

NATURE NOTES



A RINGWOOD INSPECTORATE PUBLICATION.....VOL.19 NO.5

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..editorial.. ..



Hello there,

For centuries, people all over the world have been scared by monsters. The Yeti, the Yowie, the Bunyip, the Kraken and the Loch Ness Monster are just a few. Do they really exist? Of course, no-one is sure. Whenever anybody ever sees one, they have either forgotten their camera or the film was spoiled. There's always some good reason why they can't prove once and for all that the monster exists. This month in Nature Notes we're paying tribute to the real monsters of this world. No-it's not a special issue about children!

Cheerio for now,
Debra Brydon

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WHAT'S INSIDE?

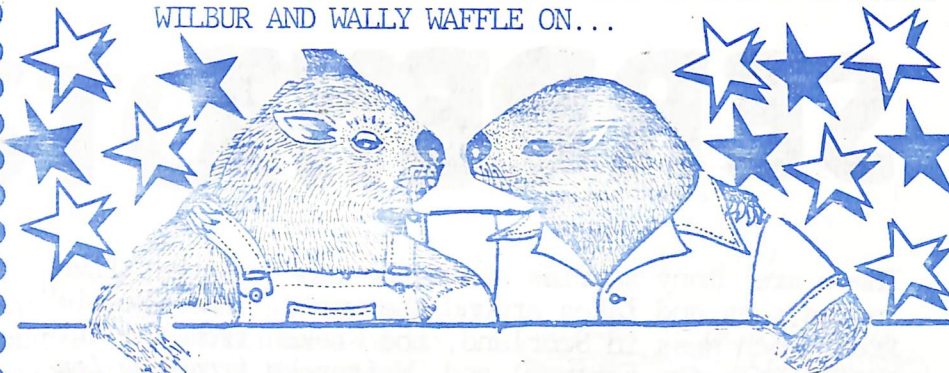
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ARTISTS THIS MONTH

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WILBUR AND WALLY WAFFLE ON...



Wally and Wilbur are woken in the middle of the night by a crashing sound. Wilbur races outside to check out the scene.....

WILBUR: It's a Yowie, it's a Yowie, Wally come quick!

WALLY : It's a what?

WILBUR: A big hairy Yowie just tried to break into the back shed Wal!

WALLY : What on earth is a Yowie Wilbur?

WILBUR: A Yowie is a hairy, ape like beast that is said to roam the eastern coastal areas of Australia. It has been reported to have been sighted at both Narranderra and at the back of Brisbane.

WALLY : A monster? Like a Yeti or a Big Foot or a Kraken? You've flipped Wilbur!

WILBUR: There have been several alleged sightings of the Yowie. It is said to have a terrible smell to it, and to be scared of people.

WALLY: Gosh Wilbur, next you'll be telling me there is a man in the moon!

WILBUR: Well isn't there Wal?.....

WALLY : No, Wilbur. Most of the stories we hear about monsters are just that.....STORIES! Let's go and have a look out the back for your "monster"

WILBUR: After you Wally.

Wally looks around out the back and.....

WALLY : No worries Wilbur, it's not a silly old Yowie after all, it's just a seventy foot high Bunyip.

WILBUR: B.B.B. But you said Wal,...about monsters and allabout s.s.s.stories...I don't feel very good Wal.....

WALLY : Tee HeeHee Wilbur, have a look... it's only a big possum you nong! Don't believe EVERYTHING people tell you!!!!!!!

NATURE NOTES...A RINGWOOD INSPECTORATE PUBLICATION

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SERPENT

There are many stories about the monsters that live in the seas and lakes around the world. Take "Nessie" from Loch Ness in Scotland, the Kraken from the Atlantic ocean (an octopus) and Waitoreke from New Zealand. The sightings and stories about these monsters really get people interested, but there are some really monstrous explanations to explain some of the sightings of serpents and monsters from around the coast of Australia.

Many serpent sightings have been proven to be the flipper of a whale extended from the water. A whale is a pretty big animal, so it's no wonder its flipper can grow to five metres in length, and scare the daylights out of an observer. The flipper is shaped suspiciously like the head of a "serpent".

I HEAR SHE HAS QUITE A COMPLEX POOR DEAR..... NO WONDER WITH THE NAMES SHE GETS CALLED.....!

Off the coast of Australia lives the giant Oarfish. This poor fellow has had its fair share of name calling too! The oarfish can grow up to eight metres long, and has a bright red mane. It is very thin, and because it is so unusual, it's often thought to be a monster when one is found washed up on a beach.

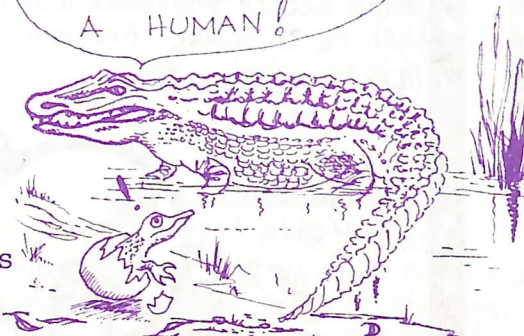
Text: M. Carmichael.
Art Work: C. Measures.

STORIES

The huge salt water crocodiles that live around the northern coast of Australia have often been mistaken for "monsters" when they are seen swimming in the ocean. It's very hard to judge the size of an object when there aren't any familiar things around, so exaggerations tend to occur.

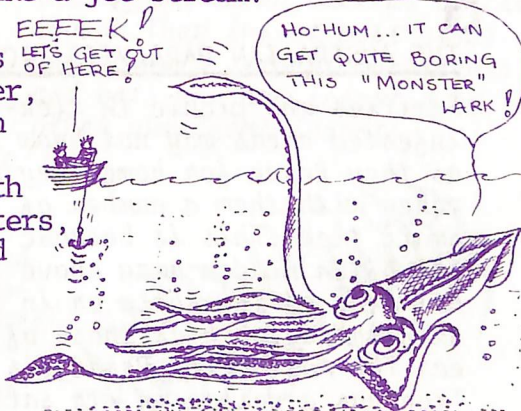
DO YOU GET THE FEELING WE'RE NOT ALONE?!

LISTEN SON... TAKE A TIP FROM ME..... NEVER SMILE AT A HUMAN!



The giant colonial sea squirt is a harmless, luminescent animal, which swims very slowly just below the sea's surface. It can grow to twenty metres in length, so you can see why people tend to think it's a "monster". Actually, it's so fragile that a specimen hasn't yet been obtained for a museum! The squirt swims by sucking in water and pushing it out like a jet stream.

Large sharks swimming alone or in groups, whales, dolphins jumping in and out of the water, giant squid and shoals of fish swimming closely together are all culprits being charged with disguising themselves as monsters. MOST of the "monsters" sighted today can be explained by a naturalist.



The rest are animals we just haven't got around to discovering yet!



micro monsters

BY D. BRYDON
Artist: W. Prohasky

THE AUSTRALIAN PARALYSIS TICK (cont.)

during each of the three stages of the cycle, the female must attach herself to a warm-blooded animal for a meal of warm blood. In some places, thousands of ticks may climb plants and wait for a host to pass by. When the tick touches the skin of its 'meal', it begins gorging itself on blood and at the same time burying itself in the skin of the victim. In 4 days, the tick will have increased in size by up to 400 times and looks something like a small blood blister. It then drops off its unfortunate host to digest the 5 day meal. Deaths due to tick poisoning are rare, however, although 20 people have died this century in New South Wales from this cause.

CENTIPEDES

In 1976, in Kew, Victoria, a young healthy man was bitten on the thumb by a medium-sized centipede. He ignored the bite but 10 minutes later he collapsed and appeared to have stopped breathing. By the time he reached the hospital, however, he had fully recovered. Treat centipedes with respect.

SCORPIONS

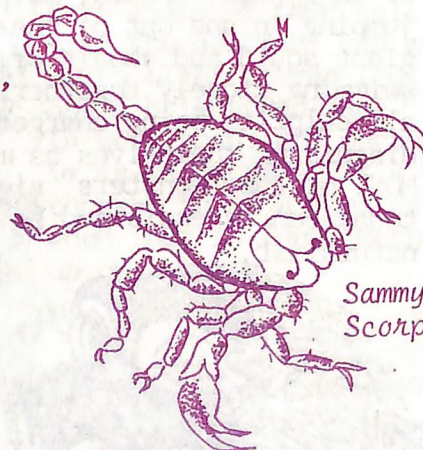
There are many different types of scorpions throughout Australia but the further north they get, the larger and more dangerous they become. Very small scorpions are often found in the undergrowth of suburban gardens. Australian scorpions are not nearly as dangerous as their Mexican cousins, however, who manage to kill at least 1000 people every year. Scorpions sting with their tails. They are not aggressive but will attack if touched accidentally. Only one Australian has been known to die from a scorpion bite.

Lennie Leech



LEECHES

These creatures are attracted by body warmth. They live in damp places and can exist for months without any kind of food. When they become aware of a meal nearby, they rapidly climb the victim's legs and attach themselves to the first area of bare flesh they find. In animals other than humans, they fasten themselves between the toes. Their bite is so gentle that it is rarely felt. Normally, the first sign of a leech's attachment is flowing blood from the tiny wound. This is caused by a chemical injected by the leech that stops the blood from clotting.



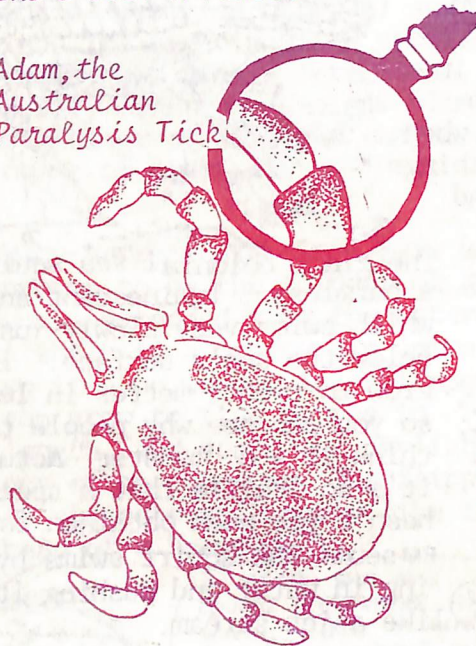
Sammy Scorpion

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Has anyone ever called you a little monster? Australia has many little monsters and not all of them are children!

HERE'S JUST A FEW...

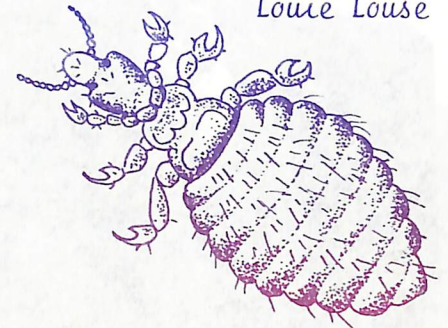
Adam, the Australian Paralysis Tick



THE AUSTRALIAN PARALYSIS TICK

Families who picnic in tick-infested areas may not know that, as they leave for home, they have taken with them a number of small ticks. This is because they are often hidden away above the hairline of the scalp or in a skin crease, such as those of the ear. The Australian Paralysis Tick has a poison in its saliva which can paralyse and sometimes kill both man and domestic animals. The life cycle of the tick is quite complicated and

Louie Louse



PEDICULUS HUMANUS...

is the correct name for that unwanted friend of many Victorian schoolchildren. Lice, as they are more commonly known, are wingless insects with hairy bodies and legs. As PARASITES, they can live only on another animal. Their bodies are specially flattened and adapted for clinging to the hair. Helping them to suck the blood on which they depend, lice have sharp piercing barbs for their mouths. Their annoying eggs are oval and are cemented to the base of the hair. Humans aren't the only unlucky victims of lice, though. They infest most birds and mammals, except monotremes and bats, who are infested by other unwelcome insects.



Cyril Centipede

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This is the world's tallest reported Sunflower. How high do they normally grow?



The world's largest flower is Rafflesia, named after the founder of Singapore. It can reach a diameter of 91cm. and a weight of 7 kilograms!

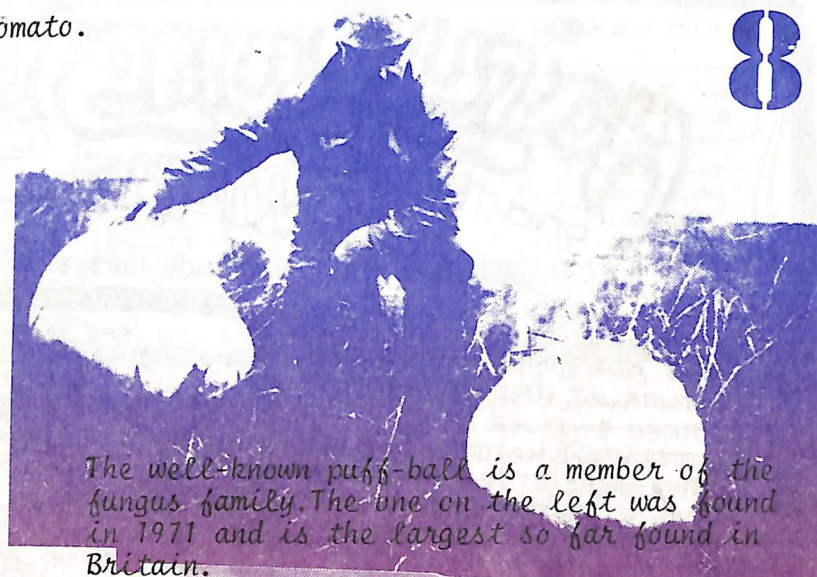
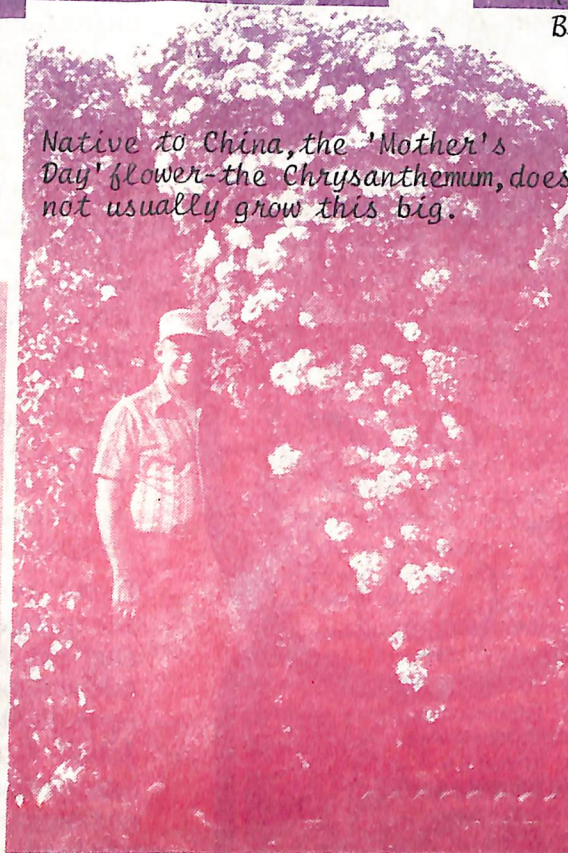
PREPOSTEROUS

Mr. Charles Roberts with his world's biggest tomato.



FOR THE MONSTROUS PHOTOS ON THIS PAGE THANKS MUST GO TO "The Guinness Book of Plant Facts and Feats" by William G. Duncalf

Native to China, the 'Mother's Day' flower - the Chrysanthemum, does not usually grow this big.



The well-known puff-ball is a member of the fungus family. The one on the left was found in 1971 and is the largest so far found in Britain.



In 1937, James Lewis grew a vegetable marrow which grew to a weight of 28.8kg. The one shown in the picture is small by comparison.

PLANT'S

HERE'S JUST A FEW 'MONSTERS' OF THE PLANT WORLD. CAN YOU THINK OF ANY OTHERS?

Hairy Bungler and the Lowland Sisters

BY D. BRYDON.....ARTIST: Cindy Humnam

TREKKING ACROSS THE COUNTRY SIDE, OUR FAMOUS AUSTRALIAN NATURALIST, HAIRY BUNGLER, IS JOINED BY THOSE OTHER FAMOUS AUSTRALIAN NATURALISTS, THE LOWLAND SISTERS, IN AN UN-ENDING QUEST TO SOLVE THE MANY MYSTERIES OF NATURE. THIS MONTH, THE TRIO ARE LISTENING TO THEIR C.B. RADIO. WHEN THEY HEAR A HIGH PITCHED VOICE TALKING IN A STRANGE LANGUAGE...

IT'S THE INSECT CHIEF-OF-POLICE, COMMISSIONER M. AGGOT....

CALLING ALL FLIES... RED ALERT! OUR PRIME MINISTER MR. B. LOWIE HAS BEEN FLY-NAPPED!

THIS SOUNDS LIKE A JOB FOR SOME-ONE WITH BRAINS, INITIATIVE, MUSCLES, WIT, DASH, DARING, GOOD LOOKS AND...

SOUNDS LIKE A JOB FOR US LUCY!

THEIR LAND ROVER DOES A RAPID U-TURN AND HEADS FOR THE CSIRO IN MELBOURNE.

THE TRIO DROP IN ON A PROFESSOR WHO SHARES THEIR CONCERN FOR THE MISSING FLY...

HERE, DRINK THIS

IT'S GOING TO BE CHAOS IN THE BUSH UNLESS SOMEONE RESCUES THE P.M. -AND I'LL BE OUT OF A JOB!

WHAT'S GOING ON??

THE TRIO WING TO A SPOT NEAR WHERE THE UNLUCKY PRIME MINISTER B. LOWIE DISAPPEARED...

NO SIGN OF FLY-NAPPERS HERE

THAT'S WHAT THEY THINK

BUT THE GIRLS TUNE IN TO SOME HORRID NOISES...

WHAT BADBAD MANNERS

BURP SLURP

EVEN WORSE, HAIRY IS HIT ON THE HEAD BY A MYSTERIOUS FLYING OBJECT.

IT'S A BOTTLE WITH A NOTE

BONK

LUCY RISKS HER LIFE TO SAVE THE P.M. DESPITE PLEAS FROM THE OTHERS

GRAB THIS

HELP! The plant you are standing next to is no ordinary plant. It's a dreaded PITCHER PLANT -one of the "animal eaters," and I'm about to be its next meal. The nectar I'm swimming in is FANTASTIC, but if someone doesn't rescue me soon, I'll drown. Lots of other animals are trapped like me... B. LOWIE P.M.

FINALLY, THE GRATEFUL P.M. IS SAVED FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH AND THE TRIO ARE OFFERED A JOB...

COULDN'T YOU STAY ON AS MY BODYGUARDS? I MEAN, THE WORLD IS FULL OF THUGS LIKE VENUS-FLY TRAPS, SUNDEW,...

...BUT THE EFFECTS OF THE MIRACLE SHRINKING DRUG WEAR OFF SUDDENLY..

CLUMSY WOMBATS

SQUASH

USE YOUR LIBRARY TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT CARNIVOROUS PLANTS.

WHAT a feat . . . This man claims to have kept the legend of the Bigfoot of Mount St. Helens, Washington state, alive and well since 1928. Looking rather glum after making his confession, Mr Rant Mullens, 86, shows one of several pairs of big feet he says

he has whittled in the past 54 years. Mr Mullens, a retired logger, says he spurred on the Bigfoot legend by carving the wooden feet to leave large footprints on the mountain. He gave details of the hoax in a copyright article published in a Vancouver newspaper.



Giant lizard eggs found

NEW YORK, Tues., AAP. — Scientists have found about 30 dinosaur eggs and bones from three adults and an infant dinosaur at a site nearby known as "egg mountain."

About 150 dinosaur eggs have been found so far on the small hill in Choteau, Montana.

Paleontologists John Horner and Bob Makela have been working at the site for the past four summers.

This year, they knocked the top off the hill and exposed the rock layer where the eggs were found. They hope to find more eggs in the hilltop.

Mr Horner said that one of the most exciting finds this summer was the bones of a "hatchling" duckbilled dinosaur which was 45 cm long and had teeth that weren't worn.

The teeth of larger baby dinosaurs have distinctive "wear patterns" that Mr Horner thinks may have been caused by eating berries.

Cash for native fish

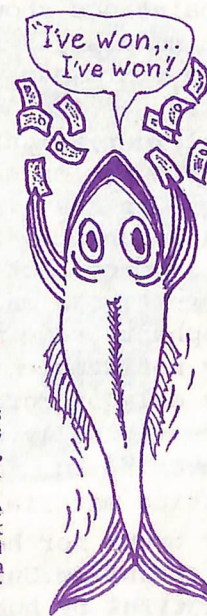
THE State Government has launched a long-term scheme to expand Victoria's native fish population.

The Conservation Minister, Mr Houghton, said yesterday an \$800,000 program for the next five to 10 years would be centred at the Government's Snob's Creek fish hatchery near Eildon.

He said the program would involve native freshwater fish including Murray cod, Macquarie perch, golden perch, trout cod and catfish.

Staff would be transferred from the Fisheries and Wildlife Division's European carp study, which would be phased out in the next year.

Mr Houghton said site works at Snob's Creek would begin soon and initial stocking with brood fish would occur later this year.



THIS small-scaled snake has given the Healesville Sanctuary a "deadly" claim to fame.

The sanctuary is one of the few places in Australia displaying the highly-poisonous snake.

Recent tests of the snake's venom show it has the highest toxicity of any land snake. Its venom is twice as potent as that of the eastern brown snake and is up to six times as deadly as the taipan.

Sanctuary director Graeme George said the small-scaled snake is less of a threat to humans than snakes such as the taipan, because the others are found in populated areas and are more aggressive.

The small-scaled snake is found mainly in the dry river plains of south-western Queensland. It thrives in plagues of the long-haired rat, which it eats.

Small — but deadly

Taipan anti-venom can be used to treat bites from small-scaled snakes.

Fully grown, the deadly snake is two metres long.

The snake was discovered in 1867. But Mr George said much still needs to be learned about it.

Research was continuing, he said.

Both the small-scaled snake and the taipan are on display at the sanctuary's reptile house.

LEFT: Thanks to "The Sun", 10-2-81 page 20

ABOVE: Thanks to "The Sun", 14-4-81 page 11



These poachers didn't get away with it.

PHOTO: Thanks to "Saving the Animals"
by Bernard Stonehouse, page 146

WATCH OUT, JUMBO!



Elephants are perhaps the most 'monstrous' mammals. African jumbos and their smaller Asian cousins are the last survivors of a large group of trunked animals that included the Woolly Mammoth. Cro-magnon man's cave paintings showed the mammoth being hunted. He, more than anything else, is responsible for its final extinction twenty thousand years ago. The two surviving types of elephant are the African and the Asian (or Indian) elephant. African elephants are larger, weighing up to $7\frac{1}{2}$ tonnes, and have large flapping ears, a sloping or sagging back. They also have two sensitive 'fingers' on the tip of their trunk. Asian elephants are smaller and weigh only up to 5 tonnes. Their ears are small, they have a domed back and only a single trunk 'finger'. In African elephants, both males and females have large tusks: in Asiatic elephants some males have small tusks. Many only have the barely noticeable tusks of the female Asian elephant. Tusks are really only overgrown incisor teeth. Up to three metres long, they are virtually solid for two thirds of their length and can weigh over 50 kg. each. They are made from ivory, a tough and long lasting material. Elephants use their tusks together with their trunk for holding, tearing, digging and sometimes for fighting. Unfortunately, ivory is thought to be very beautiful by humans, especially

because it can be carved into delicate shapes. In fact, greed for ivory led to the extinction of elephants in North Africa by the 14th century. Today, Asian elephants are the ones in most trouble. Until quite recently this century, they could be found anywhere in the forests that extended unbroken from western India to Indonesia. Although there are probably some 30 to 40 thousand still roaming wild, their numbers decrease as forests disappear. What does this have to do with the world's growing food problem? The number of African elephants has gone up and down in the last twenty years. Because many were protected in wild life reserves, their numbers increased. However, in 1972, the world economy 'wobbled', causing many people to demand ivory to protect their money against inflation. The price for a kilo of ivory rose from U.S.\$7-50 in the late 1960's to U.S.\$100 in 1975. The 1970's became a decade in which elephants were massacred throughout Africa. Although protected by law, poachers raided the wildlife reserves and got away with it. Of the 30,000 elephants living in Uganda in 1970, only 2000 remained in 1980. Can you imagine a world with elephants gone forever, What do you think can be done to help the elephants' urgent problem?

BY D. BRYDON

Ivory in its natural state.



PHOTO: Thanks to "Saving the Animals"
by Bernard Stonehouse, page 144

How to make new plants from cuttings:

