

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed January 7, 1928

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SPECIALIZED WEATHER FORECASTS

Dwellers in large cities are not, as a rule, greatly affected by the changes of the weather. Those of them who wonder whether the official weather forecasts, even if they were infallible, would be worth the cost of maintaining a Government meteorological service should study the history of some of the specialized forecasts for particular industries and interests issued by the United States Weather Bureau. Among these are the rain predictions that safeguard the fruit-drying industry of southern California; the "fire-weather" warnings that aid in the strenuous business of preventing and fighting forest fires; and the "shippers' forecasts," relating to temperatures injurious to perishable goods in transit.

They should consider the various ways in which the forecaster enables both farmers and horticulturists to adapt their undertakings to good and bad weather - even to pointing out the right time for spraying fruit trees against scab; a process in which, as has lately been learned, the weather plays an important part. The spores come into activity when moistened, and the correct procedure is to apply the spray just before a rain, because when the rains occur the fungi begin to grow and are killed by the poison in the spray. If applied in dry weather the spray is wasted, as it soon loses its poisonous effect.

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