

# • 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 661. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

⚙️ **TEACHING AID** for physics instructors explains the present scientific theory of magnetism from the make-up of a "magnetic atom" of iron to the finished bar or horseshoe magnet. The chart is illustrated with seven drawings, each accompanied by brief text.

Science News Letter, February 14, 1953

⚙️ **FIRE ALARM** bell for the home clangs loudly in the master bedroom when a fire breaks out in the house. Individual rooms are monitored by detector cells, set for 125 degrees Fahrenheit, which sound the alarm when overheated. The system can be obtained to work on batteries or on standard electric current.

Science News Letter, February 14, 1953

⚙️ **FORM-FITTING MASK** of aluminum is held over the nose and mouth by an elastic headband, weighs less than one-half an ounce and is comfortable to wear. It filters particles of cement, lime, gypsum metal and dust from air inhaled by the wearer. Not recommended where fine silica dust, lead, arsenic and other toxic dusts are present.

Science News Letter, February 14, 1953

⚙️ **ROTATING MERCURY** switch is a lightweight glass tube-like affair designed to work at very low temperatures, as shown in the photograph. It shoots a pulse of electricity up to 1,000 watts through a circuit for a split-second while a globule of mer-



cury rolls past the current-carrying wires inside. Good for airplane beacons, neon signs, and electric vending machines.

Science News Letter, February 14, 1953

⚙️ **ELECTRIC JUICER** grinds up tough vegetables into a pint of liquid in two minutes. Pulp from celery, carrots, apples, spinach, cabbage and other vegetables and fruits is separated from the juice by a built-in strainer. The rugged device is powered by

a quiet motor that is completely enclosed for safety.

Science News Letter, February 14, 1953

⚙️ **GRASS SPRINKLER** attachment for garden hoses features a special cast-iron base that rests evenly on two edges, keeping grass from being mashed beneath it. The sprinkler's rotating arms are made of copper-clad tubing coated with a tough butyrate plastic. Nozzles on the whirling arms can be adjusted to throw water in any direction.

Science News Letter, February 14, 1953

⚙️ **RESEALING TOOL** for the kitchen allows the housewife to put metal bottle caps back on the bottles of carbonated beverages factory-tight. The device opens and then reseals bottles so that the liquids "retain for indefinite periods" their sparkle, flavor and zest.

Science News Letter, February 14, 1953

⚙️ **FREEZER KIT** provides the housewife with packaging materials for freezing foods in the home. The kit includes assorted cartons, plastic bags and boxes, poultry bags, aluminum foil, a marking pencil, freezer tape, an ice-cream scoop, 50 sucker sticks, a funnel and a 32-page booklet describing freezing techniques. The plastic boxes have tiny "legs" which let cold air circulate completely around the containers.

Science News Letter, February 14, 1953

# • Nature Ramblings •

➤ BESIDES THE animals he keeps in or about his house as working partners, food sources or pets, man has an assorted array of hangers-on that have lived with him so long that their common names reflect the association. As a rule, these names are indications of the part of man's habitat they have chosen to be their habitat as well.

"House," the widest and most inclusive of man's habitat-names, has been added as an adjective to the names of quite a diverse list: house mouse, house cricket, housefly, house sparrow, house wren, and, in the tropics at least, house snake.

Parts of the house, or of its outbuildings, have also been incorporated into animal names: chimney swift, wall lizard, bedbug, barn owl, barn swallow, stable fly. And since a ship is in a sense a floating house, perhaps shipworm should be included in this category.

Some smaller animal forms have become so characteristic as infestants of man's pre-

## Undomestic Animals



pared foods and fabrics that they are named for them. One thinks readily of such disconcerting beasts as cheese skipper and cheese mite, flour beetle and mealworm, and that humble worm dignified as the vinegar eel. Add also clothes moth, carpet beetle and book-louse.

Many persons, too squeamish to call a cockroach a cockroach, call it a waterbug, not so much because of any aquatic pref-

erences on its part as because this particular pest seems to invade houses by way of plumbing lines and sewers.

Less artificial than houses and barns but still man-made rearrangements of nature are his gardens, orchards and other plantings. These parts of the human habitat also have their characteristically-named fauna: orchard oriole, garden snail, garden snake, garden spider, hedge sparrow, hedgehog and field mouse.

Obviously, these unbidden guests in and around man's house receive the widest imaginable degrees of welcome. Orchard oriole and house wren we are always glad to see; house mouse and house sparrow are barely tolerated nuisances; housefly and clothes moths are intolerable pests. But whether we like them or not, most of them have been with us a long time, and they are more than likely to remain with us for a long time to come.

Science News Letter, February 14, 1953