

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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RAINY SEASONS

In eastern North America we have no rainy seasons; our rainfall is spread fairly evenly throughout the year. Umbrellas and rubbers must always be ready for duty, for though a drought may occur at any season it is not regular and predictable. In sections of the country where rainfall is deficient, the seasonal distribution as well as the amount of rainfall is a matter of concern.

On the Pacific coast, winter is the rainy season. Over half the year's rainfall frequently comes in the period from December to February, inclusive, while in the warm season California valleys may be rainless for three or four months. Many crops are harvested at the end of the rainy season; in other cases the water stored in snow on the mountains is used to irrigate summer produce, and to maintain the production of alfalfa and fruit.

Moving eastward, we find a later and less pronounced rainy season. The northern Rockies and their foothills receive about a third of their rain in spring. The spring rainy season extends also onto the Great Plains. Over a large portion of the central states and provinces late spring and early summer is the rainy season. Little precipitation occurs here in winter. This is ideal for agriculture: the water is delivered when most needed and there is no fuss about storing it.

Florida alone has a marked autumn rainy season, though the Maritime Provinces and Newfoundland average wettest in November.

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