

NUTRITION

Fresh Eggs Are More Nourishing

➤ A FRESH egg for breakfast has long been favored because fresh eggs usually taste and look better than storage eggs. Now scientific tests show they are also more nutritious.

Measurements of nutritive value, as indicated by the presence of folic acid, the growth-promoting vitamin in animal tissues and plant leaves, show that eggs suffer a 16% loss in six months and a 27% loss in a year of cold storage. The tests are reported by Robert John Evans, J. A. Davidson, Doris Bauer, and Helen A. Butts of Michigan State College in the *Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry* (April 15).

Previous studies have indicated losses in protein, riboflavin, niacin, vitamin B-6 and pantothenic acid, the scientists report.

Several million cases of eggs are stored in this country during periods of high production, to be used later when production is lower and prices are higher, the report points out. Any changes in nutritional quality of stored eggs are important, but very little is known about the relative nutritive values of fresh and stored eggs, they say.

Eggs from ten White Leghorn hens kept in laying cages and fed a diet of constant composition were used in the experiments. Fifteen eggs were saved from each hen. Three were used for immediate folic acid assay, and 12 were stored in a carton. The ten cartons of eggs were placed in a walk-in refrigerator at 32 degrees Fahrenheit. Eggs were removed for assay after three, six and 12 months of storage. Three eggs from each hen were used for each period.

Each fresh egg contained on the average 4.59 microgram of folic acid. (One microgram equals .000,000,353 ounce.) After three months there was no measurable change, but after six months the average was 3.84 and after a year 3.37 micrograms. There was a loss of folic acid from the egg yolks and some transfer of folic acid from the yolks to the whites during cold storage, the report notes.

Science News Letter, May 9, 1953

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See and Shun!

➤ POISON IVY victims begin to become numerous at about this time of year, and they will continue so until frost strips the wicked vine of its foliage.

It is sometimes stated that poison ivy is at its most virulent when in bloom; but most of the afflicted ones can find no seasonal differences in their miseries. Just as many blisters and as much itching in August as in May, they declare.

The malaise of ivy poisoning, ranging from relatively mild discomfort in some to acute and prolonged suffering in the more sensitive, can be largely obviated by attention to a few simple precautions. As in all

SURGERY

Indians Used Anesthetic

➤ SHOWY PLANTS with soft pink and salmony pastel flowers decorating the gardens of the head-hunting Jivaros high in the Andes probably hold the secret of the anesthetic used by ancient surgeons who did skilful trepan operations on the skulls of former inhabitants.

This is the opinion of Dr. W. H. Camp, curator of experimental botany and horticulture in the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.

The plants belong to the genus *Datura*. Stramonium and jimson weed are among the *Datura* species. The leaves and seeds yield a powerful narcotic, and Jivaros today grow the plants and use the leaves for this purpose.

The potency of these leaves is attested by an associate of Dr. Camp's during a plant hunting expedition, Henning Jorgensen. A few years ago while panning for gold in the Oriente, Mr. Jorgensen suffered an accidental gunshot wound of the leg. No doctor was available to remove the bullet. The Jivaros took charge, giving him a decoction of *Datura* leaves to drink. He soon became

afflicted, prevention is better than cure, and avoidance of the cause is the key to prevention.

Learn to recognize poison ivy at sight, and keep away from it whenever you see it, and you will reduce the number of attacks per season—perhaps eliminate them altogether.

Poison ivy is easily recognizable by its three-parted compound leaf. It is the only abundant shrubby plant in the woods with that kind of leaf. Flowers are small, greenish-white, thickly clustered; they are followed by berries that become a slightly soiled parchment-white when ripe.

For the Eastern species, there is no valid distinction between poison ivy and poison oak, which is sometimes attempted on the basis of leaflet-shape. Leaflet margins range all the way from entire to deeply notched or lobed—sometimes on different parts of the same vine. Poison ivy is an exceedingly variable species.

The name poison oak is properly applied to the Western species, which is plentiful in the foothills of coastal mountain ranges, and is also found less abundantly inland.

Properly speaking, poison ivy is a vine. In humid woodlands it climbs trees and clambers over rocks and stone fences, clinging by means of innumerable aerial roots. In slightly drier terrain, it disguises its character by running the main stem of the vine along or just under the ground surface, sending up numerous branches that range from a few inches to four or five feet in height, so that it is often described as a shrub. But it's all the same old pesky poison ivy.

Science News Letter, May 9, 1953

drowsy and when he awoke, about 36 hours later, he found the bullet had been removed and the deep wound poulticed.

"Unfortunately, he could not see," Dr. Camp relates. "He complained about this, but was told to be patient. He said he did not regain normal vision for another four or five days, after which there was no apparent further effect of the narcotic."

Scientists have sometimes said that ancient surgeons had their patients chew coca leaves to deaden pain while their skulls were being trepanned for relief of brain abscesses or similar brain afflictions. Dr. Camp thinks the *Datura* leaf concoction must have been the anesthetic that held the patient still for the "tedious and painful" operation.

He tells the story of Mr. Jorgensen's experience in *Memoirs of the New York Botanical Garden*.

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About a billion board feet of lumber were destroyed by the Douglas fir beetle in Washington and Oregon during 1952.