

• New Machines and Gadgets •

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DOG CONDITIONER is said to be a pleasant-tasting, non-toxic powder formula that is mixed with the dog's daily food to help rid it of tape, round, hook and pin worms. It is also claimed to promote a glossier coat, more vitality, improve appetite and a sweeter breath.

Science News Letter, January 9, 1960

TEST TUBE CAPS of non-wettable polyethylene may also be used for centrifuge tubes. Flexible outer skirts on the caps also allow the tubes to fit into the top of the plugs. The caps are made in a variety of sizes.

Science News Letter, January 9, 1960

RECESSED LIGHT FIXTURES are incandescent units with frameless designs featuring high thermal-resistant plastic diffusers that do not warp, distort or discolor. They are available in three types and utilize 100-watt or 150-watt lamps.

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BIRD FEEDER, shown in the photograph, which can be hung through a lid eyelet, consists of a top and bottom of rigid polyethylene and a seed container of a softer transparent polyethylene. The top may be unscrewed from the container for refilling. As birds eat off the bottom tray,



more seed falls out of three openings in the seed container, keeping the tray constantly full. Drain holes in the tray keep the seed from getting soggy.

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COLANDER for washing vegetables and draining and storing food is made of lightweight high-density polyethylene. Unaf-

ected by extremely hot or cold water, it has fullgrip handles and four sturdy legs for use on many types of working surfaces. It comes in red, yellow or white.

Science News Letter, January 9, 1960

ELECTROMAGNETIC COUNTER displays six digits in a case slightly more than two inches wide. Operating on a power consumption of about six watts, the non-reset counter may be applied wherever there is a need for a low speed, limited-life unit of minimum initial cost, yet with rugged reliability.

Science News Letter, January 9, 1960

BATTERY BOOSTER KIT consists of a rubber-tired tote cart, battery box, battery tongs, and clamps and cables. It provides for easy transport of batteries and speeds up battery servicing.

Science News Letter, January 9, 1960

FURNACE FILTERS for hot air heating systems are available in six sizes. They feature all-aluminum frames, non-corrosive construction and plastic filters that remove dirt, dust and impurities from the air without the need for oil or excessive care. Claimed also to remove a good deal of pollen from the air, they may be cleaned by flushing under running water.

Science News Letter, January 9, 1960



Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

PROWLING through the woodland night, the raccoon finds its way along intricate pathways with the ease of a man walking along a busy sidewalk at high noon. Few items of food along the darkened trail escape its notice, even on the blackest night. Keen eyes, especially adapted for nocturnal vision make use of every stray glimmer of light. But more than this, the animal's senses of smell, hearing and touch act like bright beams that probe the obscurity to show what lies ahead.

Just how much the raccoon relies on non-visual senses became very apparent in the case of a raccoon recently taken in a live trap. Most trapped 'coons behave rather timidly or appear "unconcerned" until one tries to take them from a cage. But this individual charged the bars, hissed ominously and clicked his fangs audibly before the trapper "came in sight." Since there are many records of rabid raccoons, the trapper at first thought this disease might account for its strange antics. But examina-

'Coon in the Dark



tion revealed that his prisoner was blind.

Removing the raccoon from the trap presented a special problem. Ordinarily, the trapper places a bag over the opening, then shoos the animal into the bag by scaring it. But the blind 'coon could not see the bag, and reacted to the shouting and poking by more snarls and charges.

The trapper decided upon an ingenious idea: he placed the bag over the opening, then blew hard on the 'coon from the direction of the open bag. Feeling the breath of air, the animal ran toward it and into the bag.

Examination of the raccoon showed that it was an adult which had apparently been blind for a considerable length of time. Contrary to what you might guess, this animal was quite plump, well-fed and seemed in excellent health.

Thus, in spite of total blindness, the other senses of the raccoon were sufficient for it to make a good living in the wild, finding food and shelter and avoiding enemies. The non-typical charging and snarling were evident attempts to scare away potential enemies heard but not seen. His bluff served its purpose well.

This blind raccoon was marked by the trapper by clipping its toes in a distinctive manner. Its tracks as seen on the shore of the creek and on sandy trails will now furnish information on its activities. How long will this blind raccoon manage to hold its own? Will it stay in its well-known range, or will the raccoon move to other locations? The tracks will now reveal the future fate of a raccoon whose great handicap has not defeated the spunky animal.

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