

saprophytes, but others are being tested for pathogenicity. Already success has been obtained in that a species of *Coniothyrium*, so isolated, has consistently produced the disease in inoculation tests.

In a preliminary inoculation test strawberry plants grown in sterilised soil were inoculated with an infusion obtained by macerating affected roots taken from plants showing root rot symptoms. Within a month definite lesions appeared on the roots of the inoculated plants. Isolations were made from these lesions and further inoculations were carried out with the *pure cultures* of the organisms obtained. One of these, a species of *Coniothyrium*, has produced typical root rot lesions.

These observations and findings indicate that there is in Britain a strawberry root rot that is similar—though not necessarily identical in cause and effect—to that found in Canada and in the United States of America. Whether the trouble in this country is one disease or a congeries of several, and what is the rôle, under Kent and Sussex conditions, of the organisms associated with the root lesions are problems that are now being investigated at East Malling, as a result of these preliminary observations and experiments.

It would be most interesting and valuable to exchange ideas and even material with others already investigating these problems under different climatic conditions. The writer's address will be Plant Pathological Laboratory, East Malling Research Station, Kent.

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¹ Walker, A. R., Strawberry Root Rot. *Proc. Canad. Phytopath. Soc.*, 16-19; 1929.

² Strong, H. C., and Strong, M. C., Investigations on the Black Root of Strawberries. *Phytopathology*, 21, 1041-60; 1931.

³ Zeller, S. M., A Strawberry Disease caused by *Rhizoctonia*. *Oregon Agric. Expt. Stn. Bull.*, 295, 1932.

Origin of Tektites

AUSTRALIAN observers have been most interested in the article by Dr. L. J. Spencer¹ on the origin of tektites, and more particularly on the origin of australites. In his reply to Mr. F. Chapman, Dr. Spencer² suggests that the term tektites is synonymous with "aerial fulgurites". That the australites are not aerial fulgurites is surely proved by their remarkably limited distribution. I am familiar with the slaggy siliceous material from the Henbury craters, but that bears no resemblance to the material nor the forms of the australites. It is nearly a century since Darwin first figured the australite and theorised as to its origin. Since then many theories have been put forward, but none has made so great an appeal for tentative acceptance as the meteoritic one. A positive test for nickel in australites would support this hypothesis.

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July 24.

¹ NATURE, 131, 117, Jan. 28, 1933.

² *Ibid.*, 131, 876, June 17, 1933.

THE term "aerial fulgurite" was suggested by, and has reference to, Mr. F. Chapman's theory of the origin of tektites. In addition to the slaggy siliceous material from the Henbury meteorite craters, small glassy bombs of silica-glass have more recently been found by Mr. R. Bedford. Some of these are figured in the *Mineralogical Magazine* (September, 1933, plate 18), and they show a certain resemblance in form, as well as in chemical composition, to australites.

On the same plate are figured minute spheres (0.01-0.05 mm. diam.) of nickel-iron isolated from the silica-glass of the meteorite craters at Wabar in Arabia, in some specimens of which they are present in vast numbers (two million per cubic centimetre). These evidently represent a rain or fine drizzle of condensed iron and nickel from the vaporisation of the meteorite.

Similar metallic spheres attracted by a magnet are also abundantly present in some specimens of Darwin glass from Tasmania, but they are less prominent in the Henbury silica-glass. In micro-sections of australites and of tektites from Indo-China a few black spots of similar dimensions and showing a metallic lustre by reflected light can usually be found if patiently searched for—but here they are rare.

The meteoritic theory of the origin of tektites is certainly one that appeals to the imagination, but in reality there is not a single fact that can be adduced in its favour—the evidence is entirely negative. From the data recently supplied by meteorite craters we have now at least some scraps of positive evidence. Some further evidence will perhaps be supplied by the air survey referred to in the *Times* of August 24, which is to be undertaken of the goldfields in the desert regions of Western Australia.

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Pigmies Making Fires

IN the review of Dr. P. Schebesta's book in NATURE of August 12, it is stated that "Although the pigmies use fires and are familiar with the use of the fire-drill among the surrounding peoples, they do not make fire themselves". This refers to the pigmies of the Ituri forest, but a couple of hundred miles to the south, the pigmies of the forested highlands west of Lake Kivu certainly do make fires. The Cockerell-Mackie-Ogilvie expedition obtained a moving picture of the whole operation, taken by Miss Alice Mackie. The sticks used, and the entire procedure, agree almost exactly with the methods of the Australian blacks, as shown on a film we obtained when in Australia. It is extremely interesting to see this identity of method among primitive peoples so far removed from one another. The pigmies of the Kivu district may be appreciably different in some respects from those of the Ituri (it has been claimed that the Kivu gorilla is separable from that of the country northward, but apparently on very slender grounds); a picture of their chief will be found in *Natural History*, 1932, p. 403.

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