

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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MEASURING DEWFALL

In some parts of the world, especially in the tropics, dew forms a substantial part of the total amount of atmospheric moisture received by plants. For this reason, as well as on account of the general scientific interest of the matter, many attempts have been made to obtain accurate measurements of dewfall. One difficulty in this connection is the fact that the amount of dew depends on the nature of the body on which it is deposited. Some substances cool by nocturnal radiation more rapidly than others, and thus condense more water out of the atmosphere.

Instruments for measuring dew are called "drosometers," and several different kinds have been constructed. One with which a French meteorologist, M. Raymond, has been making observations regularly for a number of years on the Riviera, consists of a light basket containing a layer of dry grass or moss. The basket and its contents are weighed just before sunset and placed out of doors. They are weighed again before sunrise, and the difference between the observed weights represents the weight of the dew deposited. M. Raymond has also attached registering apparatus to his dew-gauge, and has thus obtained records of the rate of dew deposit through the night. Thus his drosometer becomes a "drosograph."

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