

# Air Pollution From Cities May Have Effect On Plants People Eat, Scientists Believe

By DELOS SMITH  
United Press Science Writer  
New York — (UP) — Because plants breathe, like people, it should surprise no one that science is keenly interested in what polluted atmospheres do to growing plants, especially plants which people eat.

A team of scientists has demonstrated that one thing atmospheric pollution can do is to give plants a content of hydrogen fluoride they wouldn't have otherwise.

Although a fluoride in a large enough amount is very poisonous, no conclusion-jumping is permissible at this stage of knowledge. There is reason to suspect atmospheric pollution has a part in causing some cancers in the lungs of people, but that isn't proven either.

Polluted atmospheres are created by cities. These atmospheres drift outward for surprising distances. Some of the nation's most productive food-growing areas — New Jersey, Long Island, and southern California, for instance — are within reach of drifting city atmospheres.

Fluorine, a gaseous element and extremely poisonous, is to be found among industrial and other fumes rising into city atmospheres. It combines easily with other elements. In the atmosphere it combines with hydrogen, making hydrogen fluoride.

**Plant Sicknesses**  
What interested the plant scientists of the University of Washington was whether plants took up hydrogen fluoride and in what amounts and at what rates. Plant sicknesses have been appearing in a number of agricultural areas which were attributed to hydrogen fluoride "breathed" in by the plants.

41-page condensation from the \$3.50 book: "The Bridge at Andau" by James Michener  
You won't know the heroism behind the barricades of Budapest nor the horror of Russian Communism until you read this true and tragic story. March Reader's Digest brings you this vivid, on-the-spot report by famed author James Michener. It is one of the most devastating indictments of Communist rule ever written. Get March Reader's Digest at your newsstand today: 35 articles of lasting interest, including the best from leading magazines, newspapers and books, condensed to save your time.

The scientists grew 40 kinds of plants in fumigation chambers where the chemical nature of the atmosphere could be precisely controlled. They found that only one and one-half parts of hydrogen fluoride per billion parts of atmosphere, were enough to produce visible leaf injury in 22 of the 40 in a matter of weeks.

The plants were exposed at this rate for eight hours daily. They accumulated more hydrogen fluoride than plants which were exposed either to an atmosphere containing five parts

of fluoride per billion parts for eight hours every third day, or to an atmosphere containing 10 parts per billion for four hours every third day. This suggested, the scientists said, that plants have a natural ability to recover from periodic exposures, even at rather high rates.

Which is well because city atmospheres vary in their degree of pollution from day to day, even from hour to hour. And, of course, the diffusion of city atmosphere out over agricultural districts is much more variable than that.

The scientists were D. F. Adams, J. W. Hendrix, and H. G. Applegate. They reported to a technical journal of the American Chemical Society. A few more words about the fluorides — we now have them in tooth pastes and in the drinking water of many municipalities. In very tiny amounts they harden teeth and bones. Before they poison, the amounts have to be considerable. So a very little bit of hydrogen fluoride in a carrot could help, rather than harm the rabbit or person who ate it.

# Reports Indicate That Russian Bomber Strength Over Estimated

By CHARLES W. CORDDRY  
United Press Correspondent  
Washington — (UP) — The government has reports from inside Russia which indicate the United States greatly overestimated the Soviet Union's heavy jet bomber air strength last year, it was learned Saturday.

Discovery of the error apparently influenced President Eisenhower's decision to cut back Air Force funds for B-52 bomber orders in the fiscal year starting July 1.

The Defense Department released the erroneous information last year during congressional furor over the comparative might of Russian and American air power.

**New Estimates**  
The new estimates also are a factor in current Pentagon studies which may result in cutting the planned B-52 production rate from 20 to 17 a month. The present rate is 10 or 11.

Ten months ago intelligence estimates indicated Russia had more than 100 Bison Intercontinental jet bombers compared with 78 B-52's the American Air Force then had.

The estimates represent the vast combined evaluations of all government intelligence services. It now appears, according to authoritative sources, that Russia probably had no more than 50 Bisons last May and probably will not surpass the United States in numbers in the "foreseeable future."

**Organized Wings**  
The U. S. Air Force has roughly 150 B-52's of which about 90 have been assigned to two organized combat wings. It will, under present plans, have 11 wings of 45 B-52's each and enough extras to make a total of more than 600 planes sometime in 1959.

How American Intelligence came to over-estimate Russian production rates was not made clear.

After the Russians flew Bison formations over Moscow in May, 1955, the United States revised upward its estimates of Russian aircraft production.

General Nathan F. Twining, Air Force Chief of Staff, told the House Appropriations committee a year ago that "we believe the Communists can build strength faster than we originally predicted."

He said at that time that the Soviet Air Force had "more Bisons than we have B-52's right now and they can maintain this advantage for some time if they keep on the production curve we are now predicting."

The United States now has about 2,200 B-52, B-36 and B-47 bombers, predominantly B-47 medium-range types. Russia has an estimated 1,100 Bison and Bear heavies and Badger mediums, likewise predominantly medium jet types.

It is now estimated the American air fleet will remain at an overall 2,200 — allowing for retirement of older planes like the B-36—into mid-1959, while the Russian fleet will increase to about 2,100 of all types.

During the next two years Russia also will have well over 1,000 slow moving piston engine bombers, copies of the World War II American B-29.



## Woodway Growing Home . . .

One night 20 years ago I awoke in the solemn watches before dawn with an idea that was to take shape as "The West Coast Woodway Growing Home" and which was to be shown, in the form of a mechanized model, all over the land. The basic idea was as old as Adam and Eve and their need to build for two at first, and then to "add on," when Cain and Abel were born.

The original touch was in the thought of "growing" a home from a start of minimum home size and cost — a seedling home.

"Wood is alive, adaptable, flexible, workable," I mused, in the dawn's early light. "Plant the 'growing home' properly at the start, and if it's wood, then the way is clear and sure for future growth, unit by unit."

The idea was taken to Chester Hogue, the founding father of timber engineering in the Pacific Northwest. He called in an architect to draft the idea into

visible shape. A design and specifications were worked up to provide a young couple, as yet childless, with an individual dwelling unit from modern living at a cost of \$3,000.00 (1937 dollars). Programs for two additional future units were provided.

"Gee Whiz . . ."  
What happened thereafter would fill a book. First, the pictures and the story were circulated among all the retail lumber dealers in the USA by the West Coast Lumbermen's association. Northwest newspapers played up the Woodway Growing Home. It was talked about on radio programs. Engineer Hogue had a mechanical model built for exhibition at lumber conventions and at the San Francisco World Fair. A motor and a geared mechanism raised Unit 1 above a platform. Then, up rose Unit 2, and Unit 3. The home "grew" in plain sight. It would disappear and then grow again.

The Woodway Growing Home got itself built in many places, and in not a few it grew. One place was in the neighborhood where the missus and I have lived since 1940.

A sample of Unit 1 could be seen from our porch. It could be heard, too, for a retired wrestler who bought wine by the barrel resided there. He howled in his sleep. The old wrestler was succeeded by a fine war veteran and his wife and one child. They proceeded to start the house growing — but on a plan of their own.

And it is still growing strong. That's the trouble I've seen in other examples. Like Paul Bunyan's towering cornstalk, once the Woodway Growing Home was started growing there seemed to be no way to stop it. Right now, one end and one side have a SIXTH addition in new frame, roof and floors extending out from the old walls, to provide a new kitchen and two new bedrooms for two more children. An overhang on the side is to give the family a modern "lanai" for outdoor living.

After 20 years. Gee whiz. Call An Architect . . .

In my neighborhood case, as in most others, the original plan was mainly used as a pattern for individual planning. That is, an architect was called on for counsel. He was shown a design for the first unit model that included minimum size bath, kitchen and utility sub-units, with yet another for double-barreled bunks, dressing room and clothes closet. The units to be grown for the future were, first, two bedrooms with bathroom, and second, a garage.

The first unit really could be built for \$3,000.00 (to repeat, in 1937 dollars), with standard, modern equipment. One wealthy couple had an architect adapt the idea for a summer cottage. But, in the main, the appeal was to youth of marriageable age and small income, looking forward to a growing home for a growing family.

When an architect was called in, the Woodway Growing Home idea could really be made to work. And how it WOULD grow! All from a dream at dawn! Gee whiz!

**A LOST ISLAND**  
Nantucket, Mass. — (UP) — From 1660 to 1692, when it was ceded to Massachusetts, Nantucket Island belonged to the Province of New York.



GOING BACK—As members of the mixed Yugoslav-Hungarian Refugee Commission look on, this group of Hungarian refugees waits to cross the border back into Hungary at Baranjsko Petrovo Selo, Yugoslavia. Some 459 Hungarians were repatriated from Yugoslavia.

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