

• New Machines and Gadgets •

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FM-AM ALL-TRANSISTOR PORTABLE, the manufacturer says, is the first American-made radio of its type and has an undistorted power output rated at 500 milliwatts or 92% greater than that of any tube-type portable sold. A control circuit to prevent FM drift is built in. A jack permits a phonograph to be played through the set or the portable to be used as an FM-AM tuner with a console radio.

Science News Letter, April 16, 1960

"DRY" INK SET permits children to paint, color eggs and draw greeting cards with a minimum of mess for there is no loose ink. The set has eight colors in bottles with six different shapes of felt tips that absorb the ink. To use, the bottle is inverted and the tip pressed to paper.

Science News Letter, April 16, 1960

CHILDREN'S BOAT, for use in swimming pools, holds two or three children but is light enough for a child to carry unassisted. Designed to be unsinkable and unbreakable, the boat is 5½ feet long and formed from plastic.

Science News Letter, April 16, 1960

PERMANENT AIR FILTER, shown in the photograph, eliminates the need to buy a new air conditioner filter each time an old one gets dirty. Made of a polyurethane foam, the new filter may be washed and re-installed. The 15x24 inch



filter may be trimmed with scissors to fit various makes of air conditioners.

Science News Letter, April 16, 1960

CORROSION INDICATORS corrode at the slightest provocation, turning reddish-brown to warn that conditions exist that might damage delicate instruments or other metal products. Only as big as a pat of

butter, each indicator has a thin film of metal that shows a corrosion of only five billionths of an inch of metal, the manufacturer states.

Science News Letter, April 16, 1960

LOUNGE CHAIR PAD is an unusual air mattress with plastic foam added in a patented arrangement. A small air valve permits the lounge to adjust his pad to the desired softness by letting air in or out. The lounge does not have to blow the pad up, as in regular air mattresses, because the air foam expands when the air valve is open and no pressure is on the pad. The pad's vinyl cover is waterproof so the pad may also be used as a pool float.

Science News Letter, April 16, 1960

POCKET PRUNER is ready for garden chores at the flick of a green thumb but folds like a regular pocket knife for convenient carrying. From one end of the tool a small pruning shear unfolds and from the other, a pruning knife.

Science News Letter, April 16, 1960

ELECTRIC ERASER rotates a rubber eraser for neat corrections by typists and draftsmen. Because rotation, not pressure, does the trick, no slip sheets between carbons are said to be needed. And because the eraser tip is automatically kept pointed, a typing shield is not needed either.

Science News Letter, April 16, 1960



Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

THE ARRIVAL of spring—reluctant as it has been this year—is signed and certified by the appearance of blossoms in woods, fields and gardens across the country.

The definition of a flower depends on the point of view. To the honeybee, it is an overflowing cup of liquid food. To the poet, it is a source of inspiration. To the person allergic to pollen, the flower is a diabolical instrument of torture.

And to the botanist, a flower is a modified stem bearing a concentric circle of leaves specialized for reproduction! If you are not in the unhappy position of the allergic pollen-avoider, pick one of these springtime blossoms and examine its handsomely designed, and functional, structure.

A typical flower consists of four circles of modified leaves mounted on a swollen base called the receptacle. Look first at the petals. These make up the second whirl of

What Is a Flower?



modified leaves. Now look just below the petals and you should see a whirl of smaller green, leaf-like structures. These are the sepals, representing the first circle of modified leaves. The enlarged portion of the flower to which the sepals and petals are attached is the receptacle. The sepals usually function to protect and support the other flower parts. The petals may do likewise, but often their primary function is to attract pollen-carrying insects.

Within the circle of petals, two other groups of delicate structures can usually be seen, though some flowers may have only one or the other of them, depending on whether they are "male" or "female" or whether they bear both "sexes." Nearest the petals is a whirl of small, stalked bodies, the stamens. These produce the "male" pollen grains in the enlarged sacs (anthers) on the tip of the stalk. Although their looks belie the fact, they are modified leaves, too.

In the center of the flower is another whirl of stalked bodies called pistils. Or there may be a single body, representing several pistils fused together. This is the "female" organ, and within its swollen base (ovary) lie one or more unfertilized eggs.

Pollen grains carried by insects or wafted by the wind fall on the tip of the pistil. A pollen grain then sends forth a tube that penetrates the pistil stalk until it reaches the egg. Then a nucleus in the pollen tube fertilizes the egg. The net result is a seed.

Science News Letter, April 16, 1960