

## U. S. Seeking Latin American Yams For Possible Cortisone Production

Efforts to assure this country a continuing supply of the drug cortisone—needed by sufferers from arthritis, asthma, and various other ailments—are being advanced by plant explorations in remote areas of Mexico and Central America, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports.

Drs. E. P. Imle and H. S. Gentry, scientists of USDA's Agricultural Research Center, Beltsville, Md., recently spent two months collecting and studying wild "Dioscorea" yams in southern Mexico, Costa Rica, and Guatemala. The tuberous roots of these yams are the most abundant and readily available source of genin and other compounds from which cortisone is synthesized.

Although collections of several species were made, primary mission of the trip by plant explorers Imle and Gentry was to investigate the possibilities of selecting wild strains of the plants for

cultivation in this country and elsewhere.

These wild yams are the source of complicated compounds that are widely used in the development of new hormone-like drugs. But USDA scientists, local governmental agencies in Mexico and Central America, and drug manufacturers are concerned that the wild supply may eventually become exhausted.

In Mexico alone, annual collections exceed 30,000 tons of fresh tubers, or almost 6,000 tons of dried tuber material. The United States is the largest single consumer of refined products made from these tubers.

USDA researchers have established experimental plantings of these yams in the southern United States. So far, however, they have not succeeded in obtaining under cultivation the high genin content found in some wild plants.

Roots and seeds of a number of plants, representing several species were brought back to this country as a result of the latest expedition. These include "Dioscorea composita", which is being heavily exploited in Mexico; "Dioscorea floribunda", which grows extensively in Guatemala; and "Dioscorea spiculiflora", which is found in limited quantities apparently only in Mexico.

One selection of "Dioscorea composita" assayed 13 per cent diosgenin—a cortisone-starting material—which is the highest content yet found by USDA workers. Unfortunately, no live material of this exceptionally high-yielding individual plant survived in experimental plantings. A yield of five per cent diosgenin is considered good in commercial processing of most tuber material.

Among selections of "Dioscorea spiculiflora" are some that show promise of being adaptable to cultivation, the drug-crop specialists say. Some plants of this species have been found growing without vine supports. Most other species grow best only in partial shade and require some special supports for the vines.

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Q If a man marries using his stepfather's name, is the marriage legal if he was never adopted—M. R.

A The marriage is certainly legal, but the man should either go through the necessary procedure to have his name changed by court decree, or else resume the use of his proper name, and request the Bureau of Vital Statistics to amend the marriage record accordingly.

Complications will eventually arise in connection with such matters as obtaining employment, obtaining a passport, entering children in school, and other situations where proof of birth and of marriage are needed, and the matter should be adjusted promptly.

Q Is it possible to find out if a person is married if you know the date and the state where the marriage was supposed to have taken place? If so, how?

J. C.

A Such information can sometimes be obtained by addressing an inquiry, setting forth all known particulars at the capitol of the state where the marriage took place.

Q By forging my name, my husband secured a loan from the bank with which we deal. It was for \$700 to be used to pay gambling debts. What can I do to prevent this happening again? C. H.

A. Pointing out to your husband the possible consequences of his criminal act should be a sufficient deterrent to his forging your name again. Forgery is a felony for which a person, upon conviction, can be sentenced to pay a fine not exceeding \$5000, or undergo imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years.

Q. Your reply to a legal problem recently published indicated that alimony has been abolished in Pennsylvania. What provisions are made for the support of an ex-wife under Pennsylvania divorce?—M. T.

A. Once divorced, a husband's duty to support his wife ceases unless the wife is insane, in which case the court has power to decree alimony for support of the insane wife during the term of her natural life.

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## Jayces Lauded For Farmer Recognition

State Secretary of Agriculture William L. Henning Friday commended the Pennsylvania Junior Chamber of Commerce for developing a program to honor outstanding young farmers of the State.

"We, in agriculture, are indeed encouraged by the Jaycees decision to recognize our agricultural leaders of tomorrow," he declared.

The Jaycees have begun a search of the Commonwealth for farmers between the ages of 21 and 36 who have made outstanding contributions to both agriculture and community.

"Such a program deserves great attention in these days of missiles, satellites and scientific advancements which threaten to take so much away from our grass roots way of life," Secretary Henning said.

He pointed out that young farmers should be recognized for their contributions to the economy of the nation and for their parts in making their home communities better places in which to live.

Each of the 188 Jaycee chapters in the State has been urged to select a young farmer through local contests. The winner will be entered in a statewide contest to determine the three most deserving young farmers in the State, one of whom will represent Pennsylvania in a national contest early in 1958.

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## Farm Calendar

Mon., Dec. 9

4-H Ayrshire Club—8 p.m. at the home of Stanly Kreider

4-H County Council Christmas Party—8 p.m. at the home of Miss Linda Mumma, R1 Manheim.

Tractor Clinic—4 p.m. at Farm Show Bld., Harrisburg.

Fruit Growers Annual Meeting—8 p.m. at Farm Bureau Cooperative Carl Bittner will show color pictures on fruit production in California. He will discuss effective fruit production in Lancaster County.

Tues., Dec. 10

Twenty-fifth annual meeting of the Producers Co-operative Exchange, Coatesville—meeting starts at 10 a.m.

Wed., Dec. 11

4 H Guernsey Club  
Red Rose 4-H Baby Beef and Lamb Club.

Thurs., Dec. 12

Farm Business Outlook Panel—7:30 p.m. at Farm Bureau Cooperative Three PSU economists will discuss the outlook in production and marketing.

4-H Holstein Club Christmas Party—at the home of George Rutt, R1 Stevens

Sat., Dec. 14

Octorara Farmers' Club—at the home of D. E. Weicksel, R1 Christiana

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