

A Science Service Feature

Released on receipt
but intended for use
October 15, 1926

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

Mailed October 8, 1926

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FROSTY MOON

The moon is often supposed to exert a mysterious control over the earth's weather affairs. This lunar magic, when analyzed in the cold light of day, usually amounts to nothing. For instance, according to an old tradition, frost will not injure crops in the "light of the moon", that is between new moon and full moon when the moon is growing larger. It is believed, however, that in the "dark of the moon", that is, as soon as the moon begins to wane, crops are subject to frost injury. There seems to be no reasonable foundation for this superstition. If we were to seek a connection between frost damage and the moon, we should say that killing frosts are more likely to occur on clear moonlight nights than on cloudy, whatever the phase of the moon. Bright moonlight thus often accompanies heavy frosts.

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