

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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AN ANNUAL POLLEN STORM

By Charles Fitzhugh Talman
Authority on Meteorology

In a dust storm the atmosphere over a large area is charged with dust. In a "pollen storm," as this term is used by O. C. Durham, of the Abbott Laboratories, North Chicago, the air contains great quantities of pollen. By far the largest percentage of hay fever cases in North America are due to a pollen storm occurring annually in the late summer and early autumn, in which the irritating pollen is mainly that of ragweed, of two species. With the aid of weather observers in the United States, Canada and Mexico, Mr. Durham has conducted in recent years annual counts of the ragweed pollen in the air day by day in numerous localities, and he has published a summary containing the statistics for the year 1929 to 1933, inclusive. The pollen crop was heaviest in 1933, when it is estimated that the total amount of ragweed pollen deposited in the United States alone was not less than 275,000 tons. An interesting occurrence of the same year was the wave of pollen blown southward from Indiana and Ohio almost to the Gulf coast on August 23 to 25 by the heavy winds attending a tropical storm that swept up the Atlantic seaboard. The great drought of 1930 reduced the pollen crop to about one-half the average for the other four years and also delayed the beginning of the ragweed pollen season by about two weeks.

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