

# • New Machines and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **PROSPECTOR'S TENT** can be suspended to a tree through a rope loop in the grommet, or erected with one pole inside the tent. Large enough to sleep three persons, the tent weighs six and one-half pounds. Available in two sizes, the tent is waterproof and mildew proof.

Science News Letter, July 6, 1957

⚙️ **DO-IT-YOURSELF LOCKSET** requires the boring of one hole for installation. Operated by means of a conventional door knob, the latch is designed for wooden screen, storm and combination doors from  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch to  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inches thick. A cardboard template is included for positioning the lockset.

Science News Letter, July 6, 1957

⚙️ **PAINT MIXER** is designed for use in open containers and is described as mixing white to color in 30 seconds. The power paint mixer can be used for mixing sheet-rock mud, mortar, latex, powders, white and red lead, and vinyls.

Science News Letter, July 6, 1957

⚙️ **COMBINATION SCREWDRIVER** shown in the photograph drives screws and has a built-in cutter for stripping any wire from 14 through 20 gauge, including double



strand household wire. The acetate plastic handle is designed with a transverse opening through the mid-section with the cutter embedded in it. The tool is available in four sizes.

Science News Letter, July 6, 1957

⚙️ **FUEL PUMP** that can be operated with one hand is made for the rapid transfer of

gasoline to or from car or boat tanks and containers. The small fuel pump weighs four ounces and has a  $29\frac{1}{2}$ -inch and a three-inch length of pipe.

Science News Letter, July 6, 1957

⚙️ **LAWN SPRINKLER** screws on to the fitting at the end of a hose. Molded of a butyrate plastic, the sprinkler may be set in any desired position by sliding its metal spike into the ground. At normal water pressure, sprinkling coverage is about 400 square feet.

Science News Letter, July 6, 1957

⚙️ **RING PAN** collects drippings from oven dishes, serves as a table centerpiece and can be used as a spatter-proof fry pan cover. Twelve and one-half inches in diameter, the ring has a fluted edge and a cut-out raised center.

Science News Letter, July 6, 1957

⚙️ **PLASTIC BOTTLES** for storing photographic chemical solutions and powders are made of amber colored polyethylene. The amber coloring keeps light out but permits the photographer to see in. The plastic bottles are available in 8-, 16-, 24-, 32-ounce and one-gallon sizes.

Science News Letter, July 6, 1957



## Nature Ramblings



By HORACE LOFTIN

➤ **THE CAT** is not the only one curiosity kills.

Some time ago, a scientist placed a laboratory mouse in a cage with a young boa constrictor. The snake was hanging from a limb in the middle of the cage. After some preliminary sniffing about the edge of his prison, the mouse walked boldly to a position directly under the snake, reared on his hind legs and touched the nose of the hanging boa with his snout.

The snake could not strike because of his position, but when the mouse, his curiosity at least temporarily satisfied, dropped back to the floor the snake quietly slithered to a lower limb. Then the mouse rose again to examine the snake—and that was his last adventure. In a lightning-like move the snake had the laboratory mouse in his deadly coils.

Now at first glance it might seem the boa constrictor had "hypnotized" the mouse into walking to his death. But the scientist

### What Curiosity Killed



had a more probable explanation for the mouse's unwise behavior.

Consider that the mouse was of a breed raised for many generations in the laboratory and his own short life was spent in the restricted environment of a cage. His experience was very limited.

Furthermore, it is doubtful that the mouse had had any inborn fear of snakes.

Thus, when he was placed in the cage with the boa constrictor, the snake dangling quietly in the center of the cage became an attractive object for exploration not for fear.

As the snake did not make any sudden or frightening movements, the mouse approached for a closer view and a better sniff. The need for a better sniff was especially important since the mouse depends a lot on his nose for learning about strange things.

He was curious.

Such an event would seldom happen in the wild, for in a life of constant danger usually fear overpowers curiosity. In its natural environment the mouse depends on his own powers for survival and it would "think twice" before approaching a snake. He might also have been exposed to the mouse-eating habits of snakes.

But, like the human baby who pokes his little finger in an unfamiliar but intriguing electric socket—for the shock of his young life—this protected mouse knew nothing about snakes, had no reason to fear the one encountered in the laboratory cage and so he succumbed to his curiosity.

Curiosity kills the mouse, too.

Science News Letter, July 6, 1957