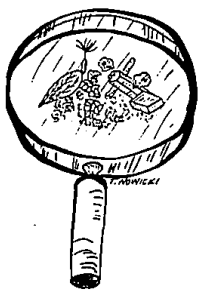


Magnify nature with a hand lens

WHEN deaf people are fitted with a machine that allows them to hear, it is as though a new world has been discovered. When glasses or surgery allow a person with poor eyesight to see clearly, that person has renewed vigor.

Imagine what it was like in 1599 when the Dutch lens maker Zacharias Janssens developed the first microscope.

Using this new tool, scientists were able to see a world of micro-



A hand lens can give you a new look at leaves, rocks and crystals.

organisms that were unknown to them. Since that time, these microorganisms have become very important in our lives.

THOUGH MOST people do not have access to a microscope, they often own magnifying glasses. With just an inexpensive hand lens, you too can investigate a whole new world right in your backyard.

In some cases, you may not even need a lens. After the next rain, take some time to examine a drop of water resting on a leaf. A drop of water bends the light and magnifies the image just like a hand lens.

If it is on a leaf, notice how it enlarges the faint veination seldom seen. These veins carry fluid to each cell just as our veins carry blood.

With your magnifying glass in hand, look at the soil in your yard. Soil consists of organic material like decayed leaves and inorganic material like pieces of rock. In combination they provide a substrate, which will support life. Dirt, on the other hand, is what you get on the walls, or these little fuzzies you find under your bed.

SOME DECAYED leaves may show just a remnant of their veination, which is the last part to decompose.

Small rock particles will show characteristic shapes and forms depending on their crystalline structure. You may even find a small in-



nature
Timothy Nowicki

sect while looking with your hand lens.

Another source to explore are the many small seeds that are now developed from the summer flowers.

Many have minute hooks that are designed to attach to fur or to clothing. When you examine them, you will be surprised to see how many, how very small and delicate they are.

Many subjects can be investigated — insects, a feather, or pollen of a flower. Just take the time and you can explore a new world by simply looking closely.

Timothy Nowicki is a naturalist at Oakland County's Independence Oaks Nature Center.

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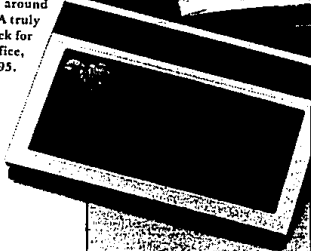
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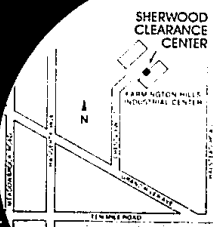
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