

# • New Machines and Gadgets •

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**RIBBON SPOOL** serves to hold ribbon and to straighten it out should it become twisted during unwinding. The roll of ribbon is placed on a bracket with a guide through which the ribbon is pulled. When the ribbon twists, it may be untwisted by rotating the guide in the opposite direction of the twist.

Science News Letter, November 28, 1959

**TURKEY SKEWERS** for sewing up the breasts of stuffed turkeys, chickens or game fowl are made of stainless steel and tempered to withstand excessive heat. They are in the form of corkscrews, with one end pointed and the other end twisted into a ring to form a handle. They are inserted by turning clockwise and removed by turning counterclockwise.

Science News Letter, November 28, 1959

**MATHEMATICAL PUZZLE CUBE** for the fascination of every member of the family is made up of many smaller hard maple cubes. These may be joined in many ways to form intriguing problem shapes.

Science News Letter, November 28, 1959

**TOY SCHOOL BUS**, shown in the photograph, has a transparent plastic roof to let toddlers enjoy the antics of the animated passengers, including two children who bounce and turn at the rear of the bus and



a driver whose head looks cautiously left and right. The front of the bus is decorated with a cheerful face with eyes that run from side to side as the bus is pulled along.

Science News Letter, November 28, 1959

**RECORD RACK** of hand-rubbed pine is made in the shape of an old-fashioned cranberry scoop. It stands 15 inches high,

14 inches wide and 8½ inches deep, and holds 50 long-playing record albums. The rack can also be used for magazines.

Science News Letter, November 28, 1959

**BUTTER RULER** of plastic has raised markings to indicate cup, tablespoon and teaspoon portions. By pressing one side of the ruler flat against a chilled quarter-pound bar of butter, the markings become imprinted on the butter's surface. One end of the ruler may be used to slice the butter.

Science News Letter, November 28, 1959

**DOGHOUSE WALL PLAQUE**, nine inches high, is equipped with tablets on which are depicted four repentent looking dogs. Each of these may bear the name of different family members. When one of the family misbehaves, the dog bearing his or her name is hung in the door of the doghouse.

Science News Letter, November 28, 1959

**JEEP-PLANE KIT** comes in an envelope 11¼ by 16½ inches, and consists of precut parts, such as a fuselage and wings, ready for quick, easy assembly. In use, the assembled plane is twirled around in circles and loops by an attached cord. A propeller produces a roar simulating an actual plane engine.

Science News Letter, November 28, 1959



## Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

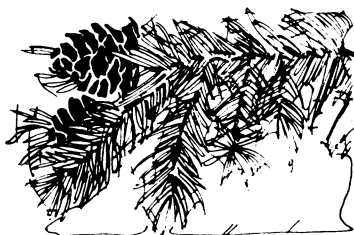
SANTA CLAUS will see some 40,000,000 Christmas trees in American homes this year on his annual trip southward from the North Pole. Of these, the handsome balsam fir will greet him more often than any other kind of tree.

Santa (and you) can tell firs from other Christmas trees by their soft, blunt-pointed needles that are slightly curved. Their cones sit upright on the branches like short, fat candles.

The next most popular American Christmas tree is the Douglas fir—not really a fir at all, but a sort of mixture of fir and spruce. It can be identified by a look at its cone. Between each of the scales of the cone is a little three-pronged projection that marks it from any other Christmas tree.

Third in rank is the tiny black spruce, the typical "grocery store" Christmas tree.

What's Your Christmas Tree?



Its diminutive size—usually two to three feet tall—belies its age, for it may be 25 to 50 years old. These trees are found in immense numbers in the swamps and lowlands of the Great Lakes states, where bad weather and worse soil leads to this dwarfed condition. Spruces of all kinds can be told by their short, sharp-pointed, prickly needles and small cones that hang downward from the branches.

Although fourth place in use, probably the most common American Christmas tree cut wild from the forest is the eastern red cedar.

This tree is very beautiful and is abundant in much of the country. Dad likes to bring it home, but Mother usually objects to its bad habit of dropping its tiny, prickly leaves too easily. Merchants dislike it for this same reason.

The white spruce is fifth in popularity. The cones of this tree are somewhat larger than those of the black spruce and are pale green, tinged with red, rather than the dull gray-brown of the black spruce.

These five evergreens make up about 85% of the American Christmas trees used every year.

The Scotch pine, southern pine, red spruce, Virginia pine, white fir and Norway spruce, in this order, comprise the bulk of the remaining trees that Santa will see.

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