BOTANY

NATURE RAMBLINGS



Dayflower

➤ LATE OCTOBER though it is, you can find the dayflower in bloom in a thousand places in the moist woods, and if the winter turns out to be a mild one you will find it still in bloom after several snows have fallen. This lowly, creeping, unobtrusive plant with the curious two-petaled blue or purple flowers is one of the hardiest blossomers we have.

If you will pluck one of the little flowers and examine it more closely, you will find that it is not really two-petaled, but has the orthodox three of the lily tribe and the rest of the great branch of the flowering world known to botanists as the monocotyledonae. The third petal is so much smaller than the other two that it is often overlooked at first glance.

More specifically, the plant belongs to the same group as the familiar spiderwort and the even more familiar Tradescantia or Wandering Jew widely cultivated in window boxes. Its creeping habit and the shape of its leaves and jointed stems remind one at once of the latter species. It also has the same trick of striking roots at the joints or nodes, which makes for its success in taking care of itself in the woods.

There is also a suggestion in the arrangement of the flowers that connects this flower with the spiderwort. It will be remembered how the upper leaves of the tall spiderwort stem bunch themselves protectively around the flowers, forming a sort of rosette or clump. This function is performed in the dayflower by a single upper leaf, which folds inward to form a sort of hood.

The plant receives its English name from the brevity of the lives of its blossoms, which are even more evanescent than the tender flowers of the spiderwort. They do not even live as long as the name indicates, for they unfold in the morning and by afternoon are already past their time and turned inward, withering on their stems.

Science News Letter, October 30, 1954

A 9,000-word report on

Radioactivity

by Sir Wm. Bragg, Nobel Prize winner

THE H-BOMB and its deadly radioactive gases have been written up by virtually every newspaper in the country. Now read a **scientist's** report on what radioactivity really is, why radioactive atoms can penetrate other substances, how radioactive gases are transmuted to lead, why radioactivity is one of the few processes that scientists cannot control. It's all told in the 9,000-word opening chapter of Bragg's "CONCERNING THE NATURE OF THINGS," a book which the London Morning Post called "more interesting than any bestseller among novels that we have ever seen." Five other chapters in this 244-page paperbound republication explain in non-technical terms the nature of gases, liquids, crystals, metals, etc., and describe **in detail** the experiments by which scientists have been able to analyze their characteristics. The London Times writes: "We cannot think of any kind of man, among those having any interest in science at all, who could not read this work with pleasure and profit." 89 illustrations. **Send only $1.25** (plus 10¢ postage) **for your copy** to Dover Publications, Dept. 12, 920 Broadway, New York 10, N. Y. Money back if not delighted.

ENGINEERING

Test Transformers In "Quiet" Room

➤ TO TAKE the monotonous hum out of transformers that may be placed in residential substations, a "quiet" room has been built that throws back no echoes.

Francis E. Fairman Jr., vice-president and general manager of General Electric's transformer division, dedicated the room in Pittsfield, Mass. It is the main part of a new sound laboratory built by the power transformer department.

The anechoic chamber, as it is called, is more than four stories high. Its walls, ceiling and floor consist of more than 12,000 fiber glass wedges arranged in a pattern. Each wedge, which is 28 inches deep, absorbs sound. Floor wedges are protected by a suspended network of interwoven cables similar to the trampolins used by acrobats.

The room has five-feet-thick walls for keeping out outside noise. It has two huge 30-ton doors, also lined with fiber glass wedges, that are opened and closed by electrical means. Around the 41-feet-high doors is rubber tubing that is inflated to seal the room completely from outside noise.

Measuring 43 feet high and 58 feet long by 48 feet wide, the anechoic chamber contains as much space as some mansions. The large-sized room was required so that large transformers, often as big as a small house, could be tested in the chamber.

In addition to being the world's largest anechoic chamber, it is probably the largest room to have a solid lining of copper. A total of 20,900 pounds of copper sheeting, enough copper to make 3,250,000 pennies, was used for the lining. This prevents radio frequencies from entering the room and provides an ideal place for studying the exact effect of transformers on radio and television reception without interference.

Science News Letter, October 23, 1954

Hurricane winds blow counterclockwise in the Northern Hemisphere and clockwise in the Southern.

Questions

ASTRONOMY — What is an eclipsing binary? p. 282.

□ □ □

GEOGRAPHY—How is the Caspian Sea being dried up? p. 277.

□ □ □

ICHTHYOLOGY—Where are female coelacanths believed to be hiding? p. 280.

□ □ □

PUBLIC HEALTH—Why should common methods of dealing with athlete's foot be discarded? p. 276.

How would computing machines help in fighting smog? p. 279.

□ □ □

ZOOLOGY—How does the wallaby handle the heat problem? p. 281.

□ □ □

Photographs: Cover, General Electric Company; p. 275, Hastings-Willinger & Associates; p. 277, Bell Telephone Laboratories; p. 279, Louis van den Berghe; p. 288, Hoffritz For Cutlery.

TECHNOLOGY

Azoton Is New Cotton, Chemically Improved

➤ YOU'LL BE wearing azoton clothes and using other sorts of azoton textiles. For "azoton" is the new name for cyanoethylated cotton products, a new variation of an old cloth material.

Announced by the Institute of Textile Technology at the Eighth National Chemical Exposition in Chicago, the new name is derived from "azote," French for nitrogen, and the end of the word cotton. Azoton is made by reacting a nitrogen-containing compound, acrylonitrile, with cotton.

This produces a new fiber material which is superior to cotton. Azoton has improved resistance to wear, heat, rot, chemicals, greater strength, better dyeing qualities and improved electrical insulation characteristics.

Science News Letter, October 30, 1954

GOLF: Your LEFT SHOULDER makes the amazing difference!

One of the most startling discoveries to emerge from wide research in the golf swing is that your game literally **hinges on your left shoulder!**

How this is so and how to use this great discovery to improve your own game beyond all expectations **in a matter of short weeks** is set forth in **THE GOLF SECRET** by Dr. H. A. Murray—a medical doctor, golfer, and golf researcher, who has applied his expert knowledge of anatomy in this sweeping and utterly different study of the golf swing.

His method has now been tested on a large scale and been found to yield simply astounding results! Not only do golf scores take a sudden drop, but with the new method good golf is a hundred times **easier** than bad—because it is **NATURAL** (not **strained**) golf.

You may find out **"the golf secret"** for yourself, without risk. See below.

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