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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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RACING WITH FROST

Every farmer is something of a sporting man: he is forced to bet on the weather. In making his last plantings of beans or sweet corn he is taking his chances with frost. Now the average dates of the first killing frost in fall can be readily determined from a map, but unfortunately, only once in ten times does the frost occur on this exact date. West of the Rockies, in parts of the Middle West, and along the Gulf coast, variations are particularly wide; oftener than one year in four the first frost will be ten days or more earlier than the average date. In New England and along the Atlantic coast such an early frost is likely to occur at least once in six or seven years.

To aid the sporting gardener the Department of Agriculture has prepared a map showing when the odds on a killing frost reach 1 to 10. In the neighborhood of Boston, the average first frost date is about October 11, but by September 21 the chances of frost have risen to 10 per cent. In the White Mountains the range is not so wide, a 10 per cent. chance of frost is reached only ten days before the average date. In a dry interior region, such as the panhandle of Texas, frost occurs with even greater regularity, the 1 in 10 chance not occurring until about five days before the average date.

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