



Tabellaria flocculosa ($375 \times$) imparts a geranium odor to water when present in moderate quantities and a fishy odor when overabundant. One system of metropolitan reservoirs had it in superabundance and lost it all over a 40-year period, displaced by different algae.

Company Publishers, Dubuque, Iowa) is one example of available help. For additional suggestions on collecting, preparing, and mounting, Eric V. Gravé, who did the portraits on this page, recommends three 41-year-old articles from the *New York Microscopical Society Bulletin.* They can be obtained on request to Kodak, Scientific and Technical Photography, Rochester, N.Y. 14650. Photography Through the Microscope (Kodak Publication P-2) can be ordered from dealers in professional photographic goods, as can Kodak Publication N-19 (Biomedical Photography), which contains a detailed article on technique for sharpening up the crucial fine detail of diatoms by optically, arbitrarily, and even beautifully coloring their glassy skeletons.



Surirella (270 ×). Some species of this genus are said to favor clean waters; others, polluted waters.

There are pretty baubles in the lake-any lake. Enjoy them. Somebody ought to.

"Gentleman in the country," an individual who chose to identify himself no further in the letters he wrote to the Royal Society soon after Leeuwenhoek invented microscopy, first drew diatoms into mankind's ken by describing this organism. Thousands more have since been described. Photographed through a microscope that might otherwise stand idle while comparable investments are made in more voguish amusement devices like home video recorders, they can fascinate succeeding generations of gentlefolk. In decorating one's abode, such photographs would make an unusual personal theme, particularly for lake-dwellers interested in supplementing traditional ways of enjoying their lake. It's an alternative to riding over it or arranging tugs-of-war with a species or two of finny beings one greatly outweighs. Should the mind become engaged through desire to identify the diatoms peculiar to the particular lake at the particular season of the particular year, G. W. Prescott's How to Know the Freshwater Algae (Wm. C. Brown The September 1978 issue of SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN is devoted to the single topic of Evolution.

The word stands for one of the most consequential ideas in intellectual history. First proposed in 1858 by Charles Darwin and Alfred Wallace to explain the marvelous diversity of living things, evolution has motivated and organized the work of the life sciences ever since.

The idea itself has evolved. In the last 30 years, with new understanding and instrumentation supplied to the life sciences by the physical sciences, evolution has come to embrace life processes over the full range of their dimensions from the molecule to the biosphere. It has filled in the blank pages of the first three billion years of the history of life. For mankind's understanding of itself, evolution has illuminated the last three million years -since the first protohuman toolmakers started the cultural revolution that brought on the biological evolution of Homo sapiens.

The idea of evolution, after 120 years, remains as central in the work of the life sciences as does the concept of energy in the work of physics.

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(Top) A map of the European gene frequencies of eight alleles of the HLA-A and fifteen of the HLA-B gene synthesized by a trichromic superposition of their first three components. (Bottom) The ABO, Rh, MNS, Lewis, Duffy, Hp, and PGM₁ genes were included. These maps support the idea that farmers spread from the Near East in Neolithic times. See page 786. [P. Menozzi *et al.*, University of Parma, Parma, Italy]

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Five Years of Energy Paralysis

Five years ago the United States received notice that it could not depend indefinitely on obtaining imports of oil. Soon it was also evident that the world would be enduring economic dislocations due to high costs of petroleum and that shortages of oil would be experienced 5 to 15 years from now. Lately, confidence in the dollar has evaporated and the possibility of wild inflation here looms ever larger. On the world scene great changes have occurred in less than a year. In the meantime the United States plods along with a time scale for energy development measured in decades and more. During the past 5 years some constructive developments have occurred, but on balance, this country has drifted backward.

The easiest and quickest way to avoid energy shortages is through conservation. In this area, modest progress has been made. Following the recent severe winters, substantial amounts of insulation were installed in homes. Newly constructed buildings are also better protected. Industry now uses 14 percent less energy per unit of product than it did 5 years ago. But public recycling efforts have largely stopped. Gasoline consumption sets new records.

Unconventional energy sources, though highly touted, have not made much of a contribution. For a time solar heating and cooling caught the attention and interest of the public. Many new companies were formed to meet an eager demand for installations. But in recent months, orders have dropped to 10 percent or less of their peak rate and many companies have folded.

Domestic reserves and production of oil and natural gas continue to drop. In 1973 crude oil production was 9.3 million barrels per day. It is now about 8.7 million barrels per day. This includes the contribution of 1.2 million barrels per day of Alaskan oil. In the 48 contiguous states production has dropped rapidly. Although drilling activity on land is now at a 20-year high there have been few announcements of discoveries of giant fields. Exploration of frontier areas (incomplete) has thus far not been very encouraging. In the 5 years there has been a large increase in oil imports and in balance of payments deficits.

After conservation, substitution of other fuels should be the most practical way of lowering demand for imported oil. This means expanded use of coal, nuclear energy, or shale oil. But progress in substitution has been slow and future prospects are bleak.

During the past 5 years regulatory and legal delays have lengthened drastically. The time necessary to open a large coal mine has increased from 5 years to as much as 10 years or more. Many federal, state, and local agencies have set separate but often overlapping requirements which differ from place to place. As many as 100 permits are required to open a mine, all of which must be obtained before construction can begin. The time required to bring a coal-fired electric plant on line has increased by several years and is approaching the 10 to 12 years needed for nuclear power plants.

Considerably more oil might be obtained fairly quickly from tertiary recovery and from pools of heavy oil, but large-scale efforts await economic incentives. Huge amounts of shale oil are potentially available by use of already developed processes, but under existing economic and regulatory conditions little is being done.

Our people have repeatedly given evidence that they will not gladly accept shortages of energy whether natural gas, electricity, or gasoline. Infatuation with the automobile is such that any political party that engineers a shortage of fuel can count on defeat at the polls. Proposition 13 is a minor breeze in comparison with the hurricane that could result from failure to deal with energy matters.

The sad part of the situation is that the technology and resources exist to enable the United States to live smoothly through the transition to more efficient energy use and to long-term and renewable energy sources. But continuation of present paralysis invites turmoil.-PHILIP H. ABELSON



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