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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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PALOUSERS

Dust storms assume a variety of forms and are known under many names in different parts of the world. The Palouse region of northern Idaho, together with a large adjacent area of the northwestern United States, is the home of the "Palouser". The storms thus designated are the bane of housekeepers, but are responsible for the gradual deposit of a deep layer of very fertile soil. Mr. J. A. Larsen says of them;

"The dust penetrates into every house and office, making it possible for anyone to write his name on the furniture. When the storm is accompanied by rain or snow, the window panes and buildings are besmirched with streaks of red dirt. To have one of these storms happen immediately after painting a house is exasperating.

"The dust is laid down in the mountains of northern Idaho, where it may be seen any day and anywhere during the summer months. Here it no doubt has profoundly influenced the growth and distribution of one of America's most valuable timber trees, the western white pine, for the best growth and development of this species takes place on the deep soils which lie directly in the path of the westerly winds carrying and depositing the dust.

"One very pronounced dust storm occurred in March, 1917, when the desert region was dry and bare but the forested area under a cover of snow. At this time a sample of dust as it had fallen on the snow was taken, the snow melted and the amount of dry soil weighed. This showed that the deposit in a single storm amounted to 600 pounds per acre."

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