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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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THE PROGRESS OF PHENOLOGY

As long ago as the year 1751 the great Swedish naturalist Linnaeus urged that records be kept of the dates of leafing, blossoming, fruiting and leaf-fall of various common plants as an index of weather and climate. Long after his time the name "phenology" was given to the border science between biology and meteorology that is concerned with records of this sort. Linnaeus himself organized the first body of phenological observers, 18 in number, who kept records under his direction. In the course of the eighteenth century "floral calendars" giving the average dates of recurrent events in the vegetable kingdom were published for several places in Europe.

In more recent times many organizations of phenological observers have kept records in both the Old World and the New. At present the most intensive work in this line is carried on in Germany, where, since 1922, a national organization, with headquarters at Berlin, has published annual records for the whole country. The densest networks of stations are found in Hesse and Bavaria, and some instructive phenological charts have been published for these regions.

Thus Dr. E. Hiltner has recently issued two large charts in colors that show the average dates of the blooming and maturity of winter rye in all parts of Bavaria, based on records at upwards of 1,000 stations during the years 1917 to 1923, inclusive. It is interesting to find that in some parts of Bavaria winter rye blooms as early as May 14 and in others not until after June 17, while the average dates on which the grain is mature and ready for harvest range from July 7 to August 20 or later.

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