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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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INVISIBLE DUST STORMS

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Every year, from early spring to the middle of autumn, many invisible dust storms sweep over North America. A decade or so ago their existence was hardly suspected and definite information about them has only come to light within the last few years. The dust does not, like that blown up from deserts and drought-stricken fields, blot out the sunshine, nor does it begrime our homes or add to our laundry bills, but it gets into people's noses and causes an annual total of fully a million cases of hay fever.

This dust is the wind-borne pollen of plants. In spring it comes mainly from trees, in the early summer from grasses, and in the late summer and early fall from ragweed, except in the far West, where its principal source at that season is the group of plants known collectively as wormwoods, including mugwort and sagebrush.

The daily pollen counts carried out since 1929 by O. C. Durham, with the aid of numerous weather observers in the United States, Canada and Mexico, reveal startling figures. We are told, for example, that in one year, 1933, the pollen of the ragweeds alone deposited within the United States is supposed to have amounted to 275,000 tons. Pollen is sometimes carried hundred of miles by the winds and it has been collected thousands of feet above the earth on plates carried by airplanes.

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