

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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COOLER

Though later hot spells may still be instore for us, we can take comfort in the fact that the average temperature is now distinctly on the down grade. The sun already in retreat two months from its northernmost position is distinctly lower in the sky. The darkness of the evening is beginning appreciably earlier and dawn does not come so soon. The daytime heating is less intense and lasts for a shorter period, while the nighttime cooling can continue uninterrupted through the lengthening night.

The biggest change is noticeable in the far north, where the sun's rays at a greater slant are losing their heating power more rapidly, and where the days are shortening by hours. We can appreciate this, even though some distance to the south, by the readiness with which a mass of cool air can come from higher latitudes. With an ordinary shift of wind to a northerly direction the air does not have to travel so far to reach us from really cool latitudes. Whereas in July and the first half of August air of 50 degrees Fahrenheit was about the coolest the wind could import, we now can receive air as cold as 45 degrees Fahrenheit.

Once we have obtained a good supply of cool dry air, the longer nights make lowland frosts possible, and the first reports of killing frost appear in the newspapers. These reports never come at this time from places along the south or east shores of Lakes Michigan, Erie or Ontario: the water is too good a heater for the passing wind. They come most commonly from the wetter lowlands north of latitude 40, or from the mountain valleys of the North. The wetter lowlands heat little by day and cool readily at night. The mountain valleys are well supplied with shade, and cool air from neighboring heights.

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