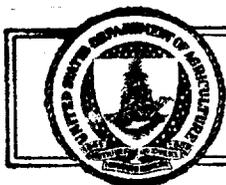


INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS



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RED SQUILL POWDER NOW POPULAR
AS SAFEST POISON FOR RATS

An onionlike plant that grows wild along the Mediterranean coast produces the safest rat poison yet known. It is called red squill, and it produces large bulbs that are made into the red-squill powder that has proved so effective in killing rats. So says a leaflet on "Red-Squill Powders in Rat Control" just issued by the United States Department of Agriculture.

Red squill had been known in Europe for many years, says the leaflet, but apparently its use had not become popular, owing to extreme variation in the toxicity of the products available. Studies by the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture, however, showed that drying red-squill bulbs under controlled temperature conditions, makes it possible to produce a powder that is uniformly poisonous. The powder, although effective in destroying rats, does not seriously endanger other animal life. Reports of the progress of the investigation and the excellent results obtained in the early stages stimulated interest and powdered red squill is now manufactured in quantity in the United States. So far as known, the first of these commercial red-squill powders was placed on the American market in 1926, and in five years these products have taken a leading place among rat poisons.

More than a year ago the department published a Technical Bulletin, Red Squill Powders as Raticides, giving in detail the results of the investigations. The new leaflet summarizes in popular form the technical bulletin and gives directions for preparing and exposing red-squill baits for rat control. It also discusses the effect of red squill on animals other than rats, showing that this poison is relatively harmless to human beings and domestic animals. As a test, one of the authors of the leaflet swallowed 15 grains of a toxic red-squill powder with no apparent harm, and later took 40 grains, which caused nausea and vomiting within 15 minutes, but no other effect. "Red-squill powder when mixed with food in the concentration recommended for rat control is not likely," it is stated, "to cause serious harm to farm animals in good health. It is possible that the irritant may cause death under certain conditions; so far as possible, therefore, red-squill baits for rats should be kept out of reach of other animals."

Copies of Leaflet 65-L, just published, may be obtained free on request to the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., and copies of the longer report, Technical Bulletin 134-T, may be purchased for 10 cents each from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

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