

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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APRIL SHOWERS

Even before Chaucer wrote of "Aprille with his schowres swoote" April was noted for its showery days. It is doubtful whether April can generally lay claim to any more showers than May or the summer months; in fact, in the Rockies and parts of the western plains May and June seem to be the leaders. Perhaps April owes its reputation to the fact that the showery or summer type of rain first becomes frequent at about this time of year, replacing the longer, larger scale winter rains or snows.

"Rain long foretold long last,

Short notice, soon past."

Spring showers are due largely to the local heating of moist air causing convectional currents, winter rains, to the forced ascent of air in front of a low pressure area, or over a barrier. With the approach of summer, convection becomes stronger and low pressure areas weaker. In spring and early summer, conditions are particularly favorable for showers because the ground and lower air are frequently damp and heat rapidly in the warm sunlight. But the upper air is still cold, so that rising currents are chilled sufficiently to form clouds before ascending far.

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