

Small Worlds Around Us
By Lynn M. Watkins

The Geological Story Behind Cerimon Leaves
You would have been very unobservant not to have seen in hotel lobbies and in plantings of tropical plants the sturdy vine with the huge, shiny green leaves, leaves that are deeply cut and perforated with many irregular openings.

The sturdy vine had its origin in Mexico and Central America a very long time ago and is named *monstera deliciosa* because a delicate flavored fruit grows on the vine. Called also a cerimon, it is a member of the Arum family.

It is unusual because of its large leaves and the deep cuts and perforations in the leaves. In its native land in a tropical jungle, the leaves often are four feet long and three feet wide.

Perforated Leaves
The openings in the leaves and their deeply cut edges serve a very definite use. Here we find a specialized type of plant adaptation to its environment.

We must project our thoughts back across millions of years of geological time; back to the very beginning of plant growth. It was dark in the jungle. Those plants that grew close to the ground were hungry for sunlight. They struggled upward. But the forest giants grew ever higher and denser. The plants on the jungle floor couldn't make it. So, they reigned themselves to the lower, more-shady level. Over a period of undetermined time, they increased the individual size of their leaves, thereby presenting more leaf surface to what sunlight came through.

The development of the leaves over a long period of time took on gigantic proportions. Along the vertical stem of the vine one great leaf overlapped the one below it, but all arranged themselves to catch every trace of sunlight. The vine struggled upward, leaning on a tree for support. It sent out tiny, clasping fingers that held it in place.

No Realization
The plant, having no sense, never realized what it was doing in developing its huge leaves. As one giant leaf put out from the parent stem, one above the other, a problem of another sort presented itself. In its attempt to increase its leaf area, it overdid it, and the leaves, overlapping, acted like the shingles of a roof funneling the water away from the root system.

Something had to happen, and once again, the plant began another phase of its development. This time holes and deep, leaf-edge cuts slowly appeared. Now the rains came again and again over years and years, and the water ran through the openings in the leaf. Adaptation.

This, then, seems the obvious explanation for the perforations; perhaps it all happened like that; maybe it didn't, but the holes are there in all the leaves of the cerimon; plant evolution over millions of years of plant growth from the dark rain-jungles to the tropical display in a modern hotel lobby.

(Released by The Register and Tribune Syndicate, 1960)

Governors Call for Medical Program

Glacier Park, Mont. —UP— The nation's governors, in a surprise but narrow vote, called on Congress Wednesday to enact a medical insurance program for the aged based on the Social Security payment system.

The medical aid resolution, amended at the last minute, was adopted by a roll call vote of 30-13—barely the required two-thirds majority.

The National Governor's conference also acted on almost a score of other resolutions including one calling for continuation of the interstate highway construction program with financing which will not mean an increase in the three-cent federal gasoline tax.

Man's Best Friend Navigates Automobile

Newark, N.J. — A Newark man was hit by his own car in his own driveway.

Victor Knaph was treated for a fractured leg. He stopped the car next to his house and got out too close to the garage door.

In slamming the door sharply, Knaph startled his dog, Billy, who was curled up in the front seat.

The dog jumped and knocked the gearshift into "Drive."

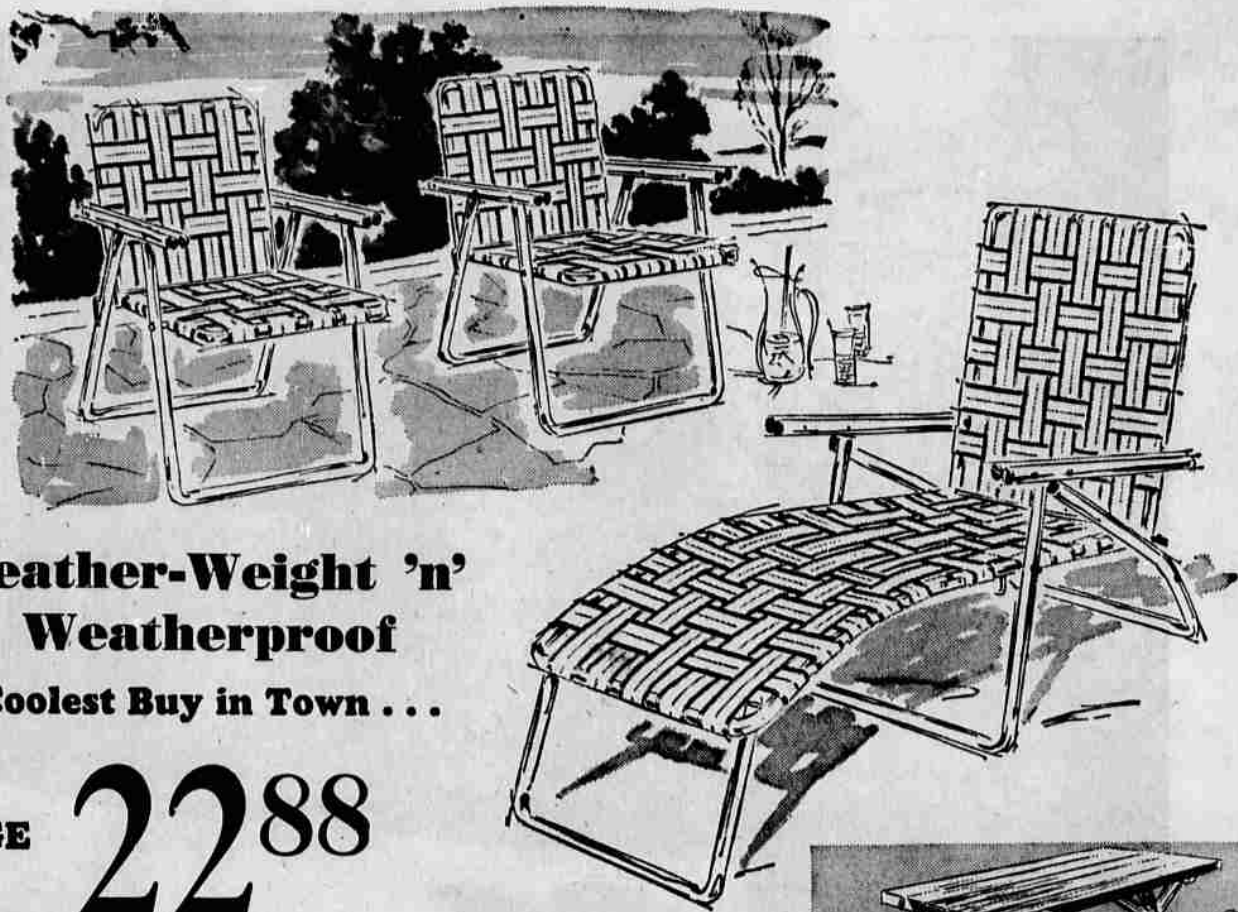


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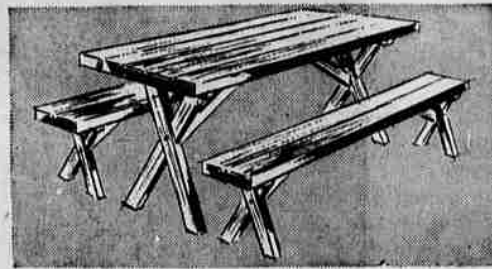
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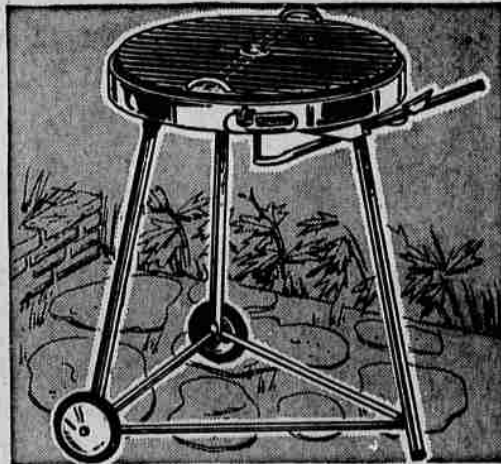
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Backyard Bargains



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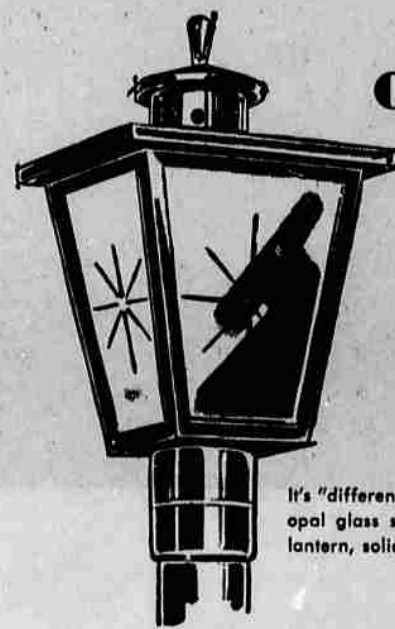
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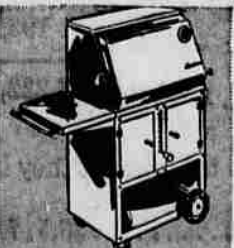
Outdoor Post-Top Lantern 8⁹⁹

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