

# • New Machines and Gadgets •

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⚙️ **PHOTOFLASH BATTERY** about the size of a man's thumb stores enough energy to fire 25,000 flash bulbs. Especially designed for use in capacitor cartridges, the battery is made up of 15 dry cells that combine to form a 22½-volt unit.

Science News Letter, November 29, 1952

⚙️ **WINTER TIRE** for passenger cars is said to have high gripping action in loose or hard-packed snow, on ice and in mud, yet it operates smoothly and quietly. Available in standard and white-sidewall designs, the tire uses some of the latest long-mileage rubber compounds.

Science News Letter, November 29, 1952

⚙️ **COFFEE SERVER** uses a liquid pure coffee concentrate, pure cane sugar, fresh cream and hot water to brew 100 cups of high-quality coffee at a cost between five and 10 cents per cup. Containing its own cooling and heating units, the coffee server operates by coin, or by the flip of a switch in offices where coffee is served free.

Science News Letter, November 29, 1952

⚙️ **PUSHBUTTON PARKING** system of type shown in the photograph increases garage business, yet reduces number of attendants needed to park cars. Cars are moved automatically onto an elevator, raised to the proper floor, moved sideways



into the parking shelf and are set down. The movable elevator floor is made of parallel beams that slip between smaller beams of the parking shelf.

Science News Letter, November 29, 1952

⚙️ **CHARGE INDICATOR** for industrial truck batteries has a meter mounted near the truck's controls so the operator can see

at a glance whether the battery is "full," "½," "empty" or in "danger." Easily adjustable for batteries having up to 24 cells, the device can be switched off while the battery is charged.

Science News Letter, November 29, 1952

⚙️ **ALUMINUM GRILL**, set on a stove burner, cooks eggs, pancakes, sandwiches and French toast. Melted fats run off into a deep gutter surrounding the cooking surface, and can be poured off easily when the cooking is finished. The grill is equipped with "heat-proof" handles.

Science News Letter, November 29, 1952

⚙️ **NEW FISH LURE** uses rhinestones to attract fish to its multibarbed hooks. Set in black plastic, the flashing "jewels" are foil-backed and can be seen over a wider underwater area than the usual fish-lure spinner devices.

Science News Letter, November 29, 1952

⚙️ **HOME HUMIDIFIER**, now available as a table-model unit, electrically evaporates into the air more than three gallons of water each day. That is enough moisture to improve comfort in three or four average-sized heated rooms. The increased humidity also helps prevent damage to furniture due to dry air.

Science News Letter, November 29, 1952

# • Nature Ramblings •

➤ **WITH THE** Christmas holiday season soon at hand, keeping flowers appearing fresh and attractive in the home is of interest to every flower lover.

There is nothing so disheartening as to have an attractive vase of blooms wilt and hang dejectedly. Various remedies have been offered, from aspirin to zinc dust, but many of them are worthless.

Studies made under carefully controlled conditions point up a few steps that help, and show the worthlessness of a considerable number of others. The freshness and keeping qualities of flowers depend almost entirely upon having an ample supply of moisture flowing through the stem to the flower itself. Anything that increases loss of moisture through leaves and petals shortens the flower's life. And anything that impedes or stops the absorption of moisture by the flower has an equally disastrous effect.

At least 90% of the moisture taken up by the flower is absorbed through the end of the stem. To keep the end of the stem functioning properly, it is essential that it be cut on a slant to prevent its resting squarely

## Keeping Flowers Fresh



on the bottom of the vase and thus being unable to take up moisture.

Secondly, the vase should be clean. It should, in fact, be cleaned every day so as to destroy the bacteria that normally clog up the stems. Some chemicals facilitate control of bacteria.

The addition of sugar to the water seems to increase absorption and the pressure of moisture in the cells. Leaves covered with water, especially of marigolds, dahlias and chrysanthemums, decay rapidly and foul the water, thereby increasing the number

of bacteria. These leaves should be removed before placing flowers in the vase.

Copper containers, giving off some of the copper, normally give less trouble with bacteria. However, it is just as easy to wash a vase each day and to shorten the stems as it is to use copper bowls or copper wire in a container. The carnation seems to be the only flower that does not last longer when it is in a copper container.

Keeping the flowers out of drafts, high temperatures and dry situations, conditions that speed the loss of moisture through leaf and petal, prolongs their life. Put them in some cool, moist place, such as porch or bathroom, when not needed in the living room. But even in a warm, dry room, they may be placed in the most favorable corner. Syringing the foliage each day will also help.

To aid in keeping roses and carnations fresh, Ohio State University scientists suggest the following formula: one-half teaspoon alum, one-half teaspoon Clorox; a pinch of ferric oxide and two teaspoons of sugar to a quart of water.

Science News Letter, November 29, 1952