

• New Ideas and Gadgets •

For sources of more information on new things described, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, 1719 N St., N.W., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for Gadget Bulletin 1091. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

⚙️ **TRANSISTOR RADIO**, with all-American components, weighs only five ounces. It has six matched transistors and two germanium crystal diodes, a plug-in jack for earphone, and operates from a specially designed 9-volt battery. The shirt pocket radio develops 250 milliwatts of power.

• Science News Letter, 79:304 May 13, 1961

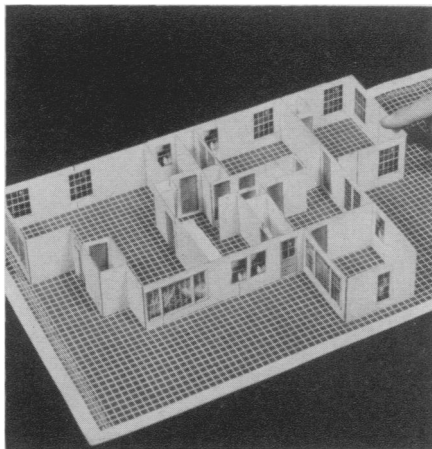
⚙️ **WALL PAINT** that does not drip, run or spatter is an extra-thick acrylic-type emulsion. It flows into a smooth, flat-finish coating as it is brushed or rolled on. With a consistency like that of mayonnaise, the paint needs no stirring, dries in 30 minutes, and is highly washable. Painting tools are readily cleaned with water.

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⚙️ **FISHHOOK DISGORGER** makes the chore of removing hooks from fishes' gullets simple and virtually bloodless without damage to popping flies and bugs. Made of polypropylene plastic, the floating instrument retains its shape even after twisting and bending.

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⚙️ **HOME-BUILDING KIT**, shown in the photograph, contains dozens of fiber partitions, doors, windows and kitchen cabinets,



all made to one-quarter-inch scale, same as blueprints, to help in planning the building of a new home or remodeling of an old one. Kit, for single- or multiple-story planning, includes 65-page handbook to help estimate costs.

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⚙️ **COLLAPSIBLE KEY RING** separates three ways automatically for ease of key selection. Precision made of alloys, the ring

is tangle-proof and carries a lifetime guarantee.

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⚙️ **NYLON SEWING THREAD**, so strong it defies breaking by hand, has special bonding agent, giving the thread a slight stiffness for easy threading. Available in 18 colors, thread may be used for same purposes as any six-cord cotton thread.

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⚙️ **AUTOMATIC LETTER OPENER** cuts the edge of envelopes safely with razor-edge precision without damage to contents. Simply insert end of envelope in slot, press bar, and it is neatly opened. Weighing only three pounds, the opener is small enough for desk use.

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⚙️ **TYPEWRITER CLEANER** is an 8½-by-11-inch sheet of velvety, fibrous material that is neat and safe to use. The sheet is rolled into the typewriter, which is placed on stencil, then each key is struck firmly three or four times to allow finger-like fibers to loosen dirt or ink. Adhesive at the base of sheet pulls out soil. Sheets come three to a pack, each sheet perforated in seven sections, providing 21 cleanings.

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Nature Ramblings



Do You Know?

► IN MID-MAY, forest fringes, wooded pastures and prairie timber belts blossom forth with masses of delicate pink, single trees standing out like huge roseate popcorn balls. These are the native wild crabapple trees, and it is by no small effort that they have grown to such beautiful proportions.

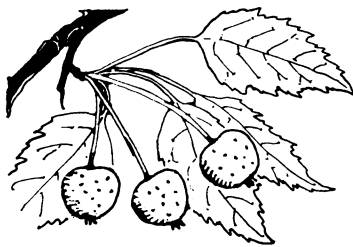
Wild crabapples growing in pastures pass through a strange metamorphosis before they reach full size and achieve the symmetrical, rounded shape typical of the species.

When the seedling tree comes up, a cow promptly bites off the top. The seedling branches, and a cow bites it off again.

The little plant grows into a compact, somewhat thorny bush, constantly gnawed by cattle, growing thorny and throwing out longer, lower branches, until at last it can hold off its browsing enemies at neck's length.

By now it has become pyramid-shaped. Then a tall shot springs up from the tip of the pyramid, beyond reach of the cattle, and grows rapidly upward, branching as it climbs. The cattle nibble off some of these

Wild Crabapples



branches and trim this upper part into a second pyramid, inverted over the first, converting the growing tree into a big green hourglass.

Finally the top expands and rounds out, and the straggling branches beneath die and break off. In any pasture one can find crabapples in all stages of this evolution.

For all their spring beauty, both of the principal native crabapple species bear bitter fruits. Notable for their high tannin content, the tough, hard apples are puckery even when they ripen in autumn.

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A recent scientific study showed that although average children in the eighth grade can do *arithmetic* taught in elementary school, only 15% actually understand it.

Death occurs for 30% to 40% of the people attacked by *sharks*.

The lifetime quota of *water* usage for the average person in the U.S. is some 3,500,000 gallons.

Future historians may note that the revolution in *computers* now underway had as great an impact on human society as the industrial revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Tornadoes killed 42 persons and injured 703 in the United States during 1960.

A cloud-scraping *television* tower rising 1,428 feet above the Texas plains near Dallas is also doing double duty as the world's tallest known weather research structure.

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