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A Science Service Feature

April 3

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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

LAST KILLING FROST

The date of the last killing frost in Spring is of considerable interest to planters. The length of the growing season is the number of days from this date to the first killing frost of autumn. As is well known, the coming of Spring is highly variable. Thus, the time of the last killing frost in any year may easily fall 10 days before or after the average date, or in extreme cases the last such frost may occur a month earlier or later than usual. Nevertheless, a map of the average dates gives a fair picture of the advance of Spring.

Only one U. S. Weather Bureau station, Key West, Florida, has never recorded a killing frost. Large parts of California, Florida, and Arizona have frost only occasionally, perhaps once a year. In general, it can be said that, in the states south of North Carolina and Tennessee, the last killing frost comes between March 1 and April 1. The next belt to the north, with dates between April 1 and May 1, extends about to latitude 41 degrees North. New York and Chicago are on its northern borders. Throughout the northeastern and the north central states the date is usually some time in May, though in the White Mountains and Adirondacks and extreme northern Maine and Minnesota, killing frosts may occur after June 1. This is the case, too, in large areas of the Rocky Mountains. In this region, altitude and topography control the coming of Spring to such an extent that there are no clearly marked belts progressing from south to north. Along the ocean coasts and the shores of the Great Lakes the effect of the relatively warm water is clear. Thus, at Cleveland, on Lake Erie, the last killing frost of spring occurs during April, while 10 or 15 miles back from the shore the date is May 1.

(Tomorrow: Planting and Frost Dates)
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