

Vintage plastic radios from the 30's to the 50's have become popular collector items that can be worth a lot of money.



Collectors Cash-In With Vintage Radios

If you or someone you know spent \$15 on the Patriot, a red, white and blue radio at the 1939 World's Fair in Chicago, hopefully you still have it. If it's in decent condition, it's worth about \$1,000.

Today's plastic radios may not be worth much when they quit working, but collectors appreciate the first plastic radios made during the 1930's through the 1950's, whether they work or not.

It's all about the color, including marbling and Art Deco style, and designs used to make the cases in the exciting new medium of plastic.

Plastic eventually made radios a lot cheaper because the molded cases could be mass-produced instead of being hand-built out of wood, says Phil Bausch. The retired radio broadcast journalist started collecting radios in the late 1990's. Initially, he bought anything he liked, but soon developed a greater interest in table models, which don't take up as much room as big floor models.

"I like the colorful plastic radios, especially the Catalin models that are so unique with their swirled colors. Radios all do the same thing, but their designs can be so different," he says.

He explains that various formulas were used to make plastic cases. Bakelite came first, made with carbon-based ingredients such as phenol and formaldehyde mixed with resin. Bakelite only came in brown, black and dark maroon. In 1933, the formula to make Plaskon radios added white, beige and other

more colorful options.

Radios got the biggest color upgrade when beautiful translucent Catalin cases were introduced in 1937. They were more expensive than other plastics because they were labor-intensive. The cases were hand-trimmed and polished before the electronics were installed.

Because of their color and style, people often saved the radios even when they quit working, and collectors started taking notice of them in the 1980's. Like any collectible, rarity and condition determine values. Common radios can be found on eBay in the \$50 range, but rarer ones sell in the \$400 to \$3,000 range. Private sales and auctions can often find the rarest radios selling for tens of thousands of dollars.

"Condition is extremely important. You want a perfect case with no cracks," Bausch says.

Typically, Catalin radios are the most valuable, but some early radios are even more expensive. For example, Air King "Skyscrapers" from the 1930's can sell for \$40,000 to \$50,000 in certain colors of Plaskon.

For FARM SHOW readers who may have a vintage radio, check out the completed sale prices of radios sold on eBay. The website www.decophobia.com has good information and sells and buys high-end radios.

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Kennel Club Dogs Sniff Out Cherry Disease

The Wenatchee, Wash., Kennel Club has had many accomplishments and projects in its 60-year history, but Ag Dog classes and a focus on dog detection services is personal for many of its 160 active members. As a 501c3 they are doing their part to battle little cherry disease (LCD), a devastating problem for sweet cherry growers in Washington and Oregon.

With a new training center, the club holds 33 classes a week from puppy and agility training to tracking and scent work. When they learned about dogs being used to detect Citrus greening, a disease decimating the citrus industry, members created a 20-week pilot project (2021) to train companion dogs to identify LCD.

"We took it on as a service project to the fruit industry," says Lynda Pheasant, project coordinator. "Our whole goal is to train LCD detection dogs to be an economic and efficient early detection tool for control and eradication of LCD."

As the name implies LCD results in small, colorless, flavorless cherries. The infected tree has to be removed to prevent it from spreading. With early detection, diseased trees could be identified before they leave the nursery or have a chance to infect other trees in the orchard.

Networking with a professional detection



A dog works on sniffing out cherry disease from leaf and branch samples during training.

dog trainer and industry experts, volunteers worked with their dogs to respond to samples of (healthy and diseased) leaf and branch samples.

Six of 11 dogs successfully discriminated between diseased and non-diseased, exceeding expectations by chance. Two were more than 90 percent accurate. Breeds included an Australian shepherd, border collie, a black German shepherd, Entlebucher Mountain dog, Rhodesian Ridgeback and yellow lab.

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Like many natural remedies, yaupon was a common drink of Native Americans.

Native American Tea Rediscovered

A tea made from yaupon leaves that was once favored by indigenous people is gaining new popularity. A scrubby evergreen tree with waxy leaves like holly, yaupon is also the only native North American plant that produces caffeine. It grows naturally from Texas to Fla. and up the East Coast to the Outer Banks of N.C.

"We always knew yaupon because of how well it grew in our area around Cat Spring, Texas, but we viewed it as others did, having to keep it in check in fence lines and trails," says Abianne Falla, CatSpring Yaupon. "We were unaware of its caffeine properties or its legacy."

Falla and her sister JennaDee Detro became intrigued with yaupon when it thrived in the drought of 2011 when even 100-year-old oaks were dying. The sisters soon discovered the weedy tree on their family ranch had plenty of history and potential.

"It has this incredible legacy, tradition and taste," says Falla. "Once people have a chance to try it, the reception is overwhelmingly positive. Without the tannins, it is less astringent than conventional tea."

Falla reports that researchers are identifying health benefits as well. It contains theobromine, credited with making the consumer feel happy and having a positive impact on oral health and preventing oral infections.

"It has more antioxidants than blueberries, is anti-inflammatory and provides a mental boost," says Falla. "It also contains saponins,

which boost the immune system, lower cholesterol, lower cancer risk and lower blood glucose response."

Like many natural remedies, yaupon was a common drink of Native Americans. In the case of the Chickasaw who lived in the Cat Springs area, they were forced to relocate to Oklahoma.

"One side of our family is Chickasaw, and we had never known of its use," says Falla. "Yaupon doesn't grow in Oklahoma, and the tradition was lost over the generations."

Seeing an opportunity to reclaim their heritage and share it with others, the sisters founded CatSpring Yaupon in 2013.

Luckily, the sisters are not alone in their efforts. The Yaupon Brothers American Tea Co. in Florida and others are also spreading the word. Falla understands there is strength in numbers.

CatSpring Yaupon has gone from harvesting leaves from a few trees on the family ranch to more than 500 acres of certified organic, native growth. The sisters sell their tea from their website at 16 tea bags or 2 ounces loose leaf for \$7.95. Buy it by the pound, and it is priced at \$35. They also sell yaupon holly wreaths for \$35 and are looking for wholesale markets.

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Dog Trained To Sniff Out Lanternfly Eggs

Detecting the eggs of the Spotted Lanternfly is fun for Lucky, a German shepherd in Pennsylvania who is trained to sniff out the destructive insects in orchards, Christmas tree farms, vineyards, and other high-value crops.

The Asia-native invasive planthopper was first discovered in 2014 in Berks County, Penn. The Spotted Lanternfly feeds on sap and excretes a sugary waste that builds up and grows sooty mold and fungi that damages the wood and affects production on smaller trees. The best way to stop the spread is to find and destroy eggs that are laid in the fall.

That's where the PennVet Working Dog Center got involved, says Jennifer Essler, PhD, a postdoctoral researcher who helped lead the project and assisted with the training. Under a grant, she and other trainers worked with 3 dogs at the center to detect the eggs.

"Once we did the research and showed they could do it, then we trained Lucky," she says. "The eggs are really small and 50 to 60 will measure about 1/2 to 2-in. long and 1-in. wide. They turn brown and flat, so they are hard to see on bark."

Since the eggs are on surfaces in the open air, the odor doesn't collect, so the trainers realized they had to slow the dogs down to methodically search nurseries, greenhouses, logging areas, trucks, and other areas where the eggs are commonly found.

"For them it's just a game," Essler says of



Photo by Shelby Wise

A German shepherd trained to sniff out Spotted Lanternfly eggs.

the dogs. When they find eggs, some dogs respond by sitting and are given food treats. Lucky freezes in place and gets a toy for her reward.

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture put Lucky to work last November, and she will be out working again this fall. When she finds eggs, her handler scrapes them into a glass jar of alcohol.

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