

• 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 1123. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

⚙️ **OVEN PROTECTOR** to make oven cleaning easier is a non-toxic, odorless and tasteless product that comes in an aerosol container. Sprayed on the oven walls before cooking, it forms a protective shield that prevents food or grease from sticking. Instant drying, the material is equally useful on baking pans, waffle irons or outdoor grills.

• Science News Letter, 80:424 December 23, 1961

⚙️ **UNIQUE SCREWDRIVER** has spring steel blades with V-shaped tips that grip the screw slot flush from top to bottom, permitting fast driving without slippage or marring of the screw head. Controlled by a push button in the handle, the driver will hold screws for starting even in hard-to-reach places. Available in 14 sizes.

• Science News Letter, 80:424 December 23, 1961

⚙️ **SILICONE SUDS-CONTROL CAKE** used in electric floor scrubber suppresses foam. The two-inch-diameter cake controls excessive sudsing as dirty water is vacuumed from the floor, thus preventing overflow onto clean floor. The replaceable cake lasts about six months.

• Science News Letter, 80:424 December 23, 1961

⚙️ **TRANSPARENT GLUE** made especially for invisible mending, as is being done for the pitcher shown in the photo-



graph, is said to make a hard permanent repair that resists water. It is prepared by combining equal amounts of the contents of two tubes, no heat or pressure being needed to apply the mixture. The adhesive will bond glass, china, metals or wood, and also repair furniture, lamps and luggage.

• Science News Letter, 80:424 December 23, 1961

⚙️ **MAGNETIC DIAL THERMOMETER** for cars contains a built-in lifetime magnet and is installed by placing it against the dashboard. Only 1½ inches in diameter

and with a range of minus 20 to 125 degrees Fahrenheit, it is easy to read. The thermometer can also be used on boats, freezers, or baby carriages.

• Science News Letter, 80:424 December 23, 1961

⚙️ **SEAT BELT POUCH** is a double pouch for the automobile driver using a seat belt. Designed to carry cigarettes, change and other odds and ends, the pocket pouch keeps these items readily available within easy reach.

• Science News Letter, 80:424 December 23, 1961

⚙️ **DISPOSABLE RAZOR** that eliminates razor cleaning and handling blades has the effective performance of a standard razor. Consisting of a sturdy one-piece plastic head and handle with a permanently locked-in steel blade, each razor is individually wrapped for instant use.

• Science News Letter, 80:424 December 23, 1961

⚙️ **SOLID GLASS BRICK** brings daylight into fallout shelters. The material has a very high density and gives the same amount of protection as an equal thickness of concrete. The glass bricks, which meet Office of Civil Defense requirements, give 54% light transmission through a thickness of nine inches. This is sufficient for performing various tasks and easing the drain on battery-powered light sources.

• Science News Letter, 80:424 December 23, 1961



Nature Ramblings



Do You Know?

➤ THERE ARE 33 kinds of mistletoe native to the United States. They are known as the dwarf mistletoes and the American mistletoes. Of the American varieties, the common southeastern species (*Phoradendron flavescens*) is the one most of us know, for this is mistletoe gathered and sold for Christmas decorations.

The scientific name of the Christmas mistletoe comes from the Greek. It means thief and tree or "tree thief." This is an appropriate name; mistletoe is a semi-parasitic plant that thrives on the living tissues of such trees as elms, maples, oaks and sycamores.

Distinguished by light green leaves, minute yellow flowers and waxy white berries, mistletoe has a history that goes back to the time of the Druids. They worshipped the oak, and anything that grew on this tree was sacred.

The custom of kissing beneath the mistletoe began so long ago, no one is exactly sure how it originated. One belief is that it is a survival of a Scandinavian custom. A

Mistletoe



combination of myth and history has it that when enemies met beneath a tree bearing mistletoe, they stopped fighting and declared a truce, perhaps leading to the kissing custom.

The plant is particularly abundant in Oklahoma, for which it is the state flower. In this state most mistletoe grows in the tops of elms. Birds flock to these treetops to feed on the plant's seeds—a wildlife food from a plant depending upon its tree host for water and dissolved minerals.

• Science News Letter, 80:424 December 23, 1961

Only 1,000 prairie chickens, once numerous all over Illinois, remain today.

The lines of force of the earth's magnetic field are nearly horizontal in the area 17 miles east of Lima, Peru.

The "breathability" of latex foam rubber is one of the important factors accounting for its popularity.

Microorganisms such as tiny bacteria are virtually unaffected by radiation that could destroy higher forms of life.

The freshness of strawberries can be extended for a significant period of time by low doses of radiation, experiments have shown.

The force to roll back the world's largest movable roof, sheathed by almost four acres of stainless steel, is controlled by a single push button.

• Science News Letter, 80:424 December 23, 1961