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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed July 8, 1931

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DATING THE DANDELIONS

It is not an uncommon practise to draw a so-called phenological chart showing the blossoming dates of some species of plant in different parts of a country or other large region, but it is a novel undertaking to construct such a chart for an area as small as a college campus. Such an undertaking in what might be called "micro-phenology" was carried out last spring at Clark University, Worcester, Mass., by E. Monroe Harwood, who charted the dates when dandelions bloomed in different parts of the campus of that institution.

As reported by Prof. C. F. Brooks, the earliest date was April 9, when blossoms appeared close to the center of the southeast face of a large brick and stone building; also near the underground outlet of an exhaust steam-pipe. Nine days later dandelion blossoms were general near the southeast walls of all the buildings on the campus and likewise out to a distance of 30 feet southeast from the large building. On the open campus the first blossoms appeared after another interval of nine days. Not until May 1 and 2 did they begin to appear near the northwest walls of the buildings. The latest date was May 5 in a shady, windy space between two buildings.

The chart shows a difference in blossoming dates of 26 days in less than 100 feet. On ordinary phenological charts this difference in time, according to Hopkins' bioclimatic law, corresponds to a difference of altitude of 2,600 feet, or to a difference of latitude of 6 1/2 degrees.

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