

Health Officer Warns of 'Kissing Bug' Dangers

By K. H. SUTHERLAND
County Health Officer

Every summer at about this time, physicians and health departments begin to receive calls from people who are apprehensive about the appearance of the conenose bugs usually called "kissing bugs" but also sometimes referred to as "assassin bugs," "wheel bugs," "China bedbugs," or "crossbugs."

The conenoses are a genus of blood-sucking bugs, technically known as Triatoma, which have been wrongfully

accused of being the spreaders of some strange and exotic tropical disease here, but correctly labeled as the culprit in some cases of severe reaction in persons sensitive to their bite.

Conflicting charges concerning the peril that this bug presents to man arises from the fact that in South America certain species of Triatoma are transmitters of a serious protozoan disease in man known as Chagas disease.

ALTHOUGH the bug, as

well as its protozoan parasite, has been present in California for many years, no case of Chagas diseases has ever been diagnosed, according to official health department reports.

Despite this, however, there is cause to avoid this creature and to exterminate it whenever it is found near human habitation.

Some persons are extremely sensitive to injections of saliva received from this bug during its biting or feeding process. Symptoms of such

sensitivity, following a Triatoma bite, may include itching, edema, urticaria (patching of the skin), nausea, diarrhea, chills, dizziness, excessive perspiration and a general feeling of discomfort or malaise. The duration and severity of these symptoms vary with the hypersensitivity of the individual.

THE LOCAL "kissing bug," Triatoma protracta, is about one-half inch in length, of uniform black color and has a characteristic cone-shaped

head and three-jointed proboscis or beak. The proboscis is inserted into the tissue of the host with the aid of a salivary secretion.

If the bug is disturbed immediately prior to inserting its beak into the flesh, it may inflict a very painful bite. Its nickname, "kissing bug," is derived from the bug's preference for feeding on the face of its victims, especially the tender parts of the mouth.

In California, most Triatoma bites occur from June

to October. Conenose bugs live temporarily with the wood rat as ectoparasites, a sort of room-and-board relationship. Temperatures in the high 70s and darkness are necessary to stimulate the hunger drive in the Triatoma and to initiate its searching flight which brings it into close contact with the man.

Control of the "kissing bug" may be achieved through destruction of the nests of wood rats and ground squirrels



POLITICS EXPLAINED . . . Ten-year-old Janie Lower of Torrance received a lesson in American democratic processes from Redondo Beach Mayor William F. Czuleger (left) with the aid of materials distributed by American Savings during the first ten days of July. Norm Reeves (right), American Savings' Redondo Beach branch manager, explained how the association's poll was conducted.

Bonzai Your Plants For a New Interest

For enjoyment throughout the entire year, coniferous (cone-bearing) evergreens are without competition. Your local member of the California Association of Nurserymen has conifers to fit every landscape situation. He especially advises the Bonsai forms of dwarfing conifers.

A Bonsai form is one which has been asymmetricaly pruned and trimmed on top and bottom . . . in other words, your C.A.N. nurseryman has used his skill to trim the roots and branches to insure you of a perfectly formed miniature of any conifer.

Bonsai forms are perfect for container growing, smaller gardening areas, or rock gardens. Containing the root growth after trimming keeps the conifers in perfect miniature form. When contained

in a pot, the roots are trimmed and the plant is a true Bonsai; "Bonsai" in Japanese means "to plant in a pot."

THESE delicate dabs of green in such dramatic shapes add a real professional touch to any area. Let your artistic intuition go rampant! Design groups of the Bonsai forms amid rock or sea shell arrangements, around sunken garden pools or succulent arrangements, or near or on the patio for an eye-pleaser during those outdoor hours.

An important fact is that there is no limit to the varieties which can use the Bonsai method. Your C.A.N. nurseryman has a complete selection of the Bonsai forms and will be more than happy to advise you as to what types are best suited to your particular plans. You will be able to enjoy the majestic and care-free Bonsai style conifers anywhere.

Some of the conifers which so readily respond to the Bonsai method are the Junipers particularly Hollywood Juniper, Juniper Procumbens types. Each has its own special charm. The Hollywood is one of the most willing trees, to grow.

ONE OF THE most popular trees in the Bonsai form, as well as in its natural height of four feet, is the Mugho Pine. Deep, dark green foliage will add a dramatic touch to any area. Mugho Pine does unbelievably well in container growing. You would think that nature planned for you to keep this tree in the miniature form. Bonsai forms of the pines are suited for everyone whether in small gardens or on sentry duty on the front porch in tubs. Monterey Pine is the most common garden show-piece in Bonsai form, but many others are available and well suited for your individual plans.

THE California Association of Nurserymen points out that the Deodar Cedar, one of the longtime favorites in California, is a speedy grower which averages about three feet a year up to 80 feet in height (if NOT in the Bonsai form). However, its graceful, evenly spaced, light green, needled branches make it a visual delight in any season in the small Bonsai shape.

YEWs, another of the Bonsai choices, are noted for the dark, dark green of their needles. They are most adaptable and hardy, even in shady conditions. Bonsai style Yews are especially stunning in a glass-in patio area or family room. They add a "conversation" touch in the living room, too.

Try this new experience in tree forms. Your local C.A.N. nursery will have the full selection of Bonsai-style conifers and the special variety just suited for your individual landscaping, landscape area, and interior decor.

Botanically speaking, the above are: Hollywood Juniper (Juniperus chinensis 'Torulosa'), Juniper Procumbens (J. horizontalis), Mugho Pine (Pinus mugho), terey Pine (Pinus radiata), and Deodar Cedar (Sedrus deodara).



DOROTHY DIGS in the garden

The lack of iron in most soils is fast becoming a problem in many areas. This becomes noticeable when plants begin to show yellow in otherwise green foliage. Chlorosis then becomes a major problem. To correct this situation we suggest that you start using iron to tone up and correct this condition.

Small amounts can safely be placed around the base of plants and watered in. This should become a regular habit in the garden as bleaching is continuously taking place and minerals are being washed away from the roots of plants.

In the case of lawns, the iron can be spread over the entire area and watered in. Regular applications to lawns, two or three times a year, can also release much fertilizer that would otherwise be wasted and never become available to the grass roots.

If penetration is your problem then ask your nurseryman for a product containing a 16-4-2 formula of fertilizer combined with iron chelates and trace minerals. This combination should take care of the feeding and greening up of the most stubborn lawns. Proper watering in dry seasons can also be a problem. This information should come from your local nurseryman.

Hanson Named On Dean's List For Two Terms

Charles W. Hanson, a 1963 graduate of South High School, has been placed on the Dean's Honor List for two semesters at the University of California at Riverside.

Hanson, son of Mr. and Mrs. William J. Hanson of 327 Paseo de Gracia, is a seal bearer in the California Scholarship Federation. He is majoring in science and mathematics at the university.



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