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A Science Service Feature

? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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AUTUMN PHENOLOGY

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Phenology is a border science between meteorology and biology, and its principal practical task is to record from year to year the events of plant and animal life that recur with the seasons; such, for example, as the blossoming of various common plants in the spring, the migration of birds, etc. Most of these events bear some relation to weather and climate, though the relationship is not always either close or well understood.

In several countries of the Old World there are large organizations of phenological observers whose records are more or less fully published from year to year. There have been such organizations in recent times in Canada but, strange to say, there has been none in the United States since the middle of the last century, though some individual records have been maintained.

There is probably only one locality in the whole of North America for which we have detailed published records covering a long series of years; viz., Wauseon, Ohio, where Thomas Mikesell maintained such records from 1883 to 1917, a large part of which, covering the years 1883 to 1912, were published by the United States Weather Bureau.

For that place, at least, we have definite information as to the average dates on which each of the common trees and shrubs changes to autumnal colors and also those when the leaves fall, as well as the earliest and latest dates on which such events were recorded by Mr. Mikesell.

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