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July 26, 1926

A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed July 19, 1926

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TIME OF THUNDERSTORMS

It is rather inconvenient that the height of the thunderstorm season, July and August, should coincide with the summer vacation period, and, moreover, that these disturbances should prefer late afternoon to early morning hours. The unwary excursionist who sets out on a hot bright morning may return home, dripping.

Local thundershowers, or the "heat" thunder storms which are common in warm muggy weather, are due to irregular overheating of the lower air and resulting convection. It takes some time for the sun to produce this effect and build up the heavy thunder cloud, therefore the showers do not commonly occur in the morning.

The stronger afternoon showers may travel along and persist into the evening or night. Night thunderstorms and those rare ones that occur in winter are more commonly connected with a general storm area or low. They are particularly likely to occur in the south quadrant of a V-shaped low pressure area which has a distinct wind-shift line between the warm muggy south or southwest wind in front and the cooler drier northwest wind in the rear. The more severe thunderstorms are likely to be of this type and are usually followed by clearer and cooler weather. The local thundershower, unassociated with a change in wind, often gives only temporary relief.

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