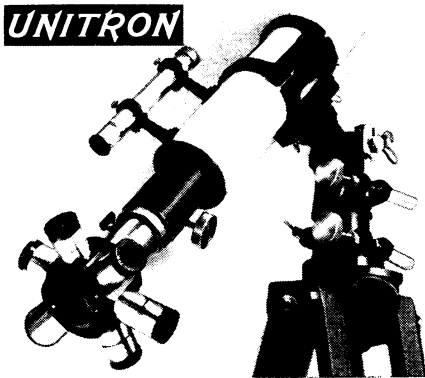


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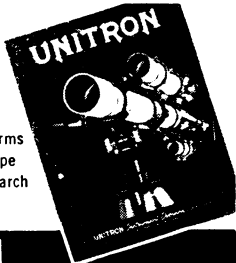
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BIOCHEMISTRY

Study Morphine Effects

► IN AN EFFORT to trace morphine from its beginning in a plant through the human body, scientists at the University of California at Los Angeles are trying to grow "hot" poppies.

Dr. Edward Leete, assistant professor of chemistry, is investigating the origin of morphine by feeding radioactively tagged compounds to the opium poppy.

If the poppy uses one or more of the radioactive compounds in the synthesis of morphine, a main component of opium, the drug then will become radioactive.

Thus the radioactivity will help detail the manner in which morphine is formed and perhaps give a clue to its function in the plant, which is unknown.

Radioactive morphine, which Dr. Leete hopes to make available, would be a valuable tool to medical science. By using the "hot" dope, medical scientists could follow its course through the body.

In this manner they could learn more about the drug's beneficial effects in relieving pain or the harmful path that leads to drug addiction.

► THE EFFECT of morphine can be partly overcome by two of the tranquilizing drugs, it is reported in *Nature* (June 15).

Drs. F. M. Sturtevant and Victor A. Drill of the division of biological research of G. D. Searle and Co., Chicago, Ill., report that since morphine has a very peculiar effect on cats, it was possible to test the effect of tranquilizers on the morphine reaction.

Injection of morphine produces mania in the cats, making them highly excitable, apprehensive and lacking in muscular coordination. The eye pupils of the cats were markedly dilated.

When either chlorpromazine or reserpine was given with the morphine, the severity of the morphine excitement was lessened.

The effect of the morphine in dilating the pupils predominated over the contracting effect of the tranquilizers, except when reserpine was given several hours after morphine.

The morphine did not affect the tendency of the tranquilizers to relax the inner eyelid of the cats.

Science News Letter, August 10, 1957

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ASTRONOMY

Rediscover Faint Comet On Return Trip

► A VERY FAINT comet named Encke has been spotted on its return trip to the sun's vicinity.

The most noteworthy fact about Comet Encke is the very short period of three and a third years in which it completes one revolution around the sun. The object, rediscovered by Dr. H. M. Jeffers of Lick Observatory, Mt. Hamilton, Calif., has a magnitude of 17, so is visible only with the very largest telescopes.

News of its recovery was bulletined to observatories in the Western Hemisphere by Harvard College Observatory, Cambridge, Mass.

Science News Letter, August 10, 1957

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MISCELLANEOUS

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Do You Know?

The *sulfonamides*, penicillin and broad-spectrum antibiotics have helped bring about a spectacular decline in the pneumonia death rate.

During the first year's use of a baby atom smasher for treating deep-seated cancer, in two-thirds (48) of 74 patients treated, all traces of tumor disappeared.

Research and experimentation are proposed to develop methods for the commercial production of fish on flooded rice acreage in rotation with field rice crops.

A teaspoonful of diesel fuel oil in a locomotive will carry a ton of freight one mile.