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A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks,
of Clark University,
discusses:

SLEET

Sleet consists of ice pellets which are frozen raindrops, or partly melted snowflakes refrozen, due to the falling of the precipitation through a cold layer of air near the surface of the earth. We hear it rattling on roofs and window panes. Usually the pellets are no larger than duckshot, but sometimes they are the size of a dried pea. Sleet has been reported as hail so often that the Weather Bureau has issued an explanatory pamphlet calling attention to the fact that ice pellets of sleet differ materially in structure from the layered hailstones. Sleet may contain enough air to give it a whitish, opaque appearance, lending it the semblance of small hail.

Sleet may occur when a cold current flows under warm, moist air, or when a warm southerly wind flows over the top of very cold surface air. Sleet storms are apt to come in the morning when the surface temperature is at its minimum, but this is by no means always the case. Sleet is often mixed with rain, when it forms as an ice-coating on the ground making a more or less pebbly surface.

(Tomorrow: Snow Is Mostly Air)

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