

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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FOG AND VEGETATION

The classic example of a region in which luxuriant vegetation is supported by fog in the absence of rain is found on the coasts of Peru and Chile, where the rainfall is almost negligible, but a wet fog from the sea, known as the "garua" or "camanchaca," supplies ample moisture for the growth of plants. A similar condition prevails along the coast of California in summer. The fog that rolls in every afternoon from the Pacific enables the farmers of that coastal region to raise big crops of beans and other products.

An engineer, J.E. Daw, is quoted in the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society as attributing similar results to the fogs of the Gaspé Peninsula, on the south shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence, where fogs are very frequent from April to the end of September; i.e., throughout the season of plant growth. At Madeline, in northern Gaspé, a fog occurs on an average about one day in three during the period mentioned.

During a recent summer, says Mr. Daw, when hardly any rain fell in this region, so that the brooks and wells dried up, the fog kept the foliage green. "The common basket fern," he states, "which requires a lot of moisture, grew to abnormal size. I walked, at the time, through a dried-up swamp where these ferns were above my shoulder. On the mountain sides tree growth was very luxuriant."

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