

• New Ideas and Gadgets •

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☛ **WATERBAG SHOWER**, convenient for campers, provides drinking water or a shower at any time, anywhere. Made of sturdy two-ply, tasteless and odorless rubberized canvas, the two-and-one-half-gallon container has a wooden handle across its top for carrying or for hanging when used as a shower. A shower attachment can be slipped on the faucet which opens from the bottom end of the waterbag.

• Science News Letter, 84:32 July 13, 1963

☛ **BIOLOGICAL FUEL CELL** for teachers, students and hobbyists can be used for experimentation and demonstration. The cell generates an electrical current from waste organic material impregnated with bacteria and the reaction will continue indefinitely by wetting periodically. Easy to assemble, the kit includes waste material and activator powder in plastic cylinders, demonstrator electric motor and complete instructions.

• Science News Letter, 84:32 July 13, 1963

☛ **EGG CODDLERS** assure eggs that are cooked exactly to taste each time. The china coddler is shaped like an egg cup and after cooking, the egg can be eaten directly from it. To cook, the egg is broken into the coddler, seasoning added, the metal top screwed on and the cup placed directly into boiling water for the desired length of time.

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☛ **PORTABLE PULL TESTER** is a hydraulic instrument about the size of a flashlight for use in checking the holding power of threaded fasteners of one-fourth or three-eighths-inch in diameter. Precision-built, the instrument can subject a completed fastening to stresses up to 5,000 pounds. The device weighs only two and one-half pounds as compared to ordinary testers weighing 50 to several hundred pounds.

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☛ **ELECTRIC SPRAYER** for dispensing air fresheners, mothproofers, liquid starch, insecticides and other liquids bought in bulk is ideal for the economy-minded housewife. The four-ounce sprayer, only six inches high, has a built-in a.c. motor and produces a fine mist-like spray when its push-button switch is pressed. The translucent sprayer can be easily emptied and refilled with different liquids.

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☛ **PERSONAL HEALTH RECORD** is a 28-page pocket-size booklet designed to maintain a ready-reference medical history for each member of the family. Spaces are provided for dates and findings of physical examinations, history of serious illnesses, immunization records, allergies, drug sensitivities, blood type and other information necessary for proper diagnosis and treatment of a patient.

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☛ **STEREO MICROSCOPE** is a low-cost, precision-engineered instrument with a stereo optical system useful to educators and students and for quality-control and manufacturing assembly of subminiaturized components and circuits. Standard eyepieces and objective combinations are available separately.

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• Doctors Are Reading •

Two Kinds of Ulcers Cured by Surgery

➤ **TWO KINDS** of ulcers—stomach and intestinal—existing at the same time can be cured by surgery, says a report by two Florida doctors in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 184:1014, 1963.

The duodenal ulcer is the original disease, and is caused by over-secretion of gastric juice, which has nervous origins. The gastric ulcer is a secondary, complicating factor, caused by over-secretion of gastric juice due to constriction of the pylorus.

The over-secretion of gastric juice containing hydrochloric acid and leading to duodenal and gastric ulcers may be corrected by vagotomy (cutting the vagus nerve) and pyloroplasty (dividing the pylorus), Drs. Lester R. Dragstedt and Edward R. Woodward of Gainesville, Fla., reported.

Vagotomy reduces the nervous condition by reducing the number of stimuli that cause over-secretion of gastric juice. Pyloroplasty corrects any stoppage of food in the stomach and decreases the continued production of gastric juice.

Household Plant Poisonous

Beware of ordinary, household potted plants! They may be poisonous, a report by two Cleveland physicians in *JAMA*, 184:1047, 1963, says.

The results of mouth contact with one "decorative pot plant" are severe. Corrosive burns of the esophagus, pharynx and stomach, as well as other complications due to poisons contained in the plant may result.

Known as *Dieffenbachia sequine* or "dumb cane," it is a popu-

lar house plant all over the United States. It contains calcium oxalate and certain glycosides that affect the heart.

Oxalate poisoning can lead to respiratory failure, muscle twitching, cramps, vomiting, diarrhea or hypotension. Drs. George Drach and Walter H. Maloney of Cleveland described the effects of a case of *Dieffenbachia* poisoning.

Drug Cures Female Infection

Successful tests with a new drug to cure a troublesome, persistent infection in women were reported in *JAMA*, 184:1011, 1963.

Two Chicago doctors, H. Close Hesseltine and Yves Lefebvre, reported their observations of 300 patients who received metronidazole to combat vaginal trichomoniasis. Two-thirds of the patients were cured after taking three tablets of the drug, also known as Flagyl, each day for ten days.

Sixteen patients were cured after a second and third course. A few remained carriers of the disease, while the rest, gaining immediate relief, never returned for subsequent observation. About 40 of the original 300 patients are still under observation.

More than two-thirds of American women, it is believed, have had trichomoniasis at some time in their lives.

More than 8,000 patients in the United States have received metronidazole from clinical investigators. Physicians in Canada, Western Europe and England have treated several times that number, with no serious complications reported. Approval of metronidazole by the Food and Drug Administration is expected soon. Its use has already been approved by the AMA's Committee on Drugs.

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