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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ? Mailed November 11, 1933

AN EAST INDIAN WEATHER CALENDAR

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A publication of the British Admiralty records a curious method of describing the seasonal succession of weather events employed in Timor Laut, or Tanimbar, a group of islands in the Malay Archipelago. The islands lie in the monsoon region, and the west monsoon begins with rain and a little wind between the end of November and the end of December. Early in January the west monsoon sets in briskly. This is the "small bread-fruit wind," and is said to last for 14 days.

A period of calms, with much rain, at the end of January is called the "small earthworm." In early February come renewed strong west winds, known as the "great bread-fruit winds." The "big earthworm," another period of calms and rain, is due at the end of February. A calm period, with little rain, known as the "dividing earthworm," comes at the end of March and the beginning of April between the west and east monsoons.

The east monsoon is in full force in June, whence this month is called the "trunk of the east monsoon." In July the same monsoon still blows steadily, and as the toriem tree is then in flower it is known as the "toriem wind." In August and September the east wind is still strong, but the rain holds off, and this season is said to be "the beginning of sun-time." October and November are the "trunk of summer"; a beautiful season of calm, sunny weather. This period is also called the "morning-ebb suntime," as strong ebb tides then leave the shore and reefs dry at dawn.

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