

Control Weeds With Insects

In many countries, including the United States, weed-eating insects have proved valuable for weed control.

ARS scientists are now trying to learn why insects choose their host plants. Their basic research may lead to wider and more effective use of insects as a biological weapon against weeds.

An example is research on the green dock beetle and the three-lined potato beetle, conducted at Albany, Calif., in

cooperation with the California Agricultural Experiment Station.

These insects were chosen for study because their main host plants are weeds, and because they have restricted feeding and egg-laying habits, and are easily raised in laboratories. Both are leafeaters, develop rapidly, and deposit their eggs in conspicuous clusters.

In the studies, researchers gave the insects access to various plants to learn how particular they were in choosing their diets. They found that the insects will feed to a limited extent on plants that are

poisonous or non-nutritious, and will lay eggs on plants unsuitable for larval development.

When synthetic diets were tested, it was found that larvae and adults of the dock beetle responded while larvae and adults of the potato beetle did not. This indicated that the dock beetle is attracted by some chemical in the host plant.

The scientists were not able to determine whether plants give off scents that attract the insects. When placed in a cage with a fan at one end, the insects found a plant rapidly when it was upwind; slowly

or not at all when it was downwind. But the insects moved upwind even when there were no plants in the cages.

In future research, scientists will try to learn how the habits of weed-eating insects are influenced by the size, shape, color, and texture of plant parts; by nutrients in plants and by chemicals in plants that may attract, repel, or stimulate insects.

● PP&L

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picnic tables, fireplaces, por-

table toilets and refuse containers. Two boat launching ramps with associated docking facilities will be installed on the mainland with facilities for docking also on the islands, Shunk said. With favorable weather, he added, work should be completed for the opening of next summer's picnic season.

Label and Store Pesticides

It may be safer to destroy the few pesticides that are left around the farm or home from summer use than to run risk of children or animals getting into them before they are needed next season. If you do keep them, label properly, and store where children and animals cannot reach them.

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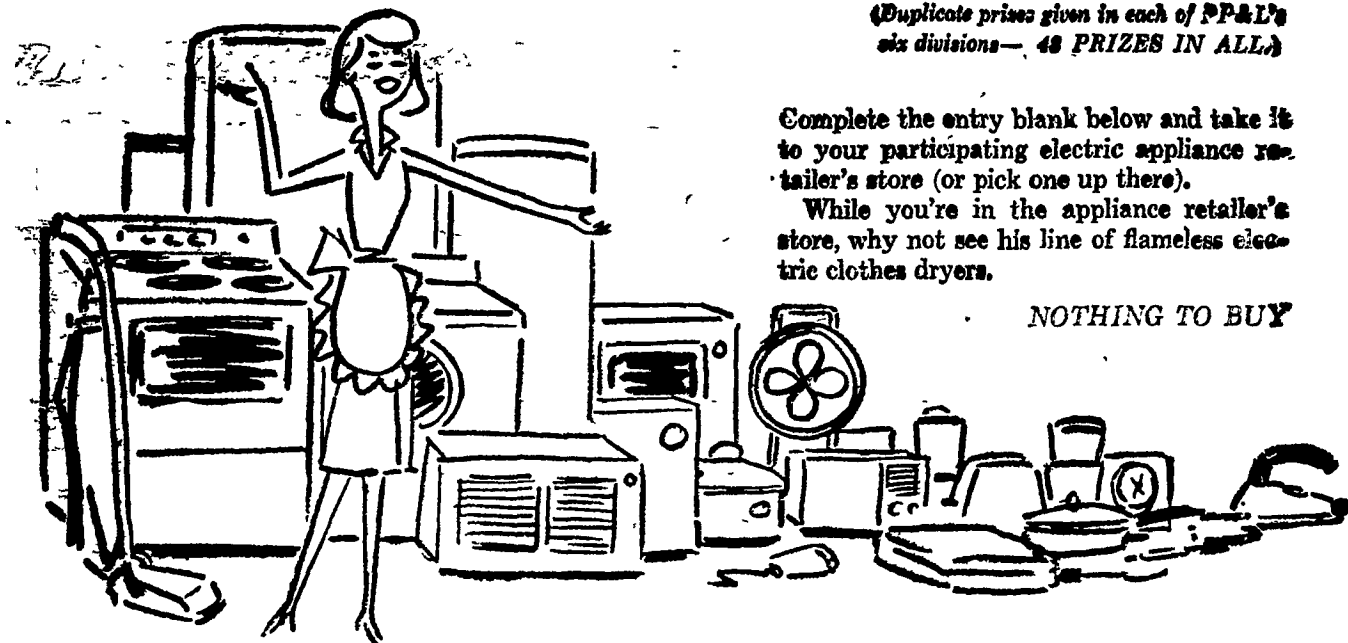
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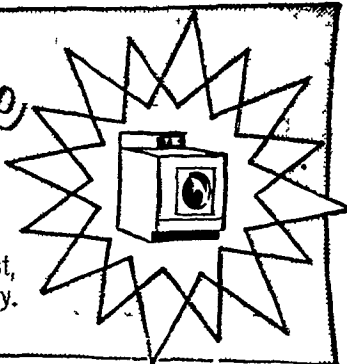
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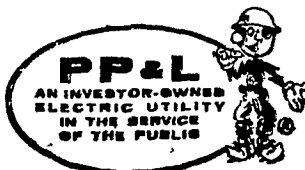
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