

The agar, tryptone and yeast extract are dissolved in approximately 900 ml of distilled water by autoclaving for several minutes. After complete solution of these components, the cottonseed oil emulsion and the previously filtered alcoholic spirit blue solution are added. The mixture is made up to one liter with distilled water and mixed thoroughly. The medium is sterilized by autoclaving for 15 minutes at 15 pounds (121° C.). Either pour-plates or streak-plates may be used. The completed medium should be stored in a refrigerator to minimize oxidative deterioration; refrigerated sterile plates of spirit blue agar will keep for more than two months.

When prepared from fresh cottonseed oil of a low acid number, sterile plates of spirit blue agar are pale lavender in color and of firm consistency. Colonies of lipolytic organisms are recognized by the development of a permanent deep-blue color beneath and surrounding the colony. No comparable change in color has been detected around colonies of any non-lipolytic organism examined.

The growth characteristics and lipolytic activity of more than 200 species of bacteria, yeasts and molds were examined by means of spirit blue agar. In no instance was there observed an inhibition of growth or of lipolysis which might be attributed solely to the dye; particularly significant is the excellent growth of all the Micrococcaceae which were examined. By use of this medium, it is possible to get "total" counts on dairy products, air and sewage which compare favorably with those obtained by the standard quantitative methods for the examination of these products, and, at the same time, the numbers of lipolytic organisms may be determined.

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AN IMPROVED METHOD OF APPLYING COLORED PENCILS

THE procedure described below is so simple and useful that it is difficult to believe that it is not already in widespread use, yet in the course of a varied experience in America and Europe the writer has not previously encountered it. Locally, at least, it is the invention of our Spanish draftsman:

To secure a uniform and smooth distribution of the color applied by any good grade of colored pencil, it is only necessary to rub the surface to which the pencil coloring has been roughly applied, with a bit of cloth soaked in gasoline. The cloth may be wrapped over the end of a toothpick or the blunt end of a penholder for finer work, and simply bunched into a soft mass for larger areas. The procedure is thus identical with the dry rubbing usually employed to obtain a smooth distribution of crayon coloring. The results obtained

by using gasoline compare favorably with a good grade of water-coloring. Much less skill is required to obtain good results, and the work can be done much more rapidly than with paints. Pencil colors so treated are completely fixed, and will not rub off or smudge.

Through the use of gasoline any two pencil colorings may be mixed to obtain a third. Thus, to make a yellow-green, apply first a rough base of yellow, and over it an equally rough surface of green. Upon rubbing with a bit of gasoline-soaked cloth, the two will blend smoothly to produce a yellow-green. Where the colors are of equal value in such mixtures, the color applied uppermost will predominate.

The above technique should be particularly useful to cartographers and others who wish to apply rapid crayon coloring over relatively large surfaces. In the absence of gasoline, turpentine will serve the same purpose, but the oily components of this substance have an adverse effect on lighter grades of paper.

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MADRID, SPAIN

BOOKS RECEIVED

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