

Bananas Don't Grow On Trees

Bananas don't grow on trees. This statement contradicts appearances, but it is a fact. The banana plant is not a tree despite its size (from 15 to 30 feet) because there is no wood in it. The trunk or main stem is composed of tightly wrapped overlapping layers. Each plant bears only a single bunch of bananas after a growing period of 10 to 15 months in the hot, moist tropical plantations. However, several plants sprout from the same mother root, so that a bunch of bananas is ready for harvesting every few months over a long period. Average annual banana production on an acre is from 125 to 250 bunches—varying according to soil, climate, and cultivation methods. Nine or 10 months after plant-

ing the plant blossoms. The stem that is to bear the bunch grows up, through the center of the stalk and out at its top. Then it bends over and down, the flower but at its end looking like a big ear of corn in its husk. When the husks drop off, the young bunch can be seen, with all its tiny bananas pointing downward. As they grow they gradually point outward and upward. The bunches as hung in fruit and vegetable stores are wrapped down. When matured, it is made up of clusters called "hands", with from 12 to 20 bananas or "fingers." Bunches usually have from 8 to 12 hands. The fruit—even when eaten in the tropics—is never allowed to ripen on the plant because it is likely to burst open and attract insects. The finest flavor is developed when it is cut green and ripened afterward. Bananas get luxury treatment on their voyage to markets in the United States. They travel in refrigerated ships, with fans blow-

POLAR BEAR SWIMMER STILL AT IT



WHILE OTHERS SCURRY INDOORS to beat the cold wave, Mrs. Charles M. Shriver goes about the business (top) of preparing for her regular swim. She uses a hatchet to crack the ice on her pool in Pikesville, Md. At bottom, the human polar bear takes another of her dips, a daily routine she has never failed to follow since 1935. (International Soundphoto)

Highway Deaths To Outpace War Next Few Weeks

(Continued from Page One) Traffic fatalities dropped about one-third compared with the previous year. While the most intensive traffic safety drive in history did not prevent the death of "Victim X" in 1951, it probably delayed it and also has provided the foundation for a bigger, stronger campaign for all states in 1952. It is this year in a nation which is more fully conscious of the menace of traffic accidents than ever before. The encouraging drop in traffic fatalities which followed the death of the millionth automobile victim must be continued throughout 1952. Automobile deaths climbed rapidly to the million mark in the 52 years, three months and one week after the first known traffic fatality occurred in New York City in September, 1899, just before the present century dawned. War deaths in the same period totaled about 474,000, the Association said.

In the first decade of the present century, 1900 through 1909, automobiles killed about 5,000 men, women and children, the Association has estimated. From 1900 to the end of 1906, deaths from the need horseless carriages averaged about 320 a year, it said. In 1907, according to the best records available, the motor vehicle death toll was 666. The following year 834 fatalities occurred and by 1909 there were 1,254 persons killed in a single year. In this first decade motor vehicle registrations had climbed from 8,000 in 1900 to 312,000 at the end of 1909. By 1913, when registrations for the first time exceeded the million mark and stood at 1,258,000 passenger cars and trucks, the 1907 motor vehicle fatality rate of 0.8 deaths per 100,000 population was more than five times greater. It reached 4.4 deaths per 100,000 Americans in 1913. For the first six months of last year it was 24.8 deaths per 100,000 persons in the nation. This compares with 30.8 in 1937, highest point of motor vehicle deaths computed on a population basis. In that year 39,643 traffic deaths occurred, the second highest toll in history and only several hundred below the peak of 39,960 fatalities in 1941, when the motor vehicle death rate was 30.0 per 100,000 population. In the second decade, 1910-19, there were 62,969 automobile fatalities. They climbed to 209,894 in the twenties, and in the following years, 1930-39, reached the peak of that decade to date, with 2,551 traffic deaths recorded. Travel restrictions of the war years 1940-49 brought the toll of the 1940-49 decade, but as the second half of the century started, fatalities in 1950 rose 2,500 over the previous year and in 1951 were estimated at 27,500 some 2,500 higher than in 1950. These big increases in deaths have given an ominous start to the second half of the century with respect to motor vehicle fatalities the Association said. This decade's fatalities so far total about 72,500 for the first two years, compared with 66,600 for the first two years of the "terrible thirties," it said.

Family of Five Get Dimes Help



The dimes are really marching for this family. Five of the nine children of the Henry F. Smith family were stricken with polio at the LaCort Oreilles Reservation in northern Wisconsin. Shown in a Duluth, Minn., hospital (l. to r.) are Donald, 7; Robert, 5; Doris, 10, and Selma, 14, all entertaining their baby brother, Billy, 19 months. The March of Dimes, currently underway, helped underwrite care.

Handy Hobby Woman Collects Hundreds Of Golf Balls

Wooster, Ohio.—Mrs. Robert Ebert collects lost golf balls as a hobby. Living just outside the Wooster College golf course, she finds it right handy. So far she has collected 1,449 lost balls, most of them found in the off-course rough. Mrs. Ebert said the biggest problem with the Southern beef breeder has been failure to adapt his animals to the climate. The future appears bright for the Southern producer who will study his problems and make an earnest effort to solve them. Dr. D. W. Colvard was in charge of arrangements for the conference, which was sponsored by the Animal Industry Department and the Division of College Extension.



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1952

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Big Increase In Married Couples

Married couples increased in number in the United States from 28,500,000 in 1940 to 36,000,000 in 1951, according to figures just made public by the Bureau of Census. The number of families also increased from 32,200,000 in 1940 to 39,800,000 in 1951. The bureau defined a family as "a group of two or more persons living together in good condition. When it arrives at wholesalers the fruit, still green, is hung for nearly a week in ripening rooms at temperatures of 62 to 66 degrees. Then ripe "hands" are cut off the bunches, carefully packed in crates or boxes, and sent to retail outlets. Central or Middle America is the principal "bananaland."

WHO'S COLD?



Who's worried about snowy winter weather? Not glamorous Virginia Mayo, who is enjoying sunny Southern California sunshine in an eye-catching black and white printed cotton sundress. The blonde Warner Bros. actress tops the halter bodice with a matching cotton hat. She is at times when a cover-up is in order.

led by blood, marriage or adoption and living together." The average size of the American family is estimated by the bureau as 3.5 persons. The agency reported that as of last April there were 110,774,000 persons fourteen years old and over. Of the total 23,930,900 or 21.7 percent, were single, and 75,478,000, or 68.2 percent, were married. The remainder were in the widowed and divorced categories. This percentage of single persons, the bureau reported, was the lowest on record. The figures show that last April there were 110,774,000 persons fourteen years of age and older, and 57,354,000 females. Of the males, 12,984,000, or 24.3 percent were single, and of the females, 10,946,000, or 19.1 percent, were single.

Scotch Humor

An American visiting England decided it would be fun to go for a walking tour in Scotland at Christmas. For once winter was living up to its name. The snow was coming down hard, and the American was struggling along what had once been a village lane. It was not long before he was completely lost. Fortunately, however, he came up with an old, Scot. "Say, friend," began the American, "I guess I'm lost." "If there a reward out for ye?" asked the Scot cautiously. "Nope," said the American shortly. "What does that matter?" "Weel," came the slow reply, "ye're still lost."

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