

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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SPARK-PLUG DEW

Has your car failed to start one of these damp mornings? Have you driven a perfectly good car home one evening and then found it impossible to make it go the next morning? And then have you labored for an hour or more with it, vainly going over connections and changing adjustments. Or have you simply tried the easier method of leaving the car alone and trying it again later? If you have had trouble of this sort you may have noticed that it occurs in the muggiest most uncomfortable weather for an auto to balk, and that morning fogginess is characteristic. You find dew on the windshield a concomitant of balkiness.

The automobile that is run every day and is put away in a warm garage is practically immune. So is one that has been covered with a blanket as in cold weather or is filled with hot water before any attempts at starting. But the car that is cool in the evening and is left out all night, or is kept in a cool damp place, is most likely to balk on a muggy morning. The nocturnal cooling reduces the temperature of the engine slowly to about the minimum temperature of the air. Vapor condenses on metal parts, favoring short circuits. Also, with the rising of the morning temperature and the evaporation of some of the dew or all of the night's fog, the air becomes so humid that its dewpoint is higher than the temperature of the engine. With cranking the introduction of air into the cylinders may be attended at once by condensation, most readily on such points as those of the spark plugs. There is no spark to ignite the gas. One or two coughs, perhaps, and then you labor long or walk.

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