

ENTOMOLOGY

Flea Beetle Snubs Leaves With DDT Spray on Them

► IN ADDITION to combating DDT-resistant insects, scientists now have to contend with an insect pest that turns up its nose at leaves sprayed with DDT.

This unexplained ability of the flea beetle to tell which leaf has the DDT was exhibited in experiments conducted by Dr. James B. Kring, an entomologist at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, New Haven.

The scientist found that flea beetles in laboratory cages that contained both DDT-sprayed and unsprayed potato leaves invariably feed upon the untreated leaves.

Dr. Kring uncovered this unique insect ability while attempting to find the nature of the flea beetles resistance to DDT, which was once highly effective in controlling this important potato pest. The Connecticut scientist also discovered that flea beetles feed much more heavily when the weather is warm.

In the meantime, newer insecticides, such as chlordane, dieldrin and endrin, have proved highly successful in preventing flea beetle damage to potatoes in other tests being conducted at the station.

Science News Letter, November 27, 1954

DENTISTRY

New Methods for Fitting False Teeth

► NEW WAYS to make false teeth fit better were reported at the meeting of the American Dental Association in Miami.

One way involves grafts of cartilage and blood vessels to build up sunken gum ridges. Patients who will benefit are those who have ridge bones damaged by disease of the gums and supporting tissues or by breakdown due to ill-fitting dentures.

Success with the method in laboratory animals has led to its trial on humans, though in these cases it is still too early to evaluate the method. It was reported by Comdr. C. H. Blackstone of the U. S. Naval Dental School, Bethesda, Md., and Comdr. Mack L. Parker of the U. S. Naval Operating Base at Kodiak, Alaska.

Second way to better-fitting false teeth involves study of the way the patient swallows and sucks. This method was reported by Dr. Russell W. Tench of York, Pa.

The swallowing and sucking actions of a baby, beginning in the first few hours of life, exert a great influence in guiding the erupting teeth that are to come later, Dr. Tench pointed out.

"Muscle function," he said, "plays an important role in the placing of teeth in natural dentition. The same muscle function can be used to determine where artificial teeth should be placed.

"Muscles do the chewing. Teeth are instruments employed by the muscles," he said.

Science News Letter, November 27, 1954

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