

• New Machines and Gadgets •

For addresses where you can get more information on the new things described here, send a three-cent stamp to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, 1719 N St., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for Gadget Bulletin 658. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

⚙️ **ICE GRIPPER** worn in the "arch" of a boot helps construction workers, mailmen, loggers, farmers and sportsmen get good traction on ice. Made of 14-gauge rust-proofed steel, the "extra-heavy" lightweight gripper has four three-quarter-inch teeth and is held in place by a web strap that encircles the ankle.

Science News Letter, January 24, 1953

⚙️ **PHOTOGRAPHIC FIXER** for commercial photographers, photo finishers and other large-quantity users is based on ammonium thiosulfate and is said to have 12 times the fixing power of standard hypo. Films are fixed in two or three minutes, paper in one. When fixed in the solution, films and paper require 20% to 40% less washing.

Science News Letter, January 24, 1953

⚙️ **TAPE SOLDER** is a 40/60 tin-lead combination that has been developed to help the homeowner make minor repairs to small wires around the house. Manufactured as a ribbon three-eighths of an inch wide and 28 inches long, the "tape" is wrapped around cleaned wires and will melt in the flame of a match. It contains a rosin flux.

Science News Letter, January 24, 1953

⚙️ **TACKLE BELT** strapped around the fisherman's waist or chest, as shown in the photograph, holds nine watertight plastic



containers in which license, lures, hooks, sinkers, cigarettes and matches can be carried safely. Weighing less than 10 ounces, the belt is made of a translucent red or blue flexible plastic.

Science News Letter, January 24, 1953

⚙️ **FURNITURE POLISH** made of 100% pure beeswax helps preserve fine woods and leathers, including leather-topped furniture and handbags. British-made, the lavender-

scented polish requires little rubbing for a high gloss that resists water stains, scuff marks and fingerprints.

Science News Letter, January 24, 1953

⚙️ **CLOUD CHAMBER** enables science students and hobbyists to "see" radioactivity as alpha and beta particles from a harmless radium radiation source zip through alcohol vapor, leaving tell-tale tracks. Operating on standard electric current, the instrument uses dry ice and rubbing alcohol to produce the "cloud" in a glass chamber.

Science News Letter, January 24, 1953

⚙️ **COLD-WEATHER BOOT** developed for the armed forces now is available to civilians. Using wool and dead air spaces to insulate the foot from cold, the water-proof boots protect feet from frostbite, and feel warm even when only one medium-weight sock is worn. The boots' soles are cleated.

Science News Letter, January 24, 1953

⚙️ **POWER MEGAPHONE** for police, firemen and rescue teams works on six standard #2 flashlight batteries and can be heard up to one-fourth of a mile away. The compact all-in-one unit weighs only five and a half pounds and works on the same principle as a magnetic amplifier, requiring no vacuum tubes, wires or warm-up time.

Science News Letter, January 24, 1953

• Nature Ramblings •

► **PINK ELEPHANTS.** Heads of pink elephants, ranged up and down a stem, like the beasts on a totem pole. Millions of them, making pink meadows in the wet places on top of the mountains.

No. This isn't ultra-modern poetry. Neither is it a stenographic report of the proceedings of the Inebriate Ward. It is a sober, matter-of-fact description of what you may see on Swan Lake Flats near the north entrance to Yellowstone National Park any year during June and July.

Elsewhere in the Park, and in many other parts of the northern Rockies, pink elephants may be found in great abundance during the midsummer months.

The pink elephant, unlike the white elephant, is not an annoying animal, but a very pleasing plant. It is a relative of the unpleasingly-named but very common lousewort, and resembles that plant in the way its flowers are arranged, packed in a close

Pink Elephants



spiral spike. But each separate flower has its petals so arranged that even the most unimaginative adult can see at a glance that it is a pink elephant's head.

This remarkable shape is formed by the upper lip of the flower which is arched over in front and prolonged into a slender, cylindrical beak that is one-half to three-quarters

of an inch long. This beak bends downward until it touches the lower lip, whereupon it bends upward and outward, giving it the circus elephant appearance.

The relationship to the lousewort is so close that botanists now include it in the same genus, *Pedicularia*. But when it was first discovered, a good many years ago, it was thought to be a genus by itself, and received the appropriate name *Elephantella*. Thus proving that even professors have imagination.

The second, or specific, name has remained unchanged: *groenlandica*. For the pink elephant's real home is far to the north, in Greenland and Labrador, and its occurrence at these great heights represents its farthest southward travel. The remarkable plant is common in marshy places throughout northern America, especially in the sub-Arctic regions of Canada.

Science News Letter, January 24, 1953