

Why Flowers Have Petals.

The following charming account of why the flowers wear Petal Dresses, by Dorothy Arno Baldwin, we run in the American Forestry Magazine (Washington). It is poetic, imaginative, and also solves the age-old problem of the petals. We all have wondered about in our early childhood. "Something must be done for the flower people will die!"

It was Rose who spoke. All the flower people were gathered around her, looking very sad. You never would have guessed who they were for not one of them had a petal dress on. What is more, they never had any. Even the Rose wasn't dressed more than a stem and a few leaves, and at the top of the stem a pair of stamens to hold her pollen. A little with tiny rooms inside in which to make seeds.

There was a long silence after the Rose had spoken, and just as it began to seem as if nobody would ever speak again, Mother Nature happened along. She had a way of appearing at just the right time.

"Dear me! What can make you all so sad this fine summer morning?"

"We have enough to make us sad," said Rose, "for scarcely one of the flowers we made last year sprouted this year. The few that did sprout were weak and the new plants aren't doing well at all. If things keep on this way, there won't be any flower people pretty soon."

"That can be the matter," said

Mother Nature. "Haven't you all had plenty of nice fresh pollen, and hasn't it been placed so it will fall in just the right spot to reach down into the seed chambers and help make your seeds?"

"Yes, we've always had plenty of pollen, and it always falls in the right place, but lately a good deal has been lost, and doesn't reach down far enough to find the seedroom. Maybe that's where the trouble is."

"Let's see now!" said Mother Nature, briskly, to the Rose. "Just shake a little pollen down onto your stigma. Why, you haven't any pollen left!"

"I've used it all up," said the Rose, "and not a single grain has gone to work. My sister still has a little, though. Perhaps she'll lend me some."

"I'm sure she will," said Mother Nature, and taking a few grains of pollen from the stamens of the sister Rose, she sprinkled it on the stigma of the other.

"There! That's good pollen, and I don't see any reason why it shouldn't make seeds for you. Now you just sit quiet here for a while and see if anything happens while I set the winds to work."

While Mother Nature was calling the winds and giving them her orders for the day, the little flower people made a ring around the Rose and waited to see if anything would happen. They could scarcely breathe, they were so excited. The Rose was excited, too, but pretty soon she began to smile, oh, ever so faintly! Then her smile grew a little brighter and a little brighter, and she said:

"I think"—then she stopped.

"Oh, what!" cried the flower people all together. "Is the pollen beginning to work for you?"

"Yes! Yes! It is!" cried the Rose.

"It's stretching out tiny fingers and reaching down, down toward my seed-room! It has found the door! Now it's pushing its way in!"

"Oh, Mother Nature! Mother Nature! The pollen has begun to work for me!"

Mother Nature sent the winds scurrying and hurried back to her little flower people, who were all on tiptoe with excitement.

"Splendid!" said Mother Nature. Then she wrinkled her forehead and thought hard.

"Yes, it must be," she said, after a moment. "That has been the trouble with all of you. I'm sure. You all need pollen from each other. If your own pollen won't work for you, somebody else's pollen will."

Then Mother Nature wrinkled her forehead again.

"How am I ever going to find time to carry pollen back and forth for all of you? I simply can't do it. Why, there are millions of you everywhere!"

"Couldn't the Bees and the Butterflies and maybe the Humming-birds and some of the little Creeping Things help?" suggested the Rose. "There are millions of them, too."

"That's so," said Mother Nature. "They shall help. But you're all such tiny little things that they'll never be able to see you. I'll have to make some bright-colored dresses for you, so they will know where to find you."

Mother Nature hurried to her store-room, and came back with her arms full of petal cloth, softer than silk. Some of it was red and some was blue, some was yellow and some was purple, and there were pink, and orange, and all sorts of other shades besides. With her scissors, Mother Nature cut out millions of petal dresses and fitted them to the flowers.

When the flower people were all dressed, Mother Nature took the honey jar out of her pantry and put a drop of sweet-smelling honey in the center of almost every flower.

"That's to be a reward for the Insect People," said Mother Nature. "They like sweet things."

No sooner was the last drop of honey placed in the last blossom than there was a tremendous busting, and the air was filled with Bees and Butterflies and Humming-birds, and quantities of little Creeping Things came crawling from every direction to see what all these bright, sweet-scented things were.

Such excitement as there was! Each one of the flying and creeping things chose the flower he liked best or thought the prettiest, and when they found that delicious honey hidden away inside, they worked with a will, carrying pollen from flower to flower. The next thing a whole army of seeds sprouted and grew into fine, strong plants, and ever since then the flower people have worn gay petal dresses, so that the flying and creeping things won't forget to visit them.

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New Binocular Magnifying Glass Fits Head.

A binocular magnifying glass, which attaches to a bandana fastened around the head, has been invented by Dr. J. Molins, of France, to take the place of the reflectors with holes in the centres now used by physicians.

The instrument leaves both hands of the user free. It is equipped with a reflector that throws a beam of light on the surface under observation while the glass magnifies it from six to 10 times, according to the distance from the object.

Two eye-pieces at the rear can be adjusted to the eyes of the observer. A single telescopic tube in front receives rays from the object being examined. These rays are split by prisms so that each eye views the same image. Screws at the end of the box are used to adjust lenses and prisms, after which the hands are left free.

Sailboats to Race Across Atlantic.

Two 40-foot boats, identical as to hull and of the same sail area, but rigged respectively as an American schooner and a British ketch, will sail soon from New York for Cowes, Isle of Wight, in what is probably the most interesting international race ever arranged. The object of this trans-Atlantic contest is to test for the first time the relative merits of typically American and typically British rigs for pleasure craft.

The contesting ships will be William Washburn Nutting, of New York, ex-Commodore of the Cruising Club of America, and the Duke of Leinster, noted British sportsman. Mr. Nutting will be remembered for his feat of sailing his 45-foot, ketch-rigged yacht, Typhoon, from Nova Scotia to Cowes, England, and back to New York via Spain and the Azores in 1920.

The challenge for the race was issued by Mr. Nutting last summer. Each boat will be 40 feet overall, and have 32 feet, 6 inches, waterline length, 11 feet, 6 inches beam and a draft of 7 feet. The American schooner is to have a jib-headed or leg o' mutton mainsail, while both the mainsail and mizzen of the Duke of Leinster's ketch are to be of this type; that is, without the gaff in the head of the sail.

Each boat will have an auxiliary motor, to be used during calm weather. The American boat has a 15 horsepower motor and the British motor is rated at 20 horsepower.

Largest "Upside Down" Telescope.

The perfect operation of the largest "upside down" telescope in the world was reported recently by Dr. Frank Schlesinger, director of Yale University Observatory, New Haven, Conn. The telescope is employed to determine the light-curves of faint, variable stars.

Advantages of the novel mechanism are convenience in operation and greatly reduced cost as compared with the telescope mounted in the usual way. In addition, it keeps the image stationary both in position and in orientation.

The telescope being used at Yale is described by Doctor Schlesinger as a "Loomis 'codest' telescope" because of its ability to keep the image stationary. It consists of a 15-inch photographic objective and ten inch focal length mounted in the same tube which is pointed downward. Images are "fed" into the telescope by means of a plane mirror thirty inches in diameter at the lower end of the tube. This mirror is rotated by clockwork at a rate of 280 degrees every 24 hours and objects are kept stationary on the plate by rotating the latter at the same rate.

Images from the lenses are formed in an observation room at the top of a massive tower 60 feet high. Electrical connections permit the observer to manipulate the telescope from the observing room.

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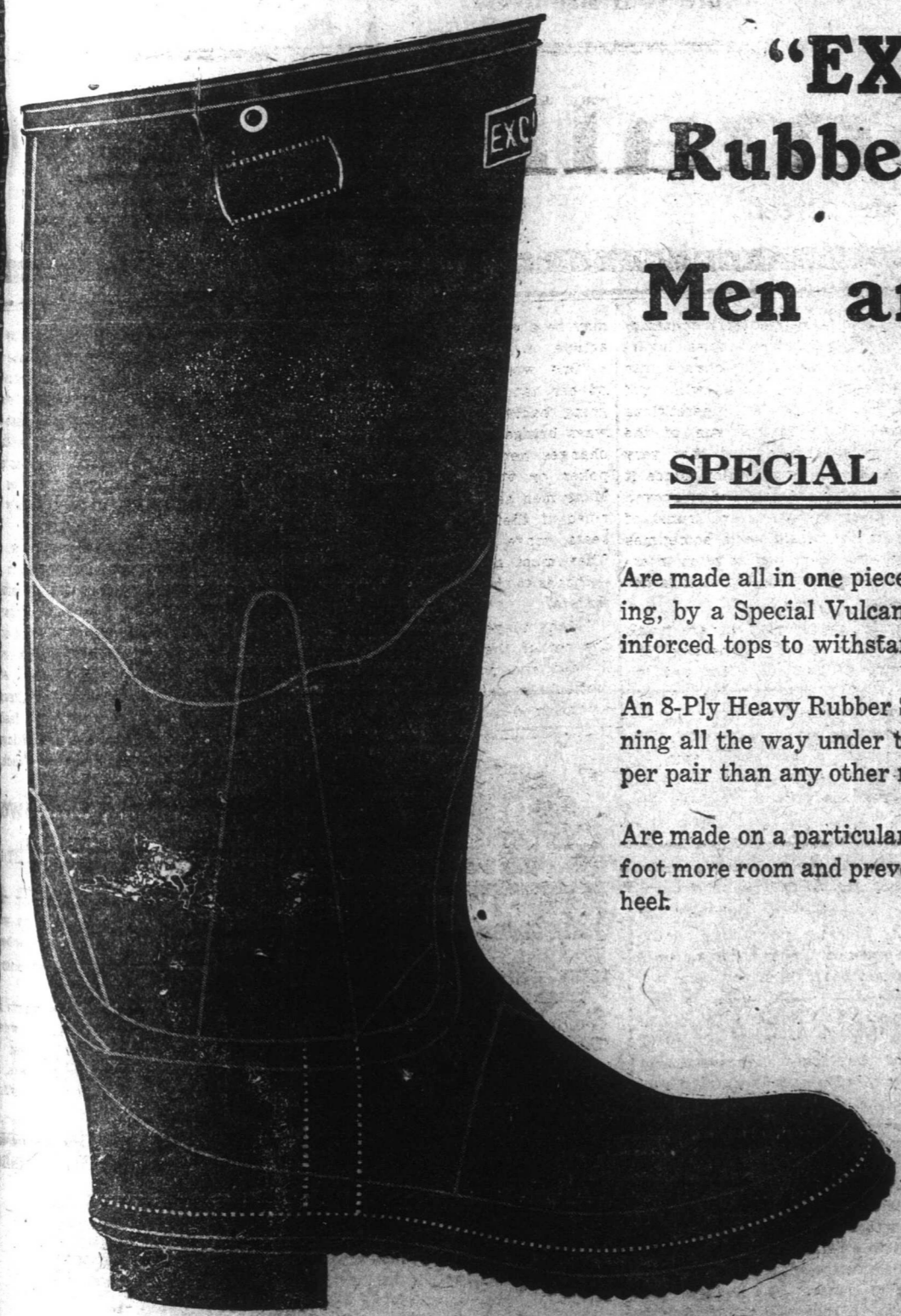
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June 4, 1928

Household Notes.

To clean bed springs easily, place them in the sun on a hot day, wash thoroughly with the hose, move to a dry place in the sun, and allow to dry. Tomato and apple jelly is quite nice. Use 1 cupful of apple juice to 1 of strained tomato juice, the juice of 4 lemons and 2-3 as much sugar as juice. Many delicious ingredients can be used in plum conserve, such as the juice and grated rind of lemons or oranges, seeded raisins and chopped nut meats.

Bread for sandwiches can be sliced more evenly and thinly if all the crust of the loaf is first cut off in slabs. Dry these crusts in the oven for crispness. For a cooling chocolate milk shake use two tablespoons crushed ice, two or chocolate sirup, and two-thirds cup of milk. Stir and top with whipped cream.