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A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Dr. Charles F. Brooks
of Clark University

Discusses

FORMS OF FROST CRYSTALS

When frost starts to form on a window pane the first crystals will commonly appear around some little irregularity in the surface, a scratch, a projection, or a little dirt. Soon the pane is covered with fine crystals, giving a granular appearance. The tendency is, however, for existing crystals to grow instead of new ones forming, and even for large crystals to grow at the expense of smaller ones, which slowly evaporate, allowing their moisture to condense again on the big crystals. Clear areas, then tend to appear around these growing crystals.

Mr. W. A. Bentley, of Jericho, Vermont, has made many beautiful microphotographs of window frost. The flakes show six pointed stars often elaborately subdivided, graceful fronds, fine filaments, delicate little curled feathers of frost, and the familiar branching forms suggestive of ferns or Christmas trees. The beauty of frost forms such as these may be appreciated by those who might fail to notice the exquisiteness of the small snowflake.

(Tomorrow: Winter Dark Days)

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