

• New Machines and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **ELECTRIC HUMIDIFIER**, for use in the home, draws air through a fiber filter while a continuous waterfall action supplies the needed moisture. The air as discharged is clean, fresh, filtered and moisturized. The device operates on the ordinary household electric current.

Science News Letter, November 13, 1948

⚙️ **NUT-SHELLER** clips small portions of the shell away instead of cracking the entire shell as done by ordinary nut openers. It is a handtool of plier-like construction with cutting teeth of special steel sharpened to a very fine edge.

Science News Letter, November 13, 1948

⚙️ **REFLECTIVE SHEETING** for automobiles permits the shape and color of the vehicle to be plainly visible at night under the headlights of approaching cars. The sheeting is made with a smooth, glossy surface that does not change the daytime appearance of the car. It comes with a solvent-activated adhesive which grips on contact.

Science News Letter, November 13, 1948

⚙️ **WIRELESS HEARING aid**, shown in the picture, is carried in the pocket or handbag, and held to the ear only when wanted. It is a sound amplifier, complete with



microphone, receiver, batteries, midjet vacuum tubes, transformer and volume control. It is designed for persons with slight hearing losses.

Science News Letter, November 13, 1948

⚙️ **SHAVING BRUSH**, whose handle is a

receptacle to hold the shaving cream, is supplied with the lathering material in the quantity desired by the turn of a knob on the outer end of the handle. The cream passes through the wet brush, becoming a lather ready for the beard. A cap covers the brush when not in use.

Science News Letter, November 13, 1948

⚙️ **SNAP-ON VISORS**, for use on automobile windshields, are made of highly polished aluminum and equipped with thin stainless steel plates which slip under the rubber seal and frame. The two sections are held rigid by the use of a tie-bolt connecting them over the center windshield bar.

Science News Letter, November 13, 1948

⚙️ **ICE GRIPPERS**, an improved type to fit over the shoe, can be slipped on or off in a jiffy and can be carried in a vest pocket. They are hardened rust-proof steel elastic web bands, and a heavy-duty type has half-inch teeth.

Science News Letter, November 13, 1948

⚙️ **BOWLING BAG**, to hold the favorite bowling ball, is made of leather but its base is a molded plastic with an inside built-in retainer cup in which the ball rests. The plastic base is attached to the leather sides with two rows of machine stitching.

Science News Letter, November 13, 1948

• Nature Ramblings by Frank Thone •

➤ **NEXT SPRING'S** Easter bonnets and dainty gowns are already being made, and shortly after Christmas they will be moving onto the merchants' shelves. But even the fabricators of fashions are not more forehanded than the herbs and shrubs and trees of the woodlands. Practically every flower and leaf that will gladden our eyes next April and May is already in place, and only awaits the signal that will be given by the returning sun and the warm spring rains.

Preparation for next spring's flowers, as a matter of fact, began immediately after last spring's flowers had faded, and in most plants went on even while fruits and seeds were ripening. The leaves of plants like dog-tooth violet and trillium, that stood all summer long with no flowers to grace them, were busy all the time making food and sending it down into underground bulbs, corms and rhizomes. In the meantime, buried growth-points were forming up into the beginnings of buds, enfolding the embryonic structures of another crop of

Ready for Spring



flowers. When the new growing season comes on, the food reserves will be liquidated and poured into the task of speeding the unfolding of the new flowers.

Something of the same sort goes on all over the branches of woody plants that blossom early in spring, like dogwood and redbud, and the lilacs and forsythias of our gardens. In the axils of this year's leaves, or

at the twig-tips, the buds of next year's growth form during the summer. Already in them are the beginnings of next spring's bloom.

Only by provisions like this can we have spring flowers at all. Flowers are expensive things: they need a great deal of food for their structure, and more for the energy expended in the rapid process of blossoming. Most plants have to make their own food, which is the job of mature leaves. If flowers come before the leaves, or while the leaves are young and small, the food will have to be stored ahead of time.

The whole process of forcing flowers, so that we have a foretaste of spring even in winter, is based on this fact. We bring bulbs or cut branches indoors, giving them as nearly spring-like conditions of temperature, moisture and light as we can provide. These stimuli cause the unlocking of the natural food cupboards, and release the chain of events that ends in the early unfolding of the flowers.

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