

depends upon the fact that the element lithium, rare in ordinary soils, can be taken up by plants without apparent injury, and afterwards can be made to show its presence by a peculiar red color when burned. In the tests, a quantity of lithium salts is mixed with earth, and a core of this "lithiated" earth is planted twelve to eighteen inches deep between corn rows after the last cultivation. After harvest, parts of the dried plants are burned in the laboratory, and the flame examined with the spectroscope. The plants showing the characteristic red line of lithium are assumed to have sent their roots into the "lithium spot" in the soil. The possibility that the lithium may have moved through the soil, in solution, is ruled out on the ground that "it enters into the base exchange complex of the soil."

CHRYSANTHEMUMS of a special kind are grown not for ornament but for the production of insect poison. Specifically, they are known as pyrethrum, and their extract, pyrethrin, is one of the most widely used means of chemical warfare against many insect pests. Dr. Brooks D. Drain and G. A. Shuey, of the University of Tennessee Agricultural Experiment Station, told how especially desirable strains of pyrethrum can be propagated without risking the loss of their valuable high poison content. The propagation consists simply in dividing the plants, much as ornamental chrysanthemums and other flowers of the same type are divided. If plants are grown from seed, the pyrethrin content is uncertain, but this vegetative propagation eliminates the risk of hybridizing with

low-grade pyrethrum strains. The best pyrethrums may contain as much as two per cent. pyrethrin, while poor plants have as low as 0.6 per cent.

THE popular belief that men are mentally superior to women, and that the number of extremely intelligent is greater among boys than among girls, was dispelled by a report by Professor Paul A. Witty, director of the psycho-educational clinic at Northwestern University. The popular misconception has been given support, Professor Witty pointed out, by observation of the outstanding proportional achievement of men in music, art, science and literature, and also by studies that have been previously made of small numbers of gifted children. It fails, however, when large numbers of boys and girls are studied with the unprejudiced eye of scientific mental measurement. Altogether, 14,149 boys and 13,493 girls, all students in secondary schools, were included in the study.

RAT fleas spread typhus fever in America, but they are not mere mechanical carriers. The virus of the disease multiplies in the body of the flea, according to a report by Dr. R. E. Dyer, of the U. S. Public Health Service's National Institute of Health. The investigation which disclosed how typhus fever is spread in this country has been carried on over a period of years by the federal health service. During the course of the investigations, a number of the men working on the problem contracted the disease.

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