

MEDICINE

Simple Trichinosis Test

► A SIMPLE, 15-minute test for diagnosing trichinosis has been developed by scientists at the U. S. National Institutes of Health. It may even be adapted for diagnosis of brucellosis, tularemia, or rabbit fever, and certain parasitic diseases besides trichinosis.

Trichinosis, estimated to affect about 16 out of every 100 Americans, is caused by worm parasites called trichina. They get into the body from eating undercooked pork infected with them. Diarrhea, nausea, colic and fever are early symptoms. Later symptoms are stiffness, pain and swelling of the muscles, fever, sweating and insomnia.

The complement fixation diagnostic test used heretofore is time-consuming and requires highly trained laboratory personnel and relatively expensive materials.

The new test is called a flocculation test. Blood serum from the person suspected of having trichinosis is put inside a wax ring on a glass slide. To this is added a special preparation of the trichina called an antigen. The droplets are rotated by an agitating

device for 15 minutes and then examined under a microscope. If the suspended particles are clumped together, the test is positive, meaning the person is infected with the trichina. If there is little or no clumping, it means no infection with trichina.

Scientists who developed the test are: John Bozicevich, Dr. John E. Tobie, Elizabeth H. Thomas, Helen M. Hoyem and Stanley B. Ward.

Success in developing the test depended largely on finding a way to make a stable antigen, or test substance. Bentonite, a fine clay, provided the solution to this problem. An extract, made from larval worms from infected rats, is adsorbed on the bentonite which covers the antigen particles completely.

Once the antigen becomes available commercially, the scientists believe the test can be used widely in large and small hospitals and by physicians or their nurses in their offices. This, it is hoped, will help in bringing the disease under control.

Science News Letter, July 7, 1951

DENDROLOGY

Wood Collection in Home

► EVERYBODY HAS a wood collection in his own home. For some this wood is in the form of pencils, toothpicks and kitchen matches; furniture, doors and wooden floors. Others collect wood as a hobby.

The next time you sharpen a wooden pencil, smell the shavings. About 97 of every 100 wooden pencils in America are made of incense cedar, grown in California and Oregon. If you have a toothpick handy, try to mark it with your fingernail. Most toothpicks are made of white birch, a northern hardwood.

White pine is preferred for kitchen matches, approximately half of the Idaho white pine lumber produced each year

going into their production. Rolling pins and bread boards are usually made of hard maple.

Redwood, one of the most durable woods known, makes good outdoor furniture. Some of the redwoods living today, found in a belt 20 miles or so wide along the northern coast of California, were strong young saplings back in 50 B.C.

Half of the world's supply of lumber is produced in the United States. Millions of additional cubic feet of forest products annually go into pulp and paper, veneers, plywood, plastics and rayon.

The United States grows its wood supply on 461,000,000 acres of commercial timberland. This area is twice as great as Texas, the six New England states and West Virginia combined.

Woods differ greatly. Some are so tough they break an axe when you try to chop them down, others are so soft you can mark them with your fingernail. Some are so light they can be used in place of cork in life preservers, others are so heavy that a raft made of them would sink in water.

Samples of hard maple, redwood, Douglas fir and several other types of wood have been collected for you by Science Service, available for the nominal sum of 50 cents in the current unit of THINGS of science. Some of the tests experts use in identifying wood are suggested in the explanatory leaflet that accompanies the wood specimens.

Just write Science Service, 1719 N St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for the Wood Identification kit.

Science News Letter, July 7, 1951

METEOROLOGY

As Usual, July Will Be Hot Except in Far North

► ONLY REALLY cool place this coming month will be a strip across the northern part of the country, it seems from the U. S. Weather Bureau's Extended Forecast Section's prediction. The 30-day outlook for the month of July calls for temperatures to average below seasonal normals in the northern portions of the Lakes, Plains and mountain states.

But in the southern half of the country temperatures are expected to average above normal with the greatest departures, in other words greatest heat, in the western Gulf states.

Elsewhere near normal temperatures are anticipated.

The southern and western portions of the country are going to be dry, too. Rainfall is expected to be below normal there. Abundant showers are indicated for the Northeast, Midwest and northern plains and near normal rainfall is expected elsewhere.

Science News Letter, July 7, 1951

INVENTION

Food Solids from Fruit Juices by Drying Process

► FREE-FLOWING solids for food are obtained from fruit and vegetable juices by a drying process invented by Sumner I. Strashun, El Cerrito, Calif. The patent awarded to him is 2,557,155. Rights are assigned to the government as represented by the federal Secretary of Agriculture.

Science News Letter, July 7, 1951

YOUR SKIN AND ITS CARE

By H. T. Behrman, M.D., and O. L. Levin, M.D.

Two dermatologists give you the up-to-date scientific facts. They tell you in detail exactly what to do to beautify and improve your skin, how to avoid or correct skin disorders, and how to deal with many skin problems as: Daily care of the face—**allergies—cosmetics—pimples—blackheads—acne—whiteheads—cysts—boils—oily skin—dry skin—chapping—poison ivy—cold sores—hives—superfluous hair—ringworm—moles—birthmarks—scars—warts—tumors—skin cancer—excessive sweating—etc.** "The type of book to which the physician can refer his patients."—*Journal of the American Medical Association.* "Accurate, unvarnished story of practical skin care."—*Connecticut State Medical Journal*

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