

# • New Ideas and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **CHARCOAL FIRE HOLDER** of wire mesh holds charcoal in a compact vertical pile to permit free circulation of air that speeds up starting and insures even burning. The holder is placed in the grill, charcoal and lighting fluid poured in, then lit. When charcoal burns with even red glow, the holder is lifted off and coals spread out.

• Science News Letter, 80:128 August 19, 1961

⚙️ **INSTANT-COFFEE SET** of white ceramic decorated with a rooster design includes a 6-inch-high coffee jar with spoon, a sugar bowl with built-in stainless steel spoon and a creamer, both 4½ inches high.

• Science News Letter, 80:128 August 19, 1961

⚙️ **HIGH INTENSITY LAMP** that rests on a base only slightly larger than a pack of cigarettes gives glare-free concentrated light. The fold-away lamp has a miniature cork-insulated reflector of 2½-inch diameter. It has an electrical outlet for small electrical tools and appliances.

• Science News Letter, 80:128 August 19, 1961

⚙️ **COMPACT COT**, shown in the photograph, folds to a size small enough to stow in a bureau drawer or pack in a suitcase and comes in a handy carrying carton. It unfolds to 6 feet 3 inches long and 26



inches wide. The cot, ideal for camping trips, weighs only four pounds and features a springy all aluminum frame with a washable green cover of heavy duck.

• Science News Letter, 80:128 August 19, 1961

⚙️ **COLOR SLIDE RULE** demonstrates components of different colors. A teaching device for classroom demonstrations in high

school and college physics, the versatile rule consists of a stationary holder with four filters, four corresponding color-coded spectrographic diagrams, and a slide with another set of four filters and diagrams that moves within the holder. Complete rule fits into standard lantern slide projector for use in large lecture rooms.

• Science News Letter, 80:128 August 19, 1961

⚙️ **FOLD-AWAY GARDEN CART** that snaps flat for storage combines a flexible steel sheet with a strong fabric bag having a capacity of six cubic feet. Weighing only 18 pounds, a dust pan lip makes it easy to sweep into.

• Science News Letter, 80:128 August 19, 1961

⚙️ **CURLY COMB** follows the natural contour of wave and curls, adding longer life to a hair set. The comb is made of clear lucite with two rows of curved teeth and is equally good for fine or thick hair.

• Science News Letter, 80:128 August 19, 1961

⚙️ **WALL HAT RACK** of plastic is attached to any wall instantly, without nails or screws, by a strong adhesive which is furnished in individual capsules. Complete instructions included with each unit.

• Science News Letter, 80:128 August 19, 1961



## Nature Ramblings



## Do You Know?

► THE LEAVES of the ginkgo tree soon will be turning a brilliant yellow, just as they have for countless autumns.

In a sense, the ginkgo is a living fossil. During the 100 or 200 million years of its known existence, while other plants were modified drastically or disappeared, the ginkgo not only persisted but changed very little.

At one time during its history, *Ginkgo biloba* was native to North America, but today only the petrified remains of these trees, not the living offspring can be found.

The trees living at the present time are believed to have originated in northern China. No one knows how long it has been since a ginkgo survived in the wild state, and if the trees had not been cultivated by Chinese Buddhist priests and monks, to whom they were sacred and worthy of a place near a temple, they might be extinct by now.

The Japanese also held the tree in respect. Such an honor is not surprising, for the ginkgo is unique among trees and has no close relatives.

The leaves are leathery and fan-shaped, and the veins run directly from the leaf stalk to the outer leaf edge. There is no prominent mid-vein as is the case with most

### Ginkgo



familiar leaves.

Thousands of ginkgos have been planted in Washington, D. C., Baltimore, Los Angeles and New York. For some reason, they suffer little damage from city grime, storms, fungi and insects.

The female ginkgo bears a thin-skinned plumlike fruit. Oriental peoples consider the large, smooth silvery-white pit of the fruit a delicacy when roasted. But the flesh has a nauseating, rancid-butter smell, and when such fruits drop to the ground in autumn and make city sidewalks a slippery, smelly mess, the female ginkgo falls into disfavor. The fruitless male tree, however, is still quite popular.

• Science News Letter, 80:128 August 19, 1961

It has been found that the use of *silage* in addition to hay, when fed in the proper amount, stimulates the milking cow to produce more milk.

Splitting, cracking, ridging, laminating or excessive brittleness of the *fungernails* can be prevented or alleviated in a majority of cases by the daily ingestion of a given amount of gelatin.

Congenital defects of the *heart* are by far the leading cause of heart disease mortality among whites under age 15, and rank only slightly below rheumatic heart disease at ages 15 to 24.

Approximately \$19,900,000 will be expended in fiscal year 1962 in a new *research* program adopted by the Atomic Energy Commission for high-temperature materials and high-performance reactors.

There are approximately 255,000 passenger *elevators* in operation in the United States, and they transport nearly 41 billion passengers per year over a distance exceeding 138,000,000 miles.

• Science News Letter, 80:128 August 19, 1961