

## MEDICINE

# War Gas for Arthritis

➤ **NITROGEN MUSTARD**, World War II poison gas chemical, may prove effective as a remedy for rheumatoid arthritis. It may also become helpful for other conditions, such as asthma, in which cortisone and ACTH are helpful.

Good results with the use of this chemical in a small number of patients are reported by Drs. C. Jimenez Diaz, E. Lopez Garcia, A. Merchante and J. Perianes of the Medical Clinic and Institute for Medical Research, Madrid University, Spain, in the *JOURNAL OF THE AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION* (Dec. 8).

Of the nine arthritis patients treated, "five improved extraordinarily," the Spanish doctors report. "Complete disappearance of the pain and swelling of the joints and recovery of normal movement" occurred in these.

In three other patients the improvement is termed "considerable, even though not so complete." In two of these patients per-

manent joint changes and irreversible muscular contractions had already set in and were not affected by the nitrogen mustard.

The breathing difficulty disappeared after the first injection in two patients with the asthma condition doctors call status asthmaticus. Reason for trying nitrogen mustard injections in these patients was the fact that they produce effects similar to that of cortisone on white blood cells, causing a progressive decrease in certain of them.

The Spanish doctors have not yet had an opportunity to use cortisone for treatment of arthritis patients, so are not able to say how the two treatments compare. They point out that the number of patients reported on is small. They are continuing the treatment on more patients. Meanwhile they feel their results are good enough to draw the attention of other doctors to this possible help for arthritis patients.

*Science News Letter*, December 15, 1951

## ENTOMOLOGY

# Elm Scale Controlled

➤ **FIRST SUCCESSFUL** introduction of insect parasites of European elm scale in the United States has been announced by the division of biological control of the University of California Agricultural Experiment Station, Riverside.

Dr. S. E. Flanders disclosed that a small parasitic wasp introduced from France and reared in the Riverside station insectary was released in three California cities, Sacramento, Pasadena and Redlands, in 1949 and 1950. The wasp this year has practically cleaned up the elm scale on trees in Redlands.

European elm scale has been a serious pest throughout the nation for many years. Unless trees are given costly annual treatment with chemical sprays, they become unsightly. Scale insects, sucking sap from the tree, excrete a honey-like fluid and create a condition right for a black fungus.

Elm scale parasites were introduced into the United States from Germany in 1908 and from France in 1934, but were not successful. In 1949, however, several hundred specimens were obtained from H. L. Parker, in charge of the U. S. Department of Agriculture parasite laboratory in France.

A pair of elm trees which had never been sprayed was found in Redlands. The first two years, Dr. Flanders said, little effect on the scale was apparent. This year, however, he reports the parasite established and working. The trees are free of scale, though others several blocks away are heavily infested.

This is the only instance of biological control of European elm scale in this country.

*Science News Letter*, December 15, 1951

## SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

VOL. 60 DECEMBER 15, 1951 No. 24

The Weekly Summary of Current Science, published every Saturday by SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc. 1719 N St., N. W., Washington 6, D. C., North 2255. Edited by WATSON DAVIS.

Subscription rates: 1 yr., \$5.50; 2 yrs., \$10.00; 3 yrs., \$14.50; single copy, 15 cents, more than six months old, 25 cents. No charge for foreign postage.

Change of address: Three weeks notice is required. When ordering a change please state exactly how magazine is now addressed. Your new address should include postal zone number if you have one.

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Printed in U. S. A. Entered as second class matter at the post office at Washington, D. C. under the act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at the special rate of postage provided for by Sec. 34.40, P. L. and R., 1948 Edition, paragraph (d) (act of February 28, 1925; 39 U. S. Code 283), authorized February 28, 1950. Established in mimeographed form March 18, 1922. Title registered as trademark, U. S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide to periodical literature, Abridged Guide, and the Engineering Index.

Member Audit Bureau of Circulation. Advertising Representatives: Howland and Howland, Inc., 393 7th Ave., N.Y.C., Pennsylvania 6-5566 and 360 N. Michigan Ave., Chicago. STAt 2-4822.

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The Institution for the Popularization of Science organized 1921 as a non-profit corporation.

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