

THE FRUIT TESTING COOPERATIVE

THOSE of your readers who are interested in horticultural progress may not be aware that, unless it can expand its membership somewhat, the New York State Fruit Testing Cooperative Association may have to cease its useful work. The Fruit Testing Cooperative was organized some twenty years ago to serve as a bridge between breeders of new fruits and the testers of new fruits. Many varieties, apparently superior under the conditions where they are originated, prove to possess weaknesses when tested elsewhere. Certain members of the staff of the New York State Experiment Station conceived the notion of a cooperative association which would stand ready to test new varieties of fruit under a great variety of conditions, reporting back occasionally on the results of their tests. The resulting association has been self-supporting since its establishment, requiring no subsidy from any source whatsoever. It has served a useful purpose not only to the fruit breeders in exposing the flaws in some of their production, but to horticulture generally in speeding up the dissemination of worthwhile new productions. The cost of membership is nominal, and members buy the productions which they propose to test out at cost. But in order to continue self-supporting the cooperative must maintain the membership of at least 2,000 persons who are genuinely interested, on the one hand, in assisting the fruit breeders, and on the other hand in having access to the best new productions of the breeders for their own use. Persons interested in the work of the association should write to H. L. King, the manager, in care of the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station, Geneva.

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NICOTINIC ACID

THERE has been much popular objection to the enrichment of bread with nicotinic acid, the vitamin necessary to prevent pellagra, because of confusion with the poisonous alkaloid, nicotine. In view of this objection the Food and Nutrition Board of the National Research Council recommends the acceptance of "Niacin" and "Niacin Amide" as synonyms for nicotinic acid and nicotinic acid amide. The committee which made the recommendation was composed of Drs. C. A. Elvehjem, W. H. Sebrell and Tom D. Spies. The committee also recommends that the terms nicotinic acid and nicotinic acid amide be used in scientific literature and that the new terms be used only where there may be objection from the public.

Elvehjem in 1937 discovered that nicotinic acid was a specific cure for black tongue in dogs. Spies and

others quickly extended Elvehjem's results to the cure of pellagra in man. The newly discovered vitamin, however, had been isolated more than 60 years earlier by treating nicotine with fuming nitric acid and named, therefore, nicotinic acid.

People unacquainted with chemistry but well aware of the deadly character of nicotine and of nitric acid taken separately, have not been able to understand how the combination of two poisons could produce a substance necessary to life and hence have opposed its use in food.

It is hoped that the word "Niacin" may be widely adopted and may allay popular misgivings as to the nature and effect of the anti-pellagra vitamin.

ROBERT F. GRIGGS

STOMATES? STIGMATES, STROMATES!

At the time of the appearance of Meyer and Anderson's "Plant Physiology," I was somewhat disturbed at their use of the word "stomate" for what we used to call "stoma" but hoped that that usage would not become generally established. Listening to the papers at the recent A.A.A.S. meetings, however, it was evident that a number of people are beginning to use that form. A protest would seem to be in order before the word becomes too firmly entrenched.

Words may quite properly be anglicized if the change makes for easier, more general or more intelligent usage. I have no objection to saying "stoma, stomas." Nor is there any serious objection to modifying a Greek or Latin word if it is unwieldy. "Mitosis" is certainly preferable to the more exact form "mitoschizosis." But is there any possible excuse for taking the plural form of a simple, usable word like "stoma," forgetting that it is a plural, and aglicizing it into an unwieldy singular form like "stomate," and then building a new plural on top of it? That has about as much reason to it as saying "an eggs, two eggsges." The old form "stoma, stomas" or "stoma, stomata" was simpler, briefer, certainly as easy to remember. Those who say "stomate, stomates" probably would not think of saying "stigate, stigmates" instead of "stigma, stigmas (or stigmata)" or "stromate, stromates" instead of "stroma, stromas (or stromata)." Yet these have equal justification. If the reason back of this innovation is a phobia against foreign-language words, why not say "pores" or "little mouths" or "openings"?

Whatever the real basis is, a protest seems justified now before too many helpless students are seduced by this new form of technical jargon!

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