

## One Farmington Man's Hobby--Collecting Snails



(Courtesy the Detroit Free Press.)

Clarence Aldrich, Farmington Nurseryman, is pictured with some of his prize tree snails which are now being exhibited at the Belle Isle Conservatory. The tree snails range in color from plain white to jet black, and have been collected by Aldrich and other hunters in various sections of the globe. Some are plain, some speckled and others striped.

### Screech Owls Prowlers; Devour Insects, Rodents

One of the most diligent mouse hunters is the screech owl. The smallest owl with ear tufts, it usually isn't given the credit it deserves as an ally of farmers.

All of the owls long have been persecuted by man, and unjustly so, asserts a writer in the Chicago Tribune, because these birds kill countless numbers of meadow mice,

wood mice, and small insect pests which injure farm crops.

For example, the screech owl is known to consume grasshoppers, crickets and many other kinds of insects, as well as crabs and an occasional snake. The night hunting screech owl likes insects better than any other American owl with the exception of the burrowing owl.

The screech owl usually nests near farm buildings or in holes

in wood, an old orchard with hollow limbs in some of the trees providing an ideal nesting spot.

Just how good the little screech owls are as farm citizens is best told by scientists who have examined the stomach contents of the birds. For example, out of 324 stomachs examined 69 were found to contain insects, 142 contained small animals (such as field mice, house mice, etc.), 56 contained birds, and 15 contained fish. Any one who dislikes the common English sparrow should be a screech owl enthusiast, because the owls destroy hundreds of sparrows in the course of a year.

### Entomologists Foretell

#### Appearance of Cicadas

The cicada is one of the most interesting insects in the world. The mystery of this insect is the main point of its great interest, for it appears in countless numbers one year, then is not seen again in such numbers for many years—usually 13 or 17. When it is known that this insect spends the 13 or 17 years in slow development beneath the earth and emerges at almost the same spot where it entered the interest in this creature intensifies. One of the strangest things in nature, writes Frederic Z. in the Washington Star, is that in spite of such extremely slow growth in their subterranean habitat, all the millions of individuals attain maturity and burst from the ground at almost the same moment. Although the adult cicadas take practically no food, the trees in which they lay their eggs, especially pear, apple, and peach trees, are severely pruned and in some cases damaged.

The cicada has been under investigation for more than 200 years and the appearance of the swarms is foretold by entomologists as accurately as eclipses of the moon are foretold by astronomers. The year 1868 was the greatest locust year in history. Periodically since then the country has been afflicted with these pests, although every year is a locust year in some part of the country.

The insect plague is visited upon nearly every part of the world, and has been known from early Bible times. St. John the Baptist is spoken of as having lived on locusts and wild honey. From the earliest times the tribes that dwelt on or near the great deserts of Persia, Arabia and Africa have eaten dried locusts as food.

### Counties in United States

There are 3,072 counties in the United States. A generation ago when new counties were constantly being formed in the western states, there used to be unorganized counties with no county seats. This situation has disappeared, however, and every county in the United States now has at least one county seat. In some states a few counties have more than one county seat. This is a similar situation to the idea of having two capitals for a state or a nation. The county government is divided, and part is carried on in one town and part in another.

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