

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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GENERAL HUMIDITY

Thanks to bountiful inflows of muggy air from the Gulf Stream and Gulf of Mexico we have had to bear an uncommon amount of humidity during the last few weeks. Early summer was dry, since our air had come largely from the cooler and drier north and northwest. Then with the disappearance of the snows and much of the ice of the north our winds set in from southerly directions, bringing an abundance of vapor. As this vapor was cooled we had numerous rains, showers, and thunderstorms, till the ground was thoroughly moistened, and the farmer and forester thankful. Whenever the sun shone or air from a drier direction came along there was an everready source of vapor for humidifying it.

A change of wind to the south or southeast then quickly brought the vapor portion of the air up nearly to the saturation point. For days at a time the air has been too humid for more than a glimpse of sunshine. And when the sun shone for an hour or two a shower was almost sure to follow the heating of the lower air and the instability thereby created. By night any clearing of the sky has been attended by copious formation of dew and occasionally a fog. So the showers by day and dews, fogs or more showers by night have provided an almost continuous wetness of surface that has fed the air more vapor whenever its temperature rose a little. Sometimes it seems that a modest influx of vapor from the sea is making a great deal of itself.

Our cellars are dripping, our pipes and furnaces rusting, our doors and desk drawers are swelling as we have not known them to do for years, our grass is growing faster than we feel like cutting it in the muggy weather, our houses are taking on a musty odor, our autos balk, and even our telephones go dead. Give us the north wind !

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