Megasporogenesis in sterile plants has not as yet been studied cytologically. Since all but a few of the female gametes are non-functional, it is tentatively assumed that megasporogenesis is probably essentially similar to microsporogenesis. The progeny of sterile plants (sterile x normal) appear for the most part to be normal diploids. Such would be expected to be the case if it is assumed that at least the full haploid set of chromosomes is necessary for the production of a functional gametophyte.

GEORGE W. BEADLE

CORNELL UNIVERSITY

APPEAL FOR SAMPLES OF TREE SEEDS

THE Waldsamenprüfungsanstalt (forest tree-seed testing station) at Eberswalde, Germany, has for decades been a leading institution for the scientific study of tree seed. During the last six years Professor Dr. Werner Schmidt, the present director of the station, has made notable contributions to our knowledge of seed, especially of the internal, physiological differences in seed of different climatic races of the same species. This station is probably the only seed control station in the world devoted exclusively to forest tree seed. It cares for all the states of Germany, and consequently has a large volume of routine work, for which research must give preference. The staff now consists of two assistants, besides the director, and from three to five laboratory assistants and clerical aids (women). The annual budget for all operating expenses aside from the salaries of the male staff is at present only 3,000 marks ($750). Thus very small funds have been available for experimental work, which has precluded the purchase of material. Recently, owing to its rapid growth in central Europe, great interest has attached to Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga taxifolia*). Northern white pine (*Pinus strobus*) is also fairly important in Europe. At present there is no systematic work being done in America on tree seed at all comparable to that under way at Eberswalde. Studies of the behavior of American species should prove very interesting. Any one in a position to do so will do the station a great favor by forwarding small samples of tree seeds with data about their place of origin. This may make possible important discoveries of the characteristics of our own species. Samples of fifty grams are sufficient for all except the largest seeded species, and should be addressed directly to Professor Werner Schmidt, Eberswalde, Germany. If possible seed of this autumn's crop should be sent; in any case full information as to where the seed was collected, altitude, notes on the climate, such as length of growing season, temperature of the summer months, etc., of the place of origin and the year and month of collection should be sent. It is not necessary that the seed be winged or cleaned; in fact cones may be sent if preferred. Several samples of the same species from widely varying regions and elevations are especially desired. It is hoped that many foresters, botanists and others may be able to cooperate by sending in samples.

HENRY I. BALDWIN

NEW HAVEN, CONN.

NEWSPAPER SCIENCE

THE following article appeared in the New York *Times* of September 1, 1929:

SNAKE-KILLING MONGOOSES
A PLAGUE TO PORTO RICO

HARRISON HECKMAN, of Augusta, Me., a field representative of the Red Cross, who has spent much time in Porto Rico, says the island has a problem: How to get rid of its mongooses. Not so long ago boa-constrictors thrived there, interfering greatly with the work of the coffee and sugar plantations. They also killed men and beasts. Even the natives hesitated to venture into the forests. So a shipment of mongooses was obtained from Asia.

Because of their fecundity only males were procured. These went about their business very thoroughly and systematically. In a few years they had cleared the island of most of the boa-constrictors. But they crossed with native rats and have multiplied to such an extent that they are devastating crops. How to get rid of them is a serious problem.

When a mongoos meets a boa-constrictor it takes up a position directly in front of it and apparently makes up faces. The snake, in its ignorance, thinking it is going to have an extra large rat for dinner, immediately throws out its poison. The mongoos, anticipating this, side-steps.

When the enraged serpent has emptied its poison sack the killer sits on his head, obtaining a firm hold with its teeth. The frenzied serpent makes a terrific struggle but in the end has to give up, exhausted.

After reading the above one is tempted to ask how Mr. Heckman learned so much that is not true. I have examined Schmidt's "Amphibians and Land Reptiles of Porto Rico"[1] and fail to find any record of the fierce (?) and poisonous (?) boa-constrictors of Porto Rico, but probably they were destroyed by the remarkable mongoos before Schmidt visited the island. island.

MEL T. COOK

INSULAR EXPERIMENT STATION,
RIO PIEDRAS, PORTO RICO

[1] Scientific Survey of Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands, New York Academy of Sciences, 1928.