

• 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 1106. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

☛ **COMPACT FIRE EXTINGUISHER**, cylindrical or ball-shaped with a replaceable shell, for use in homes, autos and boats, is designed for easy one-hand operation and has a rugged full-grip trigger. Containing 2¾ pounds of dry chemical, the charge can be quickly changed by simply unscrewing. A red plastic seal warns of discharge or tampering and a locking device prevents accidental discharge.

• Science News Letter, 80:144 August 26, 1961

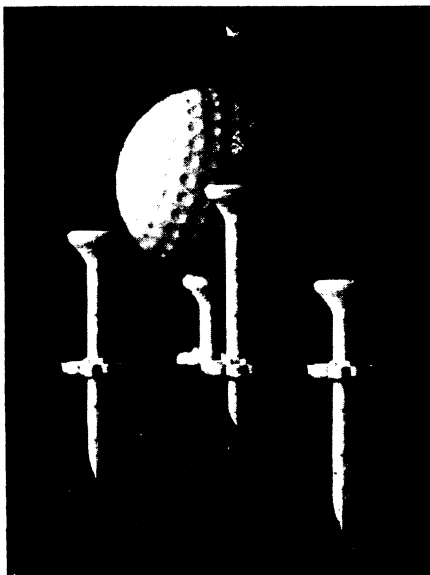
☛ **ELECTRIC CAN OPENER** operating on fingertip action opens all shapes and sizes of cans, including dented ones. Light and compact, the can opener either stands on its own legs or is mounted on a wall or cabinet. The opener has white, steel case, with gold or chrome finish on plated parts.

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☛ **CORK EXTRACTOR** is a 5¼-inch-long metal, hypodermic-like cylinder with a 1¼-inch needle which removes a bottle cork by injecting a small amount of carbon dioxide from a cartridge into the bottle below the cork. The needle is inserted through the cork, a button pushed and the gas released, lifting out the cork. Extra cartridges are available.

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☛ **ADJUSTABLE GOLF TEE** of tough butyrate plastic enables the golfer to place



the ball at exactly the same elevation for every drive. Each tee, shown in the photograph, is equipped with a detachable collar readily adjustable by a twist to any one of four positions on a notched shaft.

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☛ **DECORATIVE PLASTIC TRAYS** combine beauty and functional utility. Flecks of gold and hand-wrought designs are

permanently imbedded in the clear plastic that is durable and resistant to breakage.

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☛ **DO - IT - YOURSELF ALUMINUM DOOR** can be hung in existing door frames with standard woodworking tools and requires no painting or maintenance. The door, 1¾ inches thick and having a core of five-ply laminated wood with an outer skin of aluminum, can be planed, sawed or bored. It is available in different styles, including jalousie and flush doors.

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☛ **PEEL-A-COLOR PICTURE** enables a child to color a picture without crayons or paint. Six different colored sheets of aluminum foil are bonded together to form a nursery rhyme character. To color the figure, pre-cut areas of foil are lifted, a layer at a time, until the desired color is reached. The completed 7-x-9-inch picture can be used as a wall plaque.

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☛ **IMPACT-RESISTANT CONTAINERS** provide maximum protection in shipping electronic and photographic accessories. The tough, plastic case, available in a variety of sizes, has shock absorbing plastic foam inside that holds contents firmly in place. The boxes have high immunity to chemicals and can be steam-sterilized.

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Nature Ramblings



Do You Know?

► IN THE GREAT western plains and plateaus, one may see the towns of the prairie dogs, complete with mounds and holes. These gregarious rodents have the same elementary social organization that binds other animal groups together.

In the case of the prairie dog, the most notable feature is the posting of sentries that warn of approaching danger by whistling in shrill tones.

If the twitching and bouncing of the prairie dogs are a source of amusement to the occasional observer, they are equally unending annoyances to ranchers.

The little beasts have an insatiable nibbling appetite and do a considerable amount of damage to crops. On the range, a cow, but more frequently a horse, may stumble into a prairie dog hole at the cost of a broken bone.

There is an ancient myth, remarkably persistent in the face of adequate evidence to the contrary, that prairie dogs, burrowing owls and rattlesnakes all live in harmony in the same burrow.

Prairie Dogs



Although it is true that they are frequently found in the same village, it is a fact that owls make their own burrows, or at most pre-empt an abandoned prairie dog hole.

The snakes take advantage of the holes of both owls and prairie dogs. If they are found in the same dwellings with either of them, it may be taken for granted that they are there in intrusion rather than by invitation, for they have been known to eat the young of the prairie dog.

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The cost of *drainage* work on some highway projects approaches a half-million dollars per mile.

A recently designed mechanical *grape harvester* successfully removes more than 95% of the fruit and can do the work of 25 to 40 hand pickers.

Ozone found in smog or polluted air may be responsible for injury to *crops* grown near cities.

A remote control *vehicle* with a hand-like manipulator and four television camera "eyes," has been developed to do the work of a diver on the ocean floor.

An International *Plant Index* of about 50 volumes serving as a master reference of the world's estimated 1,700,000 plants is being compiled with the aid of automatic data-processing equipment for researchers throughout the world.

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