

The Birmingham Eccentric Features

NATURE NOW Special Writer for The Birmingham Eccentric

Cupboard Shelves Hold Rare Spices Of Far-off Lands

Every kitchen cupboard holds its own supply of spices which are characterized by a sharp taste and odor.

They are derived from various plant parts. Pepper comes from the fruit, cinnamon from the bark, cloves from the bud, nutmeg from the seed, ginger from the root and sage from the leaf.

Spices occupied a much more important place in the commerce of the early Eastern and European civilization than they do with us today. The Egyptians used a variety of spices not only in cooking but as a source of perfumes and embalming oils.

When we were in the Cairo museum we saw an amazing collection of these which remained in their seeds and leaves although they were placed in the tomb of King Tutankhamen in the year 1350 B.C.

Today, AS of yore, the bulk of our spices are produced in the tropics. Of these pepper is one of the most expensive.

It was first brought to Europe by the East by precarious ship or caravan trade routes. Today most of this spice comes from a climbing shrub cultivated in the Malay peninsula. Our black pepper (Piper nigrum) and our white pepper (P. alba) are made from the dried and ground berries.

Next to pepper, your scrub's hand reaches most often for the cinnamon box. This spice which was known in China as early as the year 2700 B.C. is made from the dried and ground bark of young branches of the cinnamon tree (Cinnamomum) of India and Ceylon. It is a small evergreen with stiff, glossy leaves and tiny yellow flowers.

THE CLOVE was one of the first of the Eastern spices to be introduced into Europe in the 16th Century.

It is the dried flower bud of a large evergreen tree (Caryophyllus), a native of the Spice Islands of the Malay peninsula. The long cylindrical stem of the clove is the dried ovary of the red flower which is never allowed to bloom. It is surmounted by four teak-like lobes of the calyx holding the infolded petals.

During the hey-day of the Roman empire the price of cloves rose to an all-time high of \$700 an ounce.

GINGER is the hot, aromatic rootstock of a tropical herbaceous plant (Zingiber). The unspiced and ground rootstock produces black ginger, the scraped root, white ginger.

When preserved it is much relished as an accompaniment to other meats.

UNTIL THE middle of the 15th century the spices of Greece and Venice were great and powerful because they were the center of the spice trade which had been broken by Columbus sea sail over unknown seas to discover a new route to the precious spice lands of the Indies.

Many aromatic herbs whose leaves are used as spices such as sage, peppermint and marjoram, occurred in an important place in your grandmother's garden.

DOWN TO EARTH

Open New Plant World Doors

Here we are entering a new era, we are sort of curious as to the events which will affect us directly. Two more cars, it is said by Dean Burchard of M. I. T.

So, in 1963, let's explore avenues in the field of horticulture, grow in our interest of growing plants and apply this new knowledge to our way of life.

AS THIS is the time of year when we take a renewed interest in our house plants you will be interested in the new handbook which has been published as a public service by the Brooklyn Botanical Gardens, Brooklyn, New York for one dollar, called "House Plants."

Within this 96-page book with its 176 illustrations you will find many answers to your problems and will develop a new taste for exploring with new selections and uses.

There are 100 "house plant portraits" with pictures, thumb nail descriptions and cultural needs of specific plants.

There is also an article on orchids and Thomas Powell says, "Actually, it is you call grow African violets you can grow orchids."

Mobile Lounges Get Passenger Approval

Airline passengers at the new Dulles International Airport near here have found the huge mobile lounges, which carry them to and from planes, to be convenient and efficient.

The 80-passenger mobile lounges were evolved and developed by Chrysler Corporation and the Federal Aviation Agency to eliminate the extreme distances passengers must walk to reach aircraft in more conventional airport layouts.

THE LOUNGES are an integral part of the Dulles Airport terminal design. A majority of the travelers during the opening weeks of the new jet airport termed them great improvements over existing systems elsewhere.

William E. Cullinan, manager of Dulles International Airport, reporting on the first three weeks of scheduled airline operation said that passengers on the mobile lounges average about 60 a trip.

An Atlanta couple traveling with an infant and two other small children, found the mobile lounge convenient to their needs.

"It sure takes the struggle out of getting the kids from terminal to plane," the father said. "It also spares the elimination of waiting in line to check onto the plane. We like it. Wish it was the same at all major airports where you have to wait half-an-hour to your plane."

EFFICIENCY and logistic factors in the lounge operations appeared to an Army captain from San Antonio, Texas, who said: "It is a splendid improvement. An ideal method of moving large numbers of people from the terminal to aircraft. It should improve departure schedules, cut down passenger inconvenience and eliminate the weather problem for boarding passengers."

One airline fuel truck operator said, "Now the passengers either stay on the airplane or go to the terminal and we don't have to worry about sightseers wandering around areas where they can get into trouble."

THE TRIP FROM terminal to plane and the unloading takes from eight to ten minutes, as a general rule.

STRICTLY FRESH

Some persons feel that America needs is young people who will show the same enthusiasm for getting ahead in their job that they display in traffic.

Ever notice how well dogs can find friends and infuse

YOU'RE A DOG!

It is said that truth has to change hands only a few times to become fiction.

As if you could kill time without injuring eternity!

Forests Offer Recreation, Beauty and Aid Economy

Management of Michigan's state forests—for recreation, wildlife and industry—is paying an annual dividend of some \$77 million to the people of Michigan in wages, salaries and business, according to conservative estimates of a recent study made for the Conservation Department.

Timber operations lead the march of these income dollars from state forests with hunting, fishing, camping and oil and gas production also putting their share of money into Michigan tills.

INCOME generated by these uses in 1957 was 40 per cent more than the total cost of the state forest system since its beginning in 1901.

Using figures from recent years, here is the brief account of income dollars on the go:

In 1957, some \$815,000 worth of standing timber was harvested from state forests.

The job of getting this timber to the sawmills cost \$65 million to workers, who did the cutting, skidding, loading and hauling.

With pulp and paper operations paying the bulk of the total, processing expenses added \$31.9 million



STATE FORESTS are paying a big dividend to the people of Michigan. On its journey from stump to consumer, state forest timber yields about \$62 of new income within Michigan for every dollar it was worth before cutting.

Conservative estimates indicate that sportsmen using state forests contribute \$10.5 million to the yearly sales of sport shops, gas stations, drug stores, etc. State forest deer hunters add some \$5.7 million to northern Michigan tills.

ALICE WESSELS BURLINGAME

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IN WAGES and salaries, taxes, etc. Costs of transportation, wholesaling, and retailing added another \$12.5 million.

TOTAL INCOME from these timber operations was \$51 million. Thus every dollar's worth of timber sold on the stump mushroomed into \$62 of new income within Michigan before it reached the consumer as part of a finished product.

Results of the study indicate that some 190,000 firearm deer hunters (38 percent of Michigan's total) took to state forests in 1958—about 26,000 in the upper peninsula and 164,000 in the lower peninsula. Approximately 42,000 small game hunters did likewise. An estimated 100,000 fishermen tested their skills in waters within state forests.

TOGETHER, these sportsmen contributed \$10.5 million to the sales of sport shops, gas stations, drug stores, etc. Deer hunters accounted for \$5.7 million while fishermen and small game hunters added \$4.1 million and \$700,000 respectively.

Estimates covering camping, hiking, picnicking and other recreation are particularly conservative since they are limited to users of Michigan's 100 state forest campgrounds. There are, of course, hundreds of thousands of recreationists who use state forest lands outside established campground areas.

AT ANY rate, it is estimated that campers recorded 405,000 user-days at these areas in 1958. Picnickers figured in another 45,000 user-days while bathers and water skiers registered 41,000.

Eliminating duplications in spending which would have been made at home (food and beverages) and out-of-state equipment purchases, expenditures of state forest campground users came to about \$900,000 in direct payments to Michigan.

Moving on to another state forest use, oil and gas production pumped \$4.7 million into Michigan's money cycle during 1957.

ALTHOUGH somewhat dwarfed by these other figures, direct cash receipts to the state treasury from sale of state forest timber and for other products and uses reached nearly \$12 million that same year.

State forests offer a wealth of additional values which cannot be conveniently measured in dollars and cents.

The aesthetic value of a forest defies any set stoppage price.

The value of a Kirtland's warbler can't be computed in terms of so many board feet of timber.

Yet all these things—call them aesthetic values or whatever—have real worth and are accounted for in the conservation department's multiple-use management of state forests.

Young Drivers Like Freeways Survey Shows

The \$50 million Grand Rapids-Kalamazoo Freeway, completed last fall, cost \$700 million as much as the first road built between the two cities more than 100 years ago.

But it will last longer and will be replaced by an "iron horse" as the first one was.

The first Grand Rapids-Kalamazoo road started 112 years ago, was constructed of wooden planks.

The builders in 1850 promised that these riders to meet this road, but the bumpy log road soon disappeared in the smoke of the first railroad engines.

THE GRAND Rapids Plank Road Co. was a part of a nationwide move to build "modern" roads from wood.

Toll for the Kalamazoo-Grand Rapids route was 96 cents, often more than the entire day's wages for the driver of the team of two horses who chose the route.

From Kalamazoo to south of Schoolcraft was 18 miles at a penny a mile. Work was started at Three Rivers to meet this road, but was never completed.

Steel rails ousted the wooden planks. The Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad moved into Kalamazoo in 1870, blowing the whistle on the wooden roads almost before the bark was torn off.

INVESTORS LOST heavily. One of them was Ephraim Ransom of Kalamazoo, a former Michigan governor, who lost most of his life's savings.

From roads versus concrete roads? The comparison was never really tested and its logical to assume the new superhighway will last longer than its forerunner.

Statistical studies of male-type baldness suggest that 25 per cent of all men will show some baldness by the age of 35 years and 50 per cent of all men will exhibit some baldness by the age of 50.

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Veterans Get \$102 Million During 1962

In its program of service to veterans and their dependents, the Veterans Administration disbursed more than \$102.2 million to 124,665 veterans in the State of Michigan in compensation and pension payments during 1962.

Robert M. Fitzgerald, manager of the Veterans Administration Regional Office in Detroit, also has reported that dependents of deceased veterans, including parents, widows and orphans, in Michigan were paid \$28.6 million in death compensation or pension.

A city and state breakdown of the payments became possible through the usage of the electronic data processing equipment at the Hines, Ill., VA Automatic Data Processing Center.

The payments are up over a year ago because of the enactment of a law that increased compensation payments from \$1 a month for those with only a 10 per cent disability to \$15 a month for those with 100 per cent disabilities. In some special cases the increase was as much as \$150 a month.

Compensation payments are paid to veterans of the Spanish-American War, World War I and II, Korean Conflict and peacetime service with service-connected disabilities.