making the aquarium is a pleasureable as well as an instructive one for the student.

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Biological Briefs

RUTH SHERMAN

MCKINNEY, H. H. *Vernalization and the Growth-Phase Concept.* The Botanical Review 6: 25–47. January, 1940.

Considerable recent research has shown that certain winter annuals and biennials can be induced to hasten their period of sexual maturity by treating the seed or bulb in the early stages of germination. This is known as vernalization. The most successful method to date has been that of soaking seeds or bulbs in water so as to begin germination, and then, under suitable conditions of moisture, to maintain them at temperatures near freezing for from 5 to 60 days. This method appears to have commercial value in hastening the blooming periods of daffodils, iris, and Easter liles, and may be profitably applied in the future to cereal and forage crops.

VAUGHAN, WARREN T. *Why We Eat What We Eat.* Scientific Monthly 50: 148–154. February, 1940.

Our varied diet of today has been developed through the ages, and gathered from world-wide points of origin. Nomads perhaps first discovered many of these, and the development of varieties and methods of cultivating food plants progressed as these nomads became agricultural peoples in prehistoric times. While the crab apple and other small wild forms are indigenous to North America, our large apples came originally from northern Eurasia. Wheat appears to have developed from the wild grasses of Asia Minor or Egypt; it was introduced into China about 3000 B.C. and was known in Egypt in 2440 B.C. Rye, rice, and barley have origins almost as ancient. Corn, apparently native to Mexico, has been cultivated since prehistoric times and is unknown in the wild state. Travel routes have controlled the spread of foods from their points of origin, and the courses of war and trade have frequently been strongly affected by food factors. Such has been the case with coffee, apricots (brought to England in the crusade of 1620), and "Irish" potatoes. The article presents an extensive list of the geographic origins of foodstuffs.

EMERSON, HAVEN. *Eugenics in Relation to Medicine.* Journal of Heredity 30: 553–556. December, 1939.

Physicians may play an important part in furthering the progress of eugenics. They are well-equipped to advise those contemplating marriage or creating a family, and should have a large part in the development and work of the "social control" agencies. The most direct help lies in teaching to each individual and family the facts of human biology. For this purpose, medical schools should broaden their curricula. The doctor should include a family pedigree as a part of his medical records. He should encourage health examinations for prospective mates, and should institute a campaign to minimize exaggerated fears of childbirth. In encouraging voluntary sterilization and birth control measures, physicians may work directly to aid the eugenics movement.

LEY, W. *Animal Fables.* Natural History 45: 84–87; 122–123. February, 1940.

Many strange beliefs concerning animals have a partial basis in misinterpreted truths, while others have been

established as fact by impartial observers. Stories concerning monkeys and rats which form living chains to cross narrow bodies of water are unproven, but certain ants do perform this feat. Bumblebees do not buzz at the mouth of the nest in the early morning to awaken others, but rather to ventilate the dwelling. Scorpions do not sting themselves to death if encircled by live coals, but do thrash about so violently that casual observers might thus interpret their struggles. Ants have been observed to extinguish the flame of a candle placed on their dwelling by bombarding the wick with their abdominal fluid. The many snake fables, concerning hypnotic gaze, milk snakes, hoop snakes, and whip snakes, are of course beyond the realm of fact.

Notes and News

Mr. Homer A. Stephens, President-elect of *The National Association of Biology Teachers,* has been granted a fellowship by the University of Wisconsin where he will pursue studies toward his doctorate.

Our Secretary-Treasurer, Mr. P. K. Houdek, of Robinson, Illinois, spent the summer working for the State Department of Public Health. Much of the time he was driving over the state visiting clubs and other organizations and assisting the various groups in working out programs of health lectures for the coming year.

The Atlanta Science Club of Atlanta, Georgia, has been accepted by the Executive Board as an affiliated local society of the *National Association of Biology Teachers.*

We hope to have more news of the activities and program of this new affiliate in an early issue of The American Biology Teacher.

The Biology Section of the Illinois High School Conference will meet at Urbana, Illinois, November 1, 1940, under the presidency of Madeline Dague. The following program is announced:

9:00 Book Review: "High Schools and Sex Education."
Glenn V. Ramsey, Peoria High School.

9:30 "How to Make and Use Color Slides in Teaching."
J. B. MacHarg, Eastman Kodak Co., Rochester, New York.

10:00 Address.
Professor G. W. Rosenlof, Teachers College, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska.

10:30 "Adventures with Birds." (Lecture and motion pictures.)
Dr. Olin Sewall Pettingill, Jr., Instructor in Zoology, Carleton College, Northfield, Minnesota.

12:15 Luncheon. "Lane Technical High School's New Charles E. Lang Formal Garden as a Biology and School Project"—Illustrated with enlarged photographs, drawings, and blueprints.
M. C. Lichtenwalter, Lane Technical High School, Chicago.

1:30 Business meeting.

2:00 "Vitamins, Their History and Value."
Dr. Frank B. Kirby, Director of Education, Abbott Laboratories, North Chicago, Illinois.

2:30 "Reading and Reference Books for the Biology Library."
Lyle Bamber, Librarian, Biology Library, University of Illinois.

3:00 "Correct Approaches to the Study of Nature."
Rev. George M. Link, Field Naturalist, Pere Marquette State Park, Grafton, Illinois.