

AGRICULTURE

Farm Ponds Yield Livestock Feed

➤ ARTIFICIAL PONDS may soon furnish high-quality livestock food in abundance. They are now a boon in irrigation and an extra source of proteins in the form of fish.

Experiments at Kansas State College showed that the common pond weed, *Elodea canadensis*, is equal or superior to alfalfa meal as a part of a pig-fattening diet.

Elodea, the moss-like weed in most American goldfish bowls, yielded from 12 to 14 tons green weight to the acre in a Kansas pond. It replaced itself in three months.

Sixteen weanling pigs gained 1.75 pounds a day when fed a balanced ration with elodea meal substituted for alfalfa meal in the mixture. They gained 1.57 pounds a day with the alfalfa portion.

To be used, elodea must be dehydrated. The meal resembles alfalfa meal, but is darker and less dusty. It has a faint fishy smell.

Science News Letter, July 16, 1955

VETERINARY MEDICINE

Insecticide Dip Harmful to Pets

➤ DOG OWNERS should beware of using the insecticide chlordion on their pets, a team of scientists from the A & M College of Texas has warned.

Testing the effects of insecticides on the animals, Dr. R. R. Bell, M. A. Price, and Dr. R. D. Turk found that chlordion has a relatively high toxicity to dogs and "is not safe to apply to the animal body."

They found, however, that malathion, used either orally or applied as a dip, has a low toxicity for dogs. Even when given very strong doses of malathion orally, the dogs studied showed no apparent signs of toxicity. The scientists cautioned that more work is necessary with malathion, however, before final conclusions on its effects can be drawn.

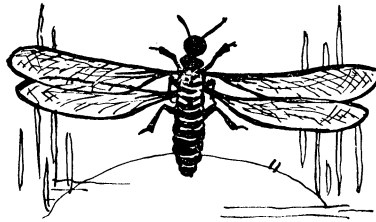
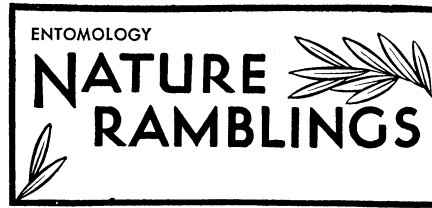
Their investigations were reported in the *Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association* (April).

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"Flying Ants"

➤ ARE THOSE "flying ants" shimmering about your yard this summer really ants? They could be termites, you know.

Here is how to tell:

Take a look at the wings. If they are ants, one of the pairs of wings will be shorter than the other, and the longest pair of wings will only be about a third of the length of the body.

Termites, on the other hand, have two pairs of wings of about equal length, which average twice the length of the insects' body. When you spot those long wings, it is time to call the exterminator.

Another clue to telling ants and termites apart is that ants have narrow waists, like the wasps. Termites have a middle-aged look about them, being about equal thickness throughout the body. You can use this test when the insects have lost their wings.

It is the mating instinct that sends ants and termites into the air. Ants mate during the "nuptial" flight, the males dying shortly afterwards. The fertilized female ant settles to the ground, bites off her wings and digs a shallow nest where she deposits the first eggs of her future colony.

Termites are not so impetuous. They merely pair off during the flight, to start building a burrow for their future home. They do not usually mate until this honeymoon cottage is completed.

Both male and female termites lose their wings spontaneously or knock them off against some hard object. They do not bite off their wings as ants do.

Nobody has a kind word for termites, because of their choice of food — wood. Too often the wood they choose is the underpinning of a house, or a favorite piece of furniture.

Actually, the termites cannot digest their meal of wood without help. Certain bacteria living in their intestinal tract break down the wood into a form that they can use. Without these bacteria, they would starve to death—even though they were offered the tenderest and most delicious door sill in your house.

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MEDICINE

Cortisone Aids Paralysis Sufferers

➤ SUFFERERS FROM cerebral blood clots causing semi-paralysis and spastic muscles may have a better chance for comfort and better physical therapy with the use of cortisone and hydrocortisone.

Following use of these chemicals, a marked decrease in painful spasticity in four hemiplegia patients was noted, and the muscles were more pliable and flexible. So reported a team consisting of Drs. R. F. Sheely, C. H. Johnson, J. J. Baker, and Rodney Harbaugh, physical therapist, of the Annie Warner Hospital, Gettysburg, Pa., in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (July 9).

In general, the psychomotor stimulation, the increased sense of well-being and the pain-relieving effects of hydrocortisone and cortisone proved a definite aid in progressive response to physical therapeutic measures for the patients, they found.

Science News Letter, July 16, 1955

PATHOLOGY

Radioactive Bodies Are Autopsy Hazard

➤ PERFORMING AUTOPSIES on bodies of patients who have been treated with radioactive materials poses a grave risk to pathologists in this atomic age, two radiation experts of the Veterans Administration Hospital, Hines, Ill., have warned.

The "greatest hazard" arises when no one is aware of the body's radioactivity, Drs. Ervin Kaplan and Theodore Fields said. Medical men will have to take the same precautions other scientists observe in handling radioactive substances.

Doctors are using radioactive materials on an increasingly wider scale in diagnosis and treatment. Various radioisotopes are used in tracer studies to locate diseased parts of the body and in the treatment of such conditions as cancer, heart disease, thyroid trouble and blood disorders.

Where radiation levels are relatively high, from five to 30 millicuries (a unit measuring radioactivity), a safety officer should be present to prescribe the working time at various distances from the body. In his absence, Drs. Kaplan and Fields suggested the wearing of heavy rubber gloves "of double thickness with gauntlet tops" to minimize exposure during autopsy.

They also advised a plastic apron, plastic shoe covers and special glasses.

When the patient's body contains more than 30 millicuries of radioactivity, a chart should be posted on the room door stating the date, amount and identity of the isotope given. It is "mandatory" that a safety officer prescribe the working limits, the two doctors said in the *American Journal of Clinical Pathology* (June).

Science News Letter, July 16, 1955

Debeaking turkeys reduces losses from cannibalism.