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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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PROTECTION FROM FROST

It sometimes pays to protect gardens from an unseasonably early frost. Look out for frost on clear calm nights, when the temperature is as low as 50 or 55 early in the evening. Spreading newspapers or, better, cloths over delicate plants will protect them from light frosts and may put off the inevitable freeze a fortnight or a month longer. The covering does not exactly "keep out the cold" but rather keeps in the heat of the ground which otherwise would be lost through radiation into space.

Frost protection on the largest scale is practiced in the citrus fruit groves of California. But only about 20 per cent. of the bearing orchards are protected by heaters; for the remaining 80 per cent. frost insurance is frequently purchased. Wood, coke, and coal fires have all been tried for orchard heating, but nothing so satisfactory as the oil burner has yet been found. Orange groves on low ground require a large heater for every tree. At first protection was sought by creating a thick cloud of smoke over the orchard to check outgoing radiation. Now it is recognized that the heating is more important than the smoke and more efficient types of burners giving less smoke are used. Even so, enough smoke is produced from the many heaters to annoy the people of southern California towns seriously. The legislature has actually been petitioned to enact laws prohibiting orchard heating.

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