9.4.86

The blue devil

WATER HYACINTH, or the "Blue Devil", as it has been dubbed by irrigation and agricultural experts, now covers 3,000 kilometres of Egypt's total water surface of 47,000 kilometres and is found in the River Nile and the Mariout, Edko and El Manzala Lakes, canals and other waterways.

Water hyacinth multiplies at an extremely rapid rate and in February of this year, the Ministry of Irrigation began an intensive campaign to combat its growth through the use of chemicals and manual collection. Although the chemicals used to kill the plant evaporate within approximately two days, and, thereafter, no longer present a danger to either humans or animals, the Chairman of the Environmental Affairs Agency, Dr. Mohamed Eid, has indicated that the Ministry plans to curtail the use of chemicals to destroy the plant, in order to afford greater protection for the citizens and animals.

Water hyacinth causes many problems. For example, it hinders navigation on the waterways, decreases the efficiency of irrigation and drainage facilities, reduces the volume of fish wealth (due to the decreased oxygen content of the water) and greatly increases the rate of evaporation of water surfaces. Furthermore, as the plant impedes the flow of water, it provides favourable breeding conditions for hookworms, the larvae of which penetrate the skin of humans and cause bilharzia.

Despite the problems caused by the "Blue Devil", studies indicate that it has the ability to absorb chemical substances, such as lead and copper, the high levels of which in a human body may lead to brain damage.

Taking into consideration the problems caused by the plant and the potential benefits to be realised through the utilisation of its filtering properties, concurrent efforts should be made to devise methods by which the plant may be effectively removed from the waterways and used as a filtering agent. Areas in which research should be undertaken include the use of insects or sea cows, which feed on the plant and the development of mechanical equipment to gather the plant and water recycling systems for factories, utilising the plant. Due to the rapid growth rate of the plant and the fact that the government will be eliminating the use of chemicals to control its growth, immediate attention should be addressed to the foregoing research activities.

17.04.86

WATER

An international confernce enitled Water at the Service of Humanity through the Year 2000, "will be held in Cairo next July. It will study the best suitable methods and solutions to face the draught problems from which a number of the developing countries are suffering. It will also study the most up-to-date methods for developing water resources and rationalising their uses. Egypt will present 14 research papers on the uses of water in agriculture, housing, industry and methods of water parification. Five hundred scientists in the field of water, its uses and means of development, from 60 countries are expected to participate in the conference, which will be organised by the UNESCO.

30.04.86

Huge underground water reservoir discovered

A team of scientists from the Faculty of Science, Menufia University, has succeeded in discovering a giant subterranean water reservoir in the western part of the Delta, specifically in the desert land surrounding Sadat City. The team is led by Dr. Maghaori Diab, Professor of Subterranean Water at the Faculty.

Hydrogeological studies revealed that the quantity of subterranean water in the area is enough to cultivate 100,000 feddans as every feddan needs about 4,000 cubic metres of water annually. Scientists estimated the volume of the discovered water at 400 million cubic metres. Dr. Diab pointed out that the boundaries of the discovered reservoir extend from kilo No. 170 on Cairo-Alexandria desert road to the Pyramids area. — GSS

29.04.86

WATER

MENUFIA Governorate has earmarked LE 2,050,000 to carry out drinking-water projects in a number of cities. The projects include the establishment of a new pump at Shebin el-Kom water participation station and the renovation of the water mains in the city, said Mr. Talaat el-Desouki, Secretary-General of the Governorate. He added that the projects will also include the expansion of the water pipe network of Menuf, Quessna, Berket el-Sabie, Talla and Sers el-Layan.