctors stated, until five years after, but they predict that many patients will show a better cure rate at the end of five years with this operation than when treated by other methods.

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The bulk of the American strawberry crop is harvested in April, May and June, but strawberry-picking goes on in one part of the country or another every month of the year.