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INVENTION

Patents of the Week

A chemical means of sterilizing insect pests instead of using radioactive gamma rays received a patent. The same compounds are used in printers' ink and wash and wear fabrics.

➤ A HIGHLY REACTIVE group of chemical compounds used harmlessly in wash and wear fabrics and printers' ink sterilizes insect pests.

When fed or applied to insects, the compounds do not remove the urge or ability to mate but remove the ability to lay eggs that will hatch. The U.S. Patent Office issued patent 3,126,315 for this group of certain aziridinyl compounds, which, if not used carefully in a laboratory, could produce sterility in humans. Other members of this highly reactive group are used in treating some types of cancer.

Developed by Drs. Charles W. Woods and Morton Beroza of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's entomology research division, these compounds were the first chemical sterilants for insects. This means of biological control sterilizes more types of insects than was possible by irradiating them with gamma rays.

In field tests the compounds have been successful in reducing the numbers of Mexican fruit flies, house flies and adult mosquitoes. Because the compounds are poisonous to man, at present they can be used only as bait in an insect-attracting device and not sprayed over a broad area.

Rights to the patent were assigned to the Department of Agriculture.

Fishbone Extractor

A long pencil-like device with a ball of lint cotton on one end is held in the hand and rotated inside the throat to remove fishbones and other sharp objects. The bones become entangled in the cotton, which is subsequently removed from the throat and discarded.

Alvis Y. Dowell, a patent attorney in Washington, D. C., invented the first-aid device, which received patent 3,126,006, during a fishing trip, when some bones caught in his throat.

Ray-Proof Glasses

A new type of glass protects the eyes from flash radiation caused by atomic blasts. Used in protective goggles, the glass absorbs dangerous infrared and ultraviolet rays. At the same time, it permits light in the safe region of the spectrum to pass through to the eyes.

The glass and the method of manufacturing it was invented by Robert W. Young of Woodstock, Conn. He assigned rights to patent 3,126,295 to the American Optical Company in Southbridge, Mass., where he is employed.

Cooling Clothing

A Dutch inventor has devised a blouse

that keeps its wearer perpetually cool. Special fibers run vertically on the outside of the blouse ending in a water-filled container at the collar.

Water moves continuously over the fibers by capillary action, and, as it evaporates in the air, draws heat away from the body. Normal body perspiration can pass between these special fibers that keep the body cool at all times. Wilhelmus A. Bemelman of Amsterdam, Netherlands, was awarded patent 3,125,865 for his invention.

Other Significant Patents

A chemical means of keeping fresh fruit and vegetables from turning brown after they are peeled or cut—patent 3,126,287 to Bernard J. Finkle, Berkeley, Calif., assigned to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

A means of indicating the temperature of milk in a baby bottle by putting materials with different melting points on the outside—patent 3,125,984 to Hiroshi Okuyama, Tokyo, Japan.

A portable lectern with built-in loud-speaker system—patent 3,126,450 to Hugh G. Neil and Curtis L. Gladson, Knoxville, Tenn., and Edgard R. Wiklund, Atlanta, Ga.; assigned to Special Instruments Laboratory, Inc., Knoxville.

A silver iodide cloud-seeding generator attached to the tip of an airplane wing—patent 3,126,155 to Ora F. Lohse, Valier, Mont.

• Science News Letter, 85:238 April 11, 1964

TECHNOLOGY

One-Man Air Conditioner Developed for Workers

➤ FACTORY WORKERS can now have hooded, individual air conditioners that weigh only three pounds and provide a flow of 20 cubic feet of cool, clean air per minute.

Developed by the Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corporation, Chalmette, La., the air conditioner has a tube worn at the waist, which delivers air through a simple harness underneath the clothes.

• Science News Letter, 85:238 April 11, 1964

Do You Know?

Underground *petroleum* storage tanks of the future may be made of glass-reinforced plastic.

Ancient man slaughtered *animals* as ruthlessly as his 19th century descendants.

• Science News Letter, 85:238 April 11, 1964