

Tree Planting Device Being Perfected By Employee Of U. S. Forest Service

By CHARLES V. STANTON
Planting tree seeds is a slow laborious job by existing methods. A new tool, now in process of refinement, may greatly simplify the task and reduce costs.

The tool, now developed to the stage of a working model, is being perfected by Wm. C. "Red" Stratton, who came west from Detroit in 1946 and "forgot to go back." Stratton spent 26 years as a tool and die maker in Detroit. During the war he worked himself to the point of physical breakdown making tools for war production. In 1946, he needed a vacation. He came to the Pacific Coast. He wanted no more of Detroit. He joined the U. S. Forest Service as a man of all work. For three years he has been at Big Camas ranger station where he does everything from razing and erecting buildings and maintaining equipment to helping the cook.

Last year Roy Silen, working at the Pacific Northwest Experiment station in Portland, had an idea for a tree planter. He couldn't get much further than an idea, however, until "Red" Stratton came along. "Red" took over at that point.

Produces First Model
Working in the Portland shops, he produced the first model. He has been refining and improving. This winter he hopes to build another model incorporating refinements he has in mind.

Made of aluminum, the tool is handled as a cane. It has a pistol grip below which is a magazine loaded with seed pellets. The pellets are fed by ratchet control down a hollow tube. As the "cane" is pushed against the ground, a plunger drives the seed into the soil. The tree seed is first encased in a clay shell. This shell is dissolved by moisture, but protects the seed against mice and other rodents until germination starts. One trouble with the tool as it now stands is that the pellets with which it is fed are not uniform in size and shape. "Red" plans to overcome this fault in two ways, first, by an improved feed mechanism, giving more latitude in handling pellets of varying size, and, second, by better pellet preparation. The tool also needs a larger ground bearing surface, as penetration now is too deep on light soil.

Present methods require seed planting by hand. Sowing pellets from airplane has had only fair success.

Will Increase Coverage
With the new tool, when perfected, it will be possible for the planter to walk over an area sowing seeds into the ground wherever desired without stopping. It will make it easy to select spots where seedlings will be shaded during the early stages of growth. The acreage one man can cover in a day's time will be greatly increased.

Forest service officials are very hopeful the invention will work. "Red" Stratton isn't hoping. He "knows" it will work. He'll keep improving it until it performs the way he wants it.

"And he is just the man who can do it," says Bob Aufdebeide, supervisor of the Umpqua National forest. "Red" is one of the handiest men we have on the forest. I don't know how we could get along without him."

Judge Puts Ban On Wife Swapping After Divorces

PORT ANGELES, Wash. — (AP) — There will be no wedding bells for two logging truck drivers who announced after their wives divorced them last week, that they planned to marry each other's "exes."

Superior Judge Max Church said "no" to the plans of Virgil T. Rondeau, 26, to marry Elizabeth, the ex-wife of his friend, William A. Fraker, 31. Fraker had planned to marry Elinora, Rondeau's former spouse.

One of the husbands called Judge Church later to appeal to him to change his ruling, but the judge refused to see them.

William Conniff, attorney for the wives, added a new note to the case. He said the women advised him that the decision to re-marry was not made until after the divorces had been granted; that it was not planned ahead of time as a spouse-swapping arrangement.

The judge issued a memorandum opinion setting aside divorces granted last week. The opinion termed the couples' plans



TREE PLANTER INVENTED—Wm. C. "Red" Stratton, forest service employee at Big Camas ranger station, is pictured above with a working model of an invention which, when improved, is expected to revolutionize tree planting. Seeds encased in clay to form small pellets are loaded into the magazine of the tool which, handled as a cane, forces a seed into the ground when given a slight push by the operator. Stratton, a veteran die maker, expects to perfect the tool during the coming winter months.

Deer, Elk Herds Plentiful, Due To Mild Winter

Game agents who have just completed a survey of deer and elk populations on eastern Oregon ranges report an excellent carry-over of breeding stock on all big game ranges.

Systematic checks of the major deer and elk wintering areas this spring revealed very light mortality. This high survival is attributed to a mild open winter.

Some game herds remain static while others show definite increases. An average of 12 deer per mile was noted in 2,200 miles sampled on 52 major mule deer winter ranges. This figure compares favorably with samplings made for the past six years.

Eastern Oregon elk populations were checked by airplane in March and April when the elk were concentrated on open ridges to feed on new grass growth. This aerial check of 726 miles showed an average of 3.4 elk per mile of established route as compared with 2.4 elk per mile in 1950.

Robert Mace, big game chief reporting in the June issue of the Game commission bulletin, says, "The high survival of deer augmented by this year's fawn crop will result in deer surpluses on many eastern Oregon ranges next winter. All surpluses should be harvested this fall when the animals are in prime condition, because experience indicates that nature will remove excess populations through mantrapping if sportsmen fail to do so."

Game Birds Thriving
Both waterfowl and upland birds will have a greater food supply this winter due to the extensive spring planting recently completed by the habitat improvement division of the Oregon Game commission.

Although not as spectacular as the work of game farms and trout hatcheries, the establishment of winter foods for game animals, fur bearers, waterfowl and upland birds is of the greatest importance. For several years the habitat improvement division has been carefully testing various plants to supply more abundant game foods. Before any plantings are made a check is made with the county agents so that no undesirable species will be introduced.

For the 1951 irrigation season in Oregon, Game commission fishway and screen crews will have 500 rotary fish screens in action to prevent trout and salmon from



RODEO PARADE AWARDS are being presented by Robert Bel-lows, Junior chamber of commerce parade award chairman, to Mrs. Craig Dishman, general chairman of Epsilon Sigma Alpha Float committee. Representing Beta Gamma, Beta Iota and Alpha Chi chapters, Mrs. Dishman accepted the non-commercial division first prize award of \$75 and the grand sweepstakes award check for \$100. The presentation marked the third consecutive year that Epsilon Sigma Alpha has captured the grand prize. (Picture by Fredrickson Photo Lab)

ending up as fertilizer in fields and pastures. The Rogue basin, at a cost of a quarter million, is the most completely screened area in the state. There are years of work ahead of screening crews before the task is completed.

The National Geographic Society says the chariot was the first notable refinement of the cart.

Convention Talk Given To Kiwanis

A report of his trip to the Kiwanis International convention, held at St. Louis, Mo., recently, was given by N. D. Johnson at the weekly Kiwanis meeting Tuesday noon in the Hotel Umpqua. Johnson said he, his wife and son joined other Kiwanians who occupied three cars from the Pacific Northwest, and at Denver an entire train of Kiwanians from the west was made up. They passed through floods in Kansas and found the temperature at 86 degrees extremely hot in St. Louis.

He discussed various phases of the convention, which was attended by 3600 delegates and an approximate 12,000 total Kiwanians. Theme of the convention was "Freedom Is Not Free." W. T. Lemon, assistant cashier of the head office of the U. S. National bank, who is accompanying the Oregon Historical caravan, spoke on the caravan. He told how the plan was conceived and of

the work that went into its planning. He also discussed the various exhibits.

He especially urged that Oregonians take more pride in their state and that they display the state flag.

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Philp And Elizabeth May Visit United States

LONDON — (AP) — Princess Elizabeth and Prince Philip will visit the United States — if they are invited — after their tour of Canada in October, responsible sources said.

Osc Gridder, Two Pals Draw Fines For Bad Conduct

De LAKE, Ore. — (AP) — Charged with conducting himself in a "Violent, riotous and disorderly manner," Sam Baker, Oregon State college football player, was fined \$25 here Tuesday.

City Judge Arnold Earnshaw Suspended a 30-day Sentence.

Baker's companions, Lloyd L. Fry, Coquille, and Dewey D. Mad-

is on disorderly conduct charges.

William E. Van Dyke, appliance store proprietor, signed the complaint against Baker.

Glenn C. Ashwill said a noise about 3 a.m. awakened him at his home near the store. He said he saw a man kicking the front door of Van Dyke's store. Ashwill said he fired three warning shots after he found a man identified as Baker sitting in his bar.

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