

Ask Andy

Why Aren't We Up to Here in Bugs?

Andy sends a complete, 20-volume set of the World Book Encyclopedia to June Von Sick, age 12, Louisville, Kentucky, for her question:

WHAT KEEPS INSECTS FROM OVERRUNNING THE WORLD?

Here and there a lucky housefly finds a warm crevice and survives the winter. Sometime in April, she lays about 500 eggs. In a short time, her children are ready to produce children of their own. Half of them, being females, can lay 500 eggs apiece. And the first fly, if her children lived, would have 125,000 grandchildren. By summer's end she would have bil-

lions of descendants—if all the flies survived. During the summer, insects multiply every few weeks and some produce even larger families than the housefly. Imagine the nightmare if all the crickets, beetles, moths and mosquitoes survived. There would be no room in the world for us. Of course, this nightmare cannot happen because Mother Nature keeps her insect population in balance.

Tons of flies are eaten by frogs, and remember, each fly eaten cannot become the ancestor of billions of other flies. Hosts of mosquitoes are eaten by bats and countless tons of insects are devoured by hungry birds. An anteat-

guls thousands of ants or termites at a single meal. The busy mole devours insect grubs in the ground.

Some insects prey on their relatives. The robber fly devours lady beetles. In the water, the larvae of the diving beetle feeds on the larvae of the mayfly. The praying mantis is always waiting to catch a careless cricket for dinner.

All summer long, the balance of nature works to keep down the exploding insect population. A few, just enough, insects from each generation survive and hand on life to a new generation. Billions become food for the countless other animals which enrich our planet. Billions of insects every year perish and

decay, adding to the soil the chemicals on which the plant world feeds. This living and dying in vast hordes seems a cruel aspect of the balance of nature. But it is a fact. Without such harsh measures, the insects would overrun the world in a single season.

Andy sends a Hammond's Nature Atlas of America to Paula Wood, age 12, Tulsa, Okla., for her question:

WHY DOES A BIRD HAVE A GIZZARD?

Abusy bird is a snack eater, for he rarely can take time for a full meal. What's more, he needs a constant supply of energy from his food, for he always is on the go. A digestive system like ours would not meet his needs. Each snack goes to the gizzard where it is quickly mashed to pulp and put to work. The gizzard is a little fist of hard muscle which does some of the work done by our stomachs.

When mashing up tough food, the little gizzard fist needs help. It uses grit and sharp stones to cut up the crumbs and crusts. When a chicken swallows a small ob-

ject, it goes into the gizzard along with the food. As the muscular fist squeezes and pummels, the stone will help to mash the food into pulp which can be digested.

On Disc and Tape

Program Music Steps Out

By MARY CAMPBELL
Of the Associated Press

Program music, often considered an unimportant stepchild among classical compositions, steps out like Cinderella at the ball in the new record releases.

First among these story-telling scores comes music for the ballet.

The glittering, enticing "The Marvelous Mandarin" suite by Bartok is coupled with "The Age of Gold" suite by Shostakovich (Capitol).

Both composers themselves condensed the suites from their longer ballets. And both suites, though dissimilar in mood, draw the listener into the music and compel him to follow developing situations.

This definitely is not in the "we'll put a record on while we talk" category.

Robert Irving conducts the Philharmonia Orchestra.

Over the years, Stravinsky has drawn three suites from his "Fire Bird," and the second of these, done in 1919 from his famous ballet of 1909-10, has again been recorded.

Earthquake Station

TAIPEI, Formosa (U)—An earthquake recording station is being set up at Anpu, 20 miles northwest of this Chinese Nationalist capital. It will be one of 125 stations in a world-wide network planned by the United States and other countries.

consider it "a shocking misuse of the word."

George Szell, who conducted the first performances of "Symphony No. 2" in Holland and America, conducts the Cleveland Orchestra in the work's first recording (Epic).

Mendelssohn's "Incidental Music to 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'" has been recorded in all its glory by the Philharmonia Orchestra, Otto Klemperer conducting (Angel).

Hear it as ballet music—the New York City Ballet danced it this season, with other Mendelssohn music added—or as accompaniment to Shakespeare's play, this is program music to delight.

The Philharmonia Chorus, Heather Harper, soprano soloist, and Janet Baker, contralto, sing in two of the 10 episodes.

Prokofiev wrote the emotional martial score for a 1938 Russian movie about Alexander Nevsky, national hero of the

13th Century. Then he immediately wrote a cantata from the film score.

This work, "Alexander Nevsky, Op. 78," takes the listener with Alexander to the Battle on Ice and the victory on the banks of the River Neva. It has been put on record in stirring fashion by the New York Philharmonic under Thomas Schippers; the Westminster Choir, directed by Warren Martin; and Contralto Lili Chookasian (Columbia).

Of course, not all the good new releases are program music. There is symphony:

Tchaikovsky's "Symphony No. 4," Antal Dorati conducting the London Symphony Orchestra (Mercury).

And chamber music: Ravel's "Trio in A Minor" and Mozart's "Trio in E Major" (Angel). Talents displayed are those of Yehudi Menuhin, violin, Gaspar Cassado, cello, and Louis Kentner, piano.

To Your Good Health

Don't Pen Up Baby in Play Pen All Day

By DR. JOSEPH G. MOLNER

Dear Doctor Molner: What do you think of keeping a 20-month-old, perfectly normal baby in a play pen all day? He is wild when he gets out. — MRS. B. C.

I don't approve. The baby may be normal, but what about the parents? Are they keeping the little feller cooped up that way purely for their own convenience?

Mind you, I have nothing against a play pen. It is a useful invention properly used. For the very little fellows, it's a means of giving them a safe place to begin creeping, learning to haul themselves up on their feet, and so on.

A period in the play pen gives mother a chance to get some of her housework done without wondering whether baby is getting into something that may hurt him.

It also protects the window curtains and such. (And I've known of people who put their Christmas tree in a play pen, to keep the very little ones from tipping it over, picking the ornaments off, off getting their little hands on the lights.)

But for several reasons, too much confinement in a play pen is harmful.

A child of 20 months, on the average, should walk alone, sit in a small chair by himself, be toilet trained, show interest in toys. He needs to practice his walking and his balance, learn to fall on his little bottom and get up again, and use up some of the energy in that growing body.

If a child, kept all day in a pen, becomes "wild" when let out in the evening—small wonder! I'd begin to worry if he DIDN'T. He's making his protest against not being allowed to crawl, walk, fall and get up again.

Let him work off his steam during the day, so he'll be tired enough to be sound asleep at 7 or 8 p.m. (Even after having an afternoon nap, or mid-day nap.)

Finally, what about the frustrated resentment that builds up from being penned too long? We wonder where excess aggressiveness comes from in some children. It can come from too tight a rein, or too much confinement.

Give a little man of 20 months his chance to start growing up!

