

No. 753

A Science Service Feature

Oct. 9

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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FREQUENCY OF DEW

Poets who are fond of describing the dewy morns of spring often fail to mention the dews of autumn, but in spite of the poets, dew is more characteristic of fall than of spring. In our middle latitudes August, September, and October are generally the months when dew is most frequent. At this season dew is likely to occur on about half the nights, and even more if the weather is clear. As many as 26 mornings with dew have been observed in one month. Dew forms best when surfaces become much cooled on clear calm nights and when water vapor is abundant. In spring the air contains less water vapor available for condensation on these surfaces than in the fall. The long nights of late summer and autumn also favor nocturnal cooling and dew formation.

From a recent discussion of dew observations the world over it appears that generally in middle latitudes there are more than 100 days per year with dew. In the tropics, where the summer type of weather prevails, the dewy mornings are more common, around 150 to 250 a year. One station in a relatively dry tropical grassland averaged 305 a year for 5 years. Even on hot deserts dews may occur nearly every morning, for although the supply of water vapor is not large the nocturnal cooling of the dry ground and scanty vegetation is very great.

(Tomorrow: Keeping the Oranges Warm)

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