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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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HEAVY ICE DEPOSITS

The coating of clear ice on terrestrial objects produced by cold-weather rain -- known to American meteorologists as "glaze" and to British as "glazed frost" -- is so light in a majority of cases as to be incapable of doing any harm. It is only when rain falls steadily for hours that the ice grows until slender telephone wires are converted into sagging cables as thick as your wrist, feathery twigs become massive shafts of crystal, and the needles of the pines and firs are so heavily encrusted and so compactly frozen together that the trees look like solid pyramids of ice. These heavy deposits cause enormous damage in some cases; especially when a high wind adds to the destruction due to the mere weight of ice.

In severe ice storms an inch of ice on wires is common, two or three inches have often been recorded, and there are reports, substantiated by photographs, of much more remarkable deposits. A tree of average size may carry five tons of ice. In the great storm of February, 1922, which caused almost unprecedented damage to forests and orchards in Michigan and Wisconsin, an elm twig examined by Prof. W.E. Rogers, of Lawrence College, was found to weigh 132 times as much with its icy envelope as without it.

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