

# New Machines and Gadgets

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**RECHARGEABLE BATTERY** cartridge fits in standard flashlights to provide continuous light. It is recharged by being plugged into any 110-volt AC outlet. After a 16-hour charge, this industrial model will provide light for about three hours. It can be recharged hundreds of times at very low cost.

Science News Letter, April 2, 1960

**MANY-TIPPED HAMMER** has three interchangeable screw-in tips for use on various surfaces. Use of the proper tip is said to prevent marring of the surface to be hammered. The plastic-headed, soft-face hammer is shot-loaded which prevents rebound.

Science News Letter, April 2, 1960

**PLASTIC CUP RACK** for washing, carrying and storing cups in restaurants and institutions weighs less than conventional metal racks. The new polyethylene racks are unaffected by boiling water and detergents. They will hold more cups in less space than that taken by the same number of metal racks.

Science News Letter, April 2, 1960

**BALL BAG** protects bowling ball from scratching while in shipment and permits



the ball's serial number to be seen, as shown in the photograph. After the ball is purchased, women may find the bag useful for carrying bowling clothes and accessories.

Science News Letter, April 2, 1960

**SCREEN-STORM DOOR** combination closes itself automatically. A vinyl magnetic strip on the door frame and another on the

latch side of the door do the trick, close out cold air in the winter and insects in the summer. The door itself is aluminum.

Science News Letter, April 2, 1960

**CLOSET DEHUMIDIFIER** is said to end dampness, mold and musty odor in closets. About the size of a fluorescent light bulb, the electric device is simply plugged in and placed on the floor. Its triple action of warming, drying and circulating the air keeps the closet fresh by changing the air 150 times daily.

Science News Letter, April 2, 1960

**TUB TRAY** straddles the home bathtub and holds beauty aids, books, an ashtray or a cool drink for the bather. The plastic tray's supports are covered with vinyl to prevent marring of the tub.

Science News Letter, April 2, 1960

**STUD SHELVES** mount between open studs in garage or basement. The end of each wire shelf may be simply driven, like a nail, into the front of a stud to provide storage space for canned goods, paint, garden supplies, or hundreds of other items. The shelves are easily removed when rearranging or moving.

Science News Letter, April 2, 1960

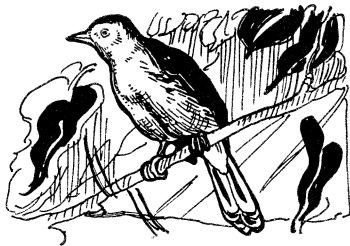


## Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

### Spring Song



WINTRY WINDS were still hurtling icy blasts across the Deep South late in February and in early March this year. Bits of snow drifted into north Florida, to the dismay of chambers of commerce there. But though the ground lay frosted, bursts of summer-like song echoed through the air, the singing of mockingbirds.

Chilly weather could not fool these birds. They were fully aware that spring was just around the corner and that it was time to stake out a claim on their breeding territory. And singing is their delightful means of advertising their possession of a given spot of tree, air and land.

The bird that ventures near the claim of a singing mockingbird is a foolish one, indeed. He can expect a blitzkrieg attack of blows on the head and body for this thoughtlessness. The remaining robins that have not yet gone north seem to suffer the wrath of territorial mockingbirds more than

any others. Intent on their search for worms, perhaps they just fail to hear the mocker's warning. They pay a dear price for their inattention, though, in the forms of blows and ruffled feathers.

The "best" fights to watch are those between a righteously indignant mockingbird and another mocker who covets that landowner's property. Both are pugnacious to a ludicrous degree, and the scuffles are furious. As in the movies, the "good guy" usually wins, driving off the intruder.

Animals on their own territory seem to have a special confidence in battle, while interlopers tend to retreat quickly. Even tiny wrens drive pugnacious jays and larger birds from their own territories.

But the mocker will not drive every bird away. He must entice a mate into his territory, woo and win her. Thereafter, he has a staunch ally in defense of the homestead. If anything, his mate is more avid than he in keeping out other birds.

The mockingbird's song will reach a crescendo at the height of the nesting season. All through the southland summer night, the mocker's song is heard loud and clear, a lullaby to some people, a sleep-robbing nuisance to others. Then in mid-summer, after the young have left the nest, the territories are abandoned and the mockingbird's song is replaced by the lazy whirring of the cicadas in the summer heat. They sing again briefly in early autumn, but soon their voices are stilled until the coming of spring starts a new cycle of song.

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