

BUTTONS FROM SHELLS

It is always interesting to contemplate the great variety of shapes that life takes. The land presents thousands of them from bacteria in the soil to the burly black bear roaming the forests. But the variety living in the water is just as astounding and the forms they take just as wonder-creating. How could Nature contrive such a creature as a clam, and for what purpose! Hatched from eggs within the parent shell, expelled as miniature clams to attach themselves to the gills and fins of fish, riding about until large enough to make their own way in life, some of the clams finally become food for muskrats and raccoons and for people; and the hard protecting shell, buttons for ladies dresses.

Have a Trailhitter bring to school the shell of a dead *muschel*. How pretty and smooth the inside is! The lining of the inside surface is made of the same material as pearls. It is called *nacre*. Once in a while a very smooth round lump is found in the soft tissue of the mussel. Put that lump in vinegar and it will dissolve. The same is true for the shell. Make that lump a setting for a ring and it will win admiration. It is a creature-created thing of beauty.

Trailhitters should look up the meaning of the italicized words, also *cilia*. They should find the names of the common *mollusks*. An exhibit of a shell from which pearl buttons were cut, some pearl buttons, and other articles made from shells would be splendid for the CONSERVATION CORNER.

we hit the trail

We'll discuss how a clam lives, how food-getting differs in water from that on land, and how some of the mollusks are equipped to carry on the business of living. We'll end our trip at a factory where disks are cut from shells for buttons, examine into the further use of shells, then close our trip around a table where clam chowder will be served (in imagination). Some Trailhitters live along the Mississippi River where gathering clams and cutting disks from the shells was quite an enterprise. We'll read a letter from a boy telling how men drag for clams.



DO YOU KNOW THE ANSWERS?

1. What is the official state tree, flower, and bird of Wisconsin?
2. Is the Virginia Creeper a centipede, an insect, a bird, a plant, or an amphibian?
3. Do you know of any quadrupeds that are not animals?
4. What three pines are native to Wisconsin? How can you tell them apart?
5. Is the ant-lion related to *Felis leo*?
6. Where do you find this to be true: "The wound is healed before the operation is performed"?
7. What is the difference between an egg and a seed?
8. Where does the bird that flaps its wings alternately in flying go for the winter?
9. How do spiders migrate in the fall?
10. What causes the greatest loss to our forests?
11. Do you think that the best way to get rid of leaves is to burn them?
12. How do hawks and owls serve a great purpose in the scheme of Nature?
13. How did G. W. Carver show that a great scientist can be a great humanitarian?
14. Can you name ten uses for peanuts? Eating them at a ball game should not be included.
15. What are some of the reasons for believing that the dog descended from the wolf?
16. In what ways is a beaver a conservationist?
17. Name ten plants that have the name of animals.
18. A tail serves as a rudder, balancer, and glider for birds. What are four other uses for tails?
19. How can you tell a young white birch, not yet turned white, from a young wild cherry in winter?
20. Which one of our winter sleepers is a true hibernator?
21. In what ways has the increase in population given rise to worries about our water resource?
22. What is meant by camouflage in Nature? Illustrate in case of the fawn.
23. Where does the mussel get the minerals to make its shell?

This broadcast is a review and will require some thinking in preparation. See how your answers correspond with those that Ranger Mac gives.