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A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,
Secretary, American Meteorological Society
says:

SUMMER BEGINS TOMORROW

Summer begins at 6:03 A.M. Eastern Standard Time tomorrow morning, so the astronomers say, that being the time that the sun reaches its farthest north and begins its six months journey back towards the Tropic of Capricorn. After tomorrow the intensity of the sun's rays which has been increasing for six months will decrease week by week as they strike more and more slantingly on the ground.

Why then do the astronomers say that summer begins when the sun begins to slack up on his job? Meteorologists count summer as beginning June 1 because the ensuing three months are, taken together, the warmest of the year, but both they and the astronomers agree that as the nights begin to lengthen the heat begins to strengthen, to paraphrase a familiar saying.

The reason is that it takes several weeks for the earth to get warmed up. So even after the sun starts back the earth does not yet lose so much heat at night as it gains by day, due to the high sun and long days. By August, however, the nights have lengthened enough for the radiation to overbalance the heat received during the day and the weather begins to get cooler.

But those who dread the hot weather can take comfort in the thought that after tomorrow the sun will be in retreat and even if the air is likely to be hot, the sunlight is weakening.

(Tomorrow: North Pole Gets More Heat Today Than Equator.)

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