



# NEWS LETTER



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### THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS

Christmas was celebrated ages before the birth of Christ. Many of the religions which preceded Christianity are reflected in its rites. It is an inevitable time for rejoicing, for the winter solstice marks the end of the period of shortening days and the beginning of a daily increasing portion of light and sunshine which will ultimately produce the harvest. It is the beginning of the procession of the seasons, of the return of the sun, a reincarnation of the year and of life.

There are two great natural festivals, the beginning and the culmination of the victory of light over darkness—when the day first begins to lengthen and when it reaches its greatest magnitude. The mid-winter festival usually ran for several days. It was celebrated by the Druids. The Saxons and other northern nations kept Mother-Night or Yule, in honor of Thor. The Romans held the Saturnalia which has grown to be proverbial for the manner of wild revelry. The Jewish religion still embraces the Feast of Candles.

Progress in this world has been largely a series of compromises. The early Christian missionaries found the heathen strongly attached to their ancient rites and customs. It is not surprising, therefore, to find many of our Christian feasts engrafted on those of earlier faiths and with observances antedating the Christian era. The Yule log of the Saxon, the mistletoe of the Druids and the merry making of the Saturnalia have become part and parcel of the solemn celebration of Christ's Mass in honor of the nativity.

Just how long this has been celebrated as a Christian feast is uncertain. Its name suggests an origin after the re-

ligion was ritualized. The earliest record of the observance of December 25th is in A. D. 70. The early Christians of the Eastern and Western churches differed slightly in the date on which they celebrated,—the Easterns keeping it on the sixth of January and calling it Epiphany, while the Westerns from the first kept it on December twenty-fifth. In the fourth century the Easterns changed their festival of the nativity to the same date, thus agreeing with the Westerns. For some sixteen centuries all Christian people have kept this feast day. St. Augustine was sent by Pope Gregory to convert Saxon England and baptized ten thousand persons on the Christmas day following his landing in 596 A. D.

Many of us draw our traditions chiefly from England. Forty generations of our ancestors have kept Christmas as we know it and countless generations before them have followed some of its observances. The spirit of a happiness so great that it overflows in kindness and good-will to all has been our heritage so long that it is innate in us. It has become almost as inherent as the instinct for the protection and preservation of one's property or one's family. There is nothing more natural or more compelling than to wish Joy, Health and Prosperity, a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to each and every one.

(from "The Thread of Life".)

### MOON HAS NO EFFECT ON CROPS, SAYS SCIENCE

Although the old idea persists that the moon affects the germination and growth of garden plants and other crops, scientists agree that the moon has no appreciable influence on temperature, rainfall, or other factors that could affect the behavior of plants. A. E. Hutchins, vegetable specialist, University Farm, St. Paul, Minn., calls attention to a recent statement by the U. S. Bureau of Plant Industry, which says that careful scientific observations have failed to show that the moon affects plant behavior in any way. Neither can science adduce any reason why the moon should have the effects attributed to it by old beliefs.

The statement points out that plant growth depends upon many factors including temperature, light, humidity, and plant food (both in the soil and in the air) and its availability. Obviously,

the moon neither mellows the ground nor fertilizes it; neither does it alter the composition of the atmosphere. Hence, it affects neither the mechanical condition of the soil, nor the kind and quality of available plant food.

It would seem probable, the statement continues, that if the moon had any influence on plant growth it would be through the light shed by the moon. Experiments, however, have shown that even full moonlight is far too feeble to stimulate plant activity appreciably, being 600,000 times less intense than full daylight.

These are some of the reasons, concludes the statement, why very few people nowadays pay any attention to the moon, either in forecasting weather or planting crops.

(Seed World).

## DECEMBER MEETING

The December meeting was held at the Hotel Statler, Boston, on the 2nd. A Winter Sports program was presented by the Entertainment Committee. The first speaker was Mr. Larry Briggs of Mass. State College. Mr. Briggs pointed out the rapid growth that archery is now making, saying that some skeet clubs in Western Massachusetts are now including archery equipment. There is a place in nearly every club for archery; it can be used by women who might otherwise be "golf widows". There should be an instructor. Archery can go on all Winter; some clubs have facilities for an indoor range, where the target can be 1/3 regulation size. There is a definite need for a place to make own tackle.

Mr. Baker of the Teepee Archery Tackle Co. in Auburndale was the next speaker, and he spoke on "Archery Golf". He pointed out that there is very little time during the year when courses could not be used for archery golf. Cost for equipment for course would be around \$250, with individuals using their own bows and arrows. The game is played similar to golf, and does not disturb the greens, as the targets are set up to one side of the rear of the greens. Rules differ in various localities at present.

Mr. Edward Bike next spoke on Skiing, Snowshoeing, and Tobogganing. He said in part: People are getting out

in the open more than formerly. Some parks are putting in ski trails; clubs have an excellent opportunity. Country clubs are accessible to public, with parking areas; have club houses; have suitable terrain, and often shelters at more inaccessible points. Skiing is still in its infancy, with not more than 10% of skiers skilled. For novices, an open slope of not more than 10% is fine for those from 5 to 70 years. Down hill trails come after the novice slope. Night ski trails are often possible at clubs if a few flood lights are installed. Cross country skiing and snowshoeing are easily adapted to country clubs. Ski jumping is more for experts, but a small ski jumping hill can be constructed so that many can have fun. Factors to be considered in making a ski slope are accessibility, direction of hill in N. E. exposure, protection from wind, proper dimension, degree of steepness.

Skating has always been popular. Where ponds are not available, tennis courts can often be flooded. On ponds, factor of safety must be considered, should have ladder, bamboo poles and boat on hand, arrangements must be made for hockey, and children regulations. In making an area, 6-10" of loam used as an embankment will do for the edge. Develop ice on a cold day, get thin layer first and then flood 2" bit by bit. Maintenance will depend on use of ice.

A toboggan slide is necessary to round out the sports program. A site is not difficult to find. Trestle start is often used to give speed. The terrain will govern the type to be constructed. Should end on a level or rising area. The trough should be 2 feet deep. Out run should be level and free from obstruction. Loading platform should have guard rail. A bell or other signal to let users know that coast is clear is a fine aid to safety. Renting toboggans at so much an hour might be considered, also storage of toboggans.

A Winter carnival is a possibility where Winter Sports are held.

As the January meeting is the annual meeting, with reports and elections, we are anxious to have an extra large turnout. Be sure and note the change in meeting place for this meeting. All officers and committee chairmen are requested to have their reports ready to submit at this meeting.

To all who have plantations of white pine adjacent to their courses, a bulletin from The Cornell University Agri. Exp. Station, No. 449, "Biology and Control of the White-Pine Weevil, *Pissodes strobi* Peck", will be of interest. This bulletin deals with one of the most destructive pests of the eastern white pine. The summary of this bulletin reads as follows:

The white-pine weevil is one of the most dangerous and destructive pests of young white pine and Norway spruce. It attacks and kills the leading shoots of large seedlings and small saplings. Not only does this injury result in a loss in the rate of height growth, but in many cases it is the cause of serious crooks and forks in the main stem of the tree. In many instances, trees are rendered commercially valueless by the injury.

This weevil has but one generation a year. The adults appear on the trees in the early spring, after having hibernated over winter in the litter beneath the trees. They deposit their eggs in the leading shoots, and the larvae, when hatched, work downward as they feed upon the inner bark. Thus the shoot is girdled and killed. The injury frequently extends below the topmost whorl of

laterals, and sometimes below even the third whorl from the top. After completing their growth, the larvae excavate pupal cells in the pith or the wood, transform to the pupal stage, and emerge as adults in August and September. After feeding for a short time on the new growth and buds of the pines, the young adults retire to their winter quarters in the litter beneath the trees.

A number of effective methods for the control of the white-pine weevil have been developed. They may be divided into two main groups, direct methods and indirect methods. In the first group are included all of those methods that deal directly with one or more stages of the insect, or with trees or parts of trees already infested. In the second group are included all operations designed to modify environment factors so that conditions become unfavorable for the rapid increase of the weevil. The direct methods are expensive, and are applicable only in shade and ornamental plantings, along highways, on some watersheds, and in some private forests where the esthetic value is an important consideration. In the timber forest, only the indirect methods can be used except under very unusual circumstances.

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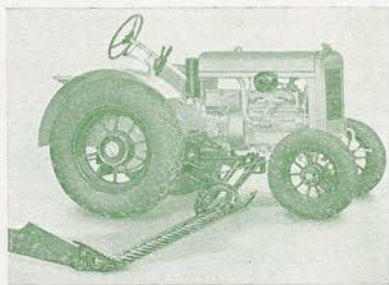
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Of the direct methods that have been developed for the control of this insect, the most effective is a combination of collecting adults in the spring, and pruning injured leaders in the summer. The best method of collecting adults is to jar the beetles from the trees into a net held beneath them. Pruning of injured leaders should be done in June and again in August, or, if only one treatment is to be given, in July. Pruning all but one lateral tends to stimulate recovery and is a desirable operation when possible.

Sprays and washes have been recommended for the control of the white-pine weevil, but they have not proved sufficiently effective to warrant their use.

In timber forests, one of two practical methods of indirect control can be used. In established forests on good soil, white pine should be grown under a form of the shelter-wood system that will provide a light shade for the young trees until they have reached a height of from twenty to thirty feet. The shade should not, however, be sufficiently heavy to seriously interfere with the growth of the trees.

On the poorer soils, in plantations, and in volunteer growth in old fields where even-aged pure stands cannot be avoided, another method for weevil control is effective. It has already been shown that density is an important factor in determining both the abundance of the weevil and the amount of injury resulting from its attack upon the trees. With an original density of 1500 trees per acre, very little weevil injury will be evident at the end of the rotation. Even at the standard density of 1200 trees per acre, comparatively little injury will result if a fully stocked stand is maintained throughout the first thirty years after planting. This is due in part to a reduction in the amount of weevil-ing, but in a much greater measure to the effect of competition in stimulating straight growth.

Parasites and predatory agents play an important part in the natural control of this insect. The most abundant and effective parasite throughout the range of the weevil is *Eurytoma pissodis* Gir. In some cases more than 50 per cent of the weevil larvae are parasitized by this species. Predatory insects and vertebrates are important aids in reducing the numbers of the weevil.

In view of the facts brought to light by the experiments in both New York

and Minnesota, it seems safe to say that the young white pine needs no longer to be seriously menaced by the white-pine weevil, because the insect can be controlled under any condition in which a fully stocked stand can be maintained throughout the first twenty-five or thirty years of the rotation, or where white pine can be grown under the shelter-wood system or some other system that will provide shade for the sapling pines. This means that where good silvicultural methods are in force, this pest can be effectively and economically controlled.

The Eighth Annual Short Course in Turf Management will be held at the College of Agriculture of Rutgers University from Feb. 17-21st, 1936. Dr. Howard B. Sprague will again be the leader.

#### ODE TO A NAG

Horse, you are a wondrous thing!

No horns to honk, no bells to ring;

No license buying every year,

With plates to stick on front and rear,

No sparks to miss, no gears to flip;

You start yourself; no clutch to slip.

No gas bills mounting every day

To steal the joys of life away.

Your inner tubes are all O. K.

And thank the Lord, they stay that way.

Your spark plugs never miss and fuss

Your motor never makes a cuss

Your body never changes style,

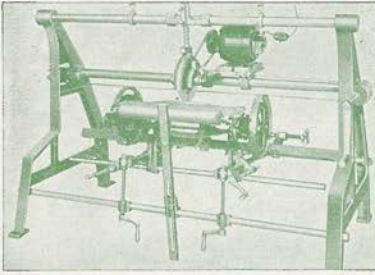
Your wants are few and easy met;

You've something on the auto yet.

—Northern Ontario Tribune.

The Tenth Annual Convention and Equipment Exhibition of the N. A. G. A. will be held Feb. 4-7, 1936, at the Carter Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio. More complete details of program, etc. will be given in our January issue.

Attention is called to a new publication soon to make its debut, *The Turf Survey* with Mrs. G. A. Farley, formerly Editor of the National Greenkeeper, as Editor. Subscriptions are \$2 a year. More later about this new magazine.



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