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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Saturday, February 19, 1938

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

Subject: "NEWS NOTES FROM WASHINGTON." Information from the Forest Service, the Bureau of Animal Industry, and the Bureau of Plant Industry, United States Department of Agriculture.

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Our correspondent in Washington, D. C., starts her letter this week by telling a detective story straight from the Forest Service. She writes:

"Forest rangers sometimes have to be detectives. Here is what one Missouri ranger by the name of James did to discover and bring to justice a man who was setting fires in a national forest in Missouri.

"During a very dry season when fire conditions were serious, a number of fires had kept the fighting forces busy. One fire in the area had burned 350 acres of timber. Another had burned 40 acres. The more the rangers examined the evidence, the more sure they were that these fires had been set maliciously.

"It just happened that a six-year-old boy told of seeing a man set a fire. And Ranger James presently learned that the suspected man would be making a return trip through the national forest area that night. So with one of his foremen, the ranger hid along the road until the suspect drove past in low gear on an uphill climb.

"Ranger James managed to climb onto the rear tire carrier where he could watch the car driver more carefully. A few moments later he saw the driver strike a match and quickly toss it out the window. The match went out before it reached the tinder-dry forest alongside the road. The man immediately lit another and threw it out. The second fire caught fire in the leaves and other dry vegetation. The ranger had his evidence because the car driver made no attempt to stop.

"In court, the fire-starter pleaded guilty and paid his fine and the Forest Service wrote finish to another one of the cases of incendiaries who burn about a million three hundred thousand acres of protected forests every year.

"Speaking of forests, have you heard that the Association of State Foresters is urging the public to have more community forests, forests owned by local communities rather than by the State or the Government or a private individual? Already there are more than a thousand community forests in this country but the foresters believe that many more would make valuable additions to State and National forests as well as being of help to people living nearby.

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"Some community forests have been acquired to protect watersheds, many as a result of tax delinquency after the owners have cut the original timber. A few community forests are original reserves. Some communities have even bought land to round out areas of tax-delinquent forests. Forests that protect watersheds also foster wildlife and provide for low-cost recreation. Many forests are already paying their way and returning a profit. They are useful in giving employment to local residents, providing supplies of timber and posts for community uses, fuel and firewood, Christmas trees, nuts, wild berries, and other forest products.

"At present New York State has the largest number of community forests. This one State has 390 such forests and together they cover 188 thousand acres. California comes second with 158 community owned forests. And Massachusetts ranks third with 125. In area, however, Wisconsin leads with 1 million 750 thousand acres in its 25 county forests. Other States with locally owned forests are; Connecticut, Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, North Carolina, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Missouri, and Oregon."

"That's all the forest news I have to report today. But I've just learned about a test to make on yourself or your family. See how well you can tell different kinds of meat by tasting them blindfolded.

"A group of judges tried this here at the Department of Agriculture the other day. Blindfolded they were given tastes of beef, pork, chicken, veal, lamb and rabbit and asked to identify each. More often they could identify beef and pork correctly than chicken, veal, lamb, or rabbit. The meat experts conclude that beef and pork have a more distinctive flavor than other meats -- at least, that their special flavors and texture are easier to distinguish.

"Have you heard about the new fungicide for lawns and golf courses which controls a disease of grass known as 'brown patch' and also dyes the grass green? It's a case of science combing the practical and the esthetic, you might say.

"The United States Golf Association through its greens workers cooperated with the Department of Agriculture in the research that discovered this fungicide. The base of the fungicide is malachite green dye. The first solutions which the scientists tried were effective in keeping down the grass disease but were such an odd color that they made the grass look unnatural. The scientists then found that they could mix this fungicide to match any grass -- use a mixture of dyes that would fit into the landscape and at the same time be a helpful fungicide.

"A half an ounce of this mixture costs about 10 cents, can be diluted with 2 to 5 gallons of water, and is sufficient to spray a thousand square feet of turf. The mixture keeps the grass green from 3 days to 3 weeks depending on the weather. But a rain before the fungicide has time to dry will wash it off quickly. And too hot weather in summer fades it. The fungicide does not harm healthy grass, is helpful against brown patch, and gives an even color to the lawn or the golf green."

That concludes this week's news letter. Another will be here next Saturday.