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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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FRUIT AND FROST

An early spring followed by cold weather causes almost inevitable damage to fruit buds. This year February was unusually warm, but, fortunately for fruit, March and April, though warm, were more nearly normal in much of the United States and southern Canada. Perhaps it is not generally recognized how many buds may be lost without much injury to the crop. It is said that in an average year a fruit tree should lose about 90 per cent. of its buds or blossoms. If a peach tree retains even only 2 per cent. of its buds that is sufficient to develop a fair crop of fruit. Experience shows the probably safe temperature for different fruits at different stages of development to vary considerably with the condition of the tree, the moisture in the atmosphere, the duration of the cold snap and other local factors. In general, peach and cherry buds just showing color are safe if the temperature does not go below 25 degrees Fahrenheit, for apples the figure is 27 degrees, and pears 28 degrees. In full bloom, peaches and cherries will stand a temperature of 28 degrees, and pears and apples a temperature of 29 degrees. During the fruit setting period all four require a temperature of 30 degrees or above. Peaches are most susceptible to cold when about the size of a pea. Young apples are often damaged by freezing of the stem.

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