

• New Machines and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **TOOLMAKER'S MICROSCOPE** has built-in lighting and a collective mirror, which together permit machinists and tool-makers to view the surface and contour of parts simultaneously. Standard magnification is 35X, but different objective and eyepiece combinations may be used.

Science News Letter, February 2, 1957

⚙️ **MOSAIC DESIGNS** can be made by the hobbyist from aluminum foil or thin sheet. Useful for wall plaques, small table tops, trays and decorations for lamp bases, the mosaic shapes have a high-fired porcelain enamel finish. A kit contains patterns and instructions. The finished material is heat resistant and waterproof.

Science News Letter, February 2, 1957

⚙️ **PIPE CONNECTION** is a thin, nut-like metal fitting to seal leaky pipe connections. Designed for both home and industrial use, sealing is made by a dry circular insert of a plastic resistant to temperature and chemically inert.

Science News Letter, February 2, 1957

⚙️ **TOOTHPASTE DISPENSER** produces a brush-length of dental cleaner. Any size toothpaste tube can be loaded into the holder, designed to be mounted on the



bathroom wall as shown. The automatic squeezer eliminates lost caps, messy tubes and waste.

Science News Letter, February 2, 1957

⚙️ **DETECTOR CRAYONS**, the first available commercially, are sensitive enough to

detect phosgene, hydrogen cyanide, cyanogen chloride, cyanogen bromide and lewisite. They write on paper, wood and other surfaces and the mark will turn color in the presence of the different gases.

Science News Letter, February 2, 1957

⚙️ **HIGH FLYING KITE** of acetate cloth is a controllable three-dimensional aeronautical compound kite. Available in 28-inch and 35-inch high models, the toy is easily flown and climbs, glides or zooms.

Science News Letter, February 2, 1957

⚙️ **INDOOR GYM** is described as a complete indoor physical training unit. The unit can be rearranged to make 21 different gym apparatus changes. The set is made of furniture steel and wood, and floors and ceilings are protected by neoprene sponge and sponge rubber cushions.

Science News Letter, February 2, 1957

⚙️ **FLOCKING ADHESIVE** is flame resistant and can be used by designers, florists, decorators and display artists. A water-based product, it can be thinned with water, but is water resistant when dried. A flame put to an object decorated with the help of the adhesive will be self-extinguishing.

Science News Letter, February 2, 1957



Nature Ramblings



► **THE SKUNK** is a pleasant little animal, with a gentle and friendly outlook on life. He is handsome in his black coat with its bright white stripe across his back. He serves farmers well as a killer of rodents and insect pests, although he may take a chicken from time to time to vary his fare.

But in spite of his many other characteristics, the skunk is thought of first and foremost for his wonderfully effective means of defense—his overwhelming odor.

Sure of his ability to look after himself, the skunk is quite fearless. His natural enemies are few, with only the great horned owl, bobcat, fox and a few other creatures brave enough to face the consequences of arousing the skunk's wrath.

In general, the easy-going skunk will not bother you unless you bother him. You can feel safe enough in his presence so long as he is facing you. But look out when he turns his tail toward you, for then he is in position to use his artillery.

The skunk's musty secretion is stored in

Skunk's Defense Effective



two glands under the tail, and is ejected by muscular contraction. Although the total fluid discharged may amount to only three drops, it emerges as a very fine spray which quickly diffuses through the air. This terrible secretion may "perfume" the air for a half-mile around, and it may cause intense irritation of the skin if received in a concentrated dose. Temporary blindness may result if much spray lands in the eyes of the skunk's enemy.

The possession of such a powerful means of defense has made the skunk very bold and indifferent to dangers his relatives use all their agility and speed to avoid. It is proverbially impossible to catch a weasel asleep, but a skunk does not care whether you catch him asleep or not since he knows you will let him alone in any case.

It is also notable that the only animals of the weasel tribe ever run over by automobiles and railroad trains are skunks. These little animals have successfully stood their ground for centuries against grizzly bears and mountain lions, and they have not yet had time to learn how much more formidable are the man-driven machines.

The skunk is primarily a night animal, seldom seen out in daylight, and you need a flashlight to find a live one.

Although some people have been known to keep these good-natured animals as pets, caution is advised in this respect because cases of rabies in skunks have recently been reported.

Science News Letter, February 2, 1957