BOTANY

NATURE RAMBLINGS

Kinsfruit

➤ THERE IS a lot of easily-done botany in a mixed basket of fruit or berries. One can get considerable amusement determining the relationship, or lack of it, by picking them to bits—not neglecting to eat the specimens after the scientific exercise has been finished, of course.

The kinship between apples, pears and quinces is quite obvious, or that between oranges, lemons, limes and grapefruit. But it may take a little more ingenuity to show that cherries, blackberries, raspberries, strawberries and the dry "seeds" that follow such flowers as agrimony are all cousins.

Let us start with the cherry and the raspberry. Pick the raspberry into the small pieces naturally marked off in its flesh. Cut or bite into one of these pulpy fragments, and you find a single hard little seed. The raspberry is a tight-packed cluster of tiny "cherries."

Between raspberry and blackberry the likeness is more obvious. A blackberry is solid in the center where the raspberry is hollow, that is all. The solid edible center of the blackberry is the same thing, essentially, as the tough little stem-end that remained on the bush when the raspberry was plucked. The blackberry therefore is a coating of tiny "cherries" over a pulpy and soft stem-end.

Now imagine the same pulpy stem-end greatly increased in size, while the "cherries" on its outside have shrunk and shriveled until nothing but their pits remain, with a papery skin drawn tight over them. That is the strawberry. The strawberry is all edible stem-end, as the raspberry is all outside fruit.

Finally, consider the possibility of the "cherries" being like those of the strawberry and the stem-end being like that of the raspberry. Here would be a fruit all dry and hard, not edible at all. Such is the fruit of the agrimony flower.

Science News Letter, June 23, 1951

MILITARY SCIENCE

Better Use of Men

➤ THE ARMED Forces have had under consideration for more than two years a system which would enable them to replace top-notch physical specimens now holding down "chair corps" jobs with men with minor physical and mental handicaps. This is called the "profile" method of classification.

It might well solve the problem highlighted in a report of the Senate Armed Services Preparedness Subcommitte. The report stated that the equivalent of three to five divisions of combat-qualified men are performing "chair corps" or training duties at 16 basic training and indoctrination centers. The Subcommittee urged the Armed Forces to make greater use of men with minor physical and mental limitations. The profile system would permit the Armed Forces to do just that, in an orderly and efficient manner.

The system consists of: 1. finding out the upper limit of physical and mental qualifications which are necessary for performance of all of the thousands of different jobs in the Armed Forces; 2. classifying potential draftees as to the kinds of jobs their physical and mental limitations permit them to do.

Thus a man of limited intelligence who could not be trusted with a rifle might well be given a broom. A man with one leg who could not perform combat duty might be qualified to operate a typewriter or to instruct other men.

This system has been urged on the Armed Forces over the past two and a half years by the committee on physical standards of the National Research Council, with no results, so far. However, the Army has had experts go over all their job classifications, fitting them with the maximum physical and mental standards necessary to fill them.

Samplings of draftees have been classified by the profile system, but the great bulk of them have not. Thus no one knows now what jobs the great bulk of the current 4-F's could handle if they were needed.

Some Armed Forces officials are reluctant, at this time, to institute the profile system. They say that, whether men are holding down chair jobs now or not, in a time of limited mobilization, they must be qualified to move on to other jobs in the Armed Forces which require top physical qualifications. However, these officials fully expect to use the profile system if full mobilization is ever required.

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GENETICS

Unique Black Calf Born To White Park Cattle

➤ A COMPLETELY black calf has been born in the herd of English Park cattle at the National Zoological Park in Washington, D. C. Dr. William M. Mann, director, believes that it is the first such birth on record as such cattle are usually predominantly white with black noses. The parents of strange "blacky" calf are normal animals among the herd of half-a-dozen such cattle on show at the Zoo. The unusual color is believed to be a case of melanism, an abnormal amount of black pigmentation.

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NUTRITION

Keep Eggs in Refrigerator Particularly During Summer

➤ NOW THAT summer is here, remember to put the eggs in the refrigerator as soon as you get them home from the store. This advice comes from U. S. Department of Agriculture specialists who point out that only by cool and careful handling, from nest to breakfast table, can egg quality be conserved, especially in hot weather.

"Be wary," they advise, "of buying eggs from counter displays or cartons stacked in grocery aisles instead of from clean cold refrigerators. Every hour that eggs are left at high temperatures such as 80 to 90 degrees Fahrenheit, not unusual in many stores and kitchens in summer, they drop rapidly in quality. Eggs left for a few days at temperatures between 70 and 80 degrees Fahrenheit may lose as much freshness as eggs kept several weeks covered in the refrigerator. The best temperature for holding eggs is above freezing but not higher than 45 degrees Fahrenheit."

Many housewives complain about "hot weather eggs" with their thin white and flat, weak yolks, and some even stop buying and serving eggs in summer. The poor quality of so many summer eggs is not necessary, however, and it is not the fault of the hen. Eggs have plenty of fine quality when laid, it is pointed out. How much remains when the eggs are served at the table depends on how eggs are cared for by the farmer who produces them, the wholesaler, the retailer, and finally the homemaker, hotel chef, or institution manager who uses them.

Farmers need to gather eggs from nests at least three times a day in hot weather and then cool them promptly in well-ventilated containers. Next, wholesalers and retailers need to give them cool care, away from odors that may penetrate the porous shells and affect egg flavor. Grocers, delivery men, and house-to-house vendors need to keep eggs cool at all times.

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