

A Science Service Feature

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! WHY THE WEATHER !

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SNOW ROLLERS

Everyone has seen children start with a small handful of snow and roll it around and around the yard. As it travels, it picks up more and more snow until finally it becomes a huge ball ready to serve as the base of a snowman or part of the wall of a fort.

Occasionally the wind itself indulges in this child's sport and forms what are known as "snow rollers". In one case noted by W. A. Bentley, at Jericho, Vt., the ground was covered with light fluffy snow. During the night the temperature rose to slightly above freezing, making the snow damp and sticky, and a strong gusty wind developed. The wind appeared to have scooped out hollow ridges or snow arches and then started some of these rolling. The rolls were mostly cylindrical in shape, varying from a few inches to over a foot in diameter. The paths of some rollers are usually all in the same general direction, roughly parallel to the wind. An account of snow rollers observed in New Jersey states that "the whole landscape was covered with snowballs, differing in size from that of a lady's muff to the diameter of 2½ or 3 feet, hollow at each end to almost the very center, and all as true as so many logs shaped in a lathe."

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