

# • New Machines and Gadgets •

For addresses where you can get more information on the new things described here, send a three-cent stamp to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER, 1719 N ST., Washington 6, D. C., and ask for Gadget Bulletin 633. To receive this Gadget Bulletin without special request each week, remit \$1.50 for one year's subscription.

⚙️ **PLANETARIUM DOME** 20 feet in diameter is made of a glass fiber, impregnated with resin. When stars are projected on the dome, the illusion of the skies compares favorably with that of larger planetariums.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1952

⚙️ **MILDEW-RESISTING ENAMEL** preserves walls and ceilings from mold where ordinary paint is covered with a profuse growth within two months. Especially good in food-processing areas, the enamel contains a non-toxic fungicide rated as the most effective yet evaluated for paint.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1952

⚙️ **ELECTRIC MAT**, made of vinyl resin, takes the place of photo-electric cells in controlling the opening and closing of automatic doors in supermarkets, banks and department stores. When stepped upon, even by a 20-pound child, electrical contact is made in a harmless six-volt circuit and the door is opened by an air compressor. After the person passes through, the door is closed.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1952

⚙️ **FLEXIBLE CAST** for patients undergoing X-ray and other types of treatment hardens almost instantly, yet it can be re-used. A thin-walled rubber bag filled with tiny plastic granules holds the patient's body



stationary during treatment, as shown in the photograph. When evacuated, the bag becomes rigid. It becomes flexible when air is let back into it.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1952

⚙️ **PORTABLE PYROMETER** for diesel engines is designed to be used where no permanently mounted pyrometer exists. Its thermocouples can be installed in the cylin-

ders and exhaust line. Temperatures are checked by inserting the pyrometer prongs into the receptacles of the thermocouple's terminal head.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1952

⚙️ **COMBINATION COMPASS**, scale, straight-edge, protractor and T-square uses a standard-sized pencil locked into place with a knurled nut. The instrument will make circles up to 15 inches in diameter. Its 8½ inch scale is graduated in sixteenths.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1952

⚙️ **AIR-INFLATED CORNICE** for windows is blown up in a few seconds with little effort. The cornice fits over curtain rods and is held in place with special hooks. Made of a long-lasting plastic, the cornice will not chip or peel and can be cleaned with a damp cloth. The cornices are made in a variety of patterns and colors.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1952

⚙️ **RUG CUSHION**, made of a sponge rubber formed into a mat of small arches, gives extra spring to your rugs and makes carpets last longer. Mothproof and vermin-proof, the underlay is long-lasting and creates no dust or lint to be cleaned from under the rug.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1952

# • Nature Ramblings •

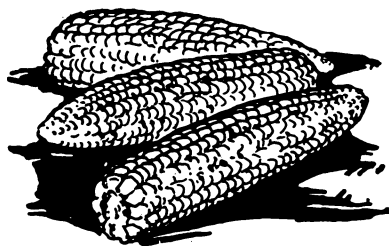
➤ **URBANITES** WHO grew up in Iowa or Wisconsin or Maine or New Jersey have long complained that the sweetcorn they get in New York or Pittsburgh or Chicago was not really fit to eat.

That was no mere effect of nostalgia. They were quite correct: sweetcorn as it has been offered in city markets for many years has not been really good.

Trouble is, it has taken too long for the corn to get from cornstalk to kettle. Past harvesting and marketing methods usually made a 48-hour time gap at least; often more than that, especially if the corn were being shipped from a distant point. That is much too much, if the corn is to remain really sweet.

Other vegetables can be picked short of maturity and permitted to ripen on the road or even on the dealer's stand. With sweetcorn, the more mature it becomes, the less sugar it contains and the more starchy it is. It must not only be picked immature, it must be eaten that way or it is no good.

## Sweeter Sweetcorn



There is an enzyme in sweetcorn that gets to work on its sugar the moment the cob is severed from the stalk, converting it into starch. Corn canners found that out long ago. They begin a day's operation with corn picked very early the same morning—even by artificial light. Every ear left on the floor when they shut down for the night is discarded. Corn 24 hours old is unfit to pack, by modern standards.

At long last, city consumers of fresh corn are now often able to get the same kind of a break. Under the leadership of energetic scientists at several state agricultural experiment stations, dawn-picked ears are rushed direct to retail dealers by truck and are ready for sale when the early housewives market. These early birds get the wormless ears, and the juiciest.

Not even this would satisfy some corn gourmets, who insist that if an ear is off the stalk longer than ten minutes, it is no longer sweetcorn, but just corn. A few extremists even carry kettles of hot water into the corn-patch with them, husk the ear before snapping it off, and pop it into the water instantly.

To do this kind of thing, however, requires that you grow your own corn. For people who have to live and work far from the nearest possible garden-plot, the newer marketing methods offer the best possible substitute.

Science News Letter, August 2, 1952