



### What Are Evergreens?

► "EVERGREEN" is very commonly used as equivalent to "conifer"; people say "evergreen" when they mean trees of the group that includes pines, spruces, firs, red cedars, etc. But not all evergreens are conifers, and there are some conifers that are not evergreens.

Properly speaking, an evergreen is any tree or lesser plant whose foliage stays green all winter, regardless of size or family connections. Plants of opposite habit, that lose their leaves in autumn and grow new ones in spring, are termed "deciduous." The conifers listed in the first paragraph, and many more besides, are true evergreens; but at least two American conifers, the bald cypress and the larch or tamarack, lose their leaves each year and are thus deciduous.

Broad-leaved trees like maples, elms and oaks are so universally deciduous in northern latitudes that they are usually thought of as typical deciduous trees.

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Yet farther south there are numerous broad-leaved trees and shrubs that are just as typically evergreen: such things as bay, mountain laurel, rhododendron, liveoak and some species of magnolia.

That botanical kinship has nothing to do with evergreenness or its opposite is well typified in the heath family, of which mountain laurel and rhododendrons are examples. Azaleas, which are very closely related to the rhododendrons, are deciduous, as is the sourwood, the one tree-sized member of this family in our southeastern states. Among this family's shrubs of lower stature, cranberries and bearberries are evergreen, whereas huckleberries and blueberries are deciduous.

We are apt to think of herbs, the plants that have no woody stems, as deciduous, dying down to ground level every winter even when they live to bloom another day by means of rootstocks or bulbs underground. Yet there are many evergreens among these plants: mosses and some ferns, ground-pines, hepaticas, trailing arbutus, day-flower and (of course) wintergreen.

Evergreen leaves naturally do not live forever. Some, like the overwintering leaves of hepatica, wither and die soon after the new leaves unfold in spring; others like most pines, hang onto their leaves as much as five years. There is no set rule; each species makes its own rules.

Science News Letter, January 24, 1948

### MEDICINE

## Tropical Diseases Recur

Servicemen and travellers may have a flare-up of maladies strange to the U. S. years after their return from abroad. Many have vague symptoms.

►TROPICAL diseases strange to the United States may flare up in servicemen and in postwar travellers years after their return from overseas, doctors are warned in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Jan. 10).

Many of these diseases may get into the chronic form with vague symptoms that are like those found in psychoneurotic patients. A tired feeling, frequent headaches, loss in weight, nervousness, palpitation, uneasiness and mild to moderate stomach and intestinal distress are symptoms of chronic forms of amebiasis, schistosomiasis, malaria and Chagas' disease as well as of psychoneurosis.

A case of kala-azar developing in a pilot officer 17 months after his return to the United States and 19 months after he had left China where he probably got the disease is reported from the AAF Regional Station Hospital at San Antonio by Capt. Moise D. Levy, Jr., of the Medical Corps and Lt. Marvin J. Yiengst of the Sanitary Corps.

The young pilot's symptoms were vague and at first it was thought he had malaria and he was treated for that. But no malaria parasite could be found so that treatment was stopped and he was put on penicillin. After about two weeks during which time many tests were made, a button of bone was cut from

his chest bone with the kind of crown saw surgeons call a trephine.

Kala-azar germs were found in the marrow of this bit of chest bone. The patient was promptly given doses of an antimony compound, standard treatment for kala-azar.

"Response to treatment was dramatic," the Army surgeons reported. "The temperature returned to normal after three days. Appetite greatly improved. Four meals daily were enjoyed. There was a progressive gain in weight from 130 pounds to 152 pounds."

Two months later the patient was returned to duty with no sign of the disease.

Science News Letter, January 24, 1948

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