

A Science Service Feature

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? WHY THE WEATHER ?

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FROST WARNINGS FOR CITRUS GROWERS

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During the coming winter the United States Weather Bureau will put in operation in the citrus groves of Florida a system of frost warnings similar to the one that has been so successful for many years in California. The first step in such an undertaking is to make a temperature survey of a fruit-growing district. Tested thermometers and thermographs are installed at a large number of places, and their readings are compared with those found at a designated "key station." There is a fairly constant relation between the readings at the different places in frosty weather. Thus, if a given minimum temperature is predicted for the key station, growers in the neighborhood know what to expect for their several localities. On the basis of the weather map, supplemented by local observations of temperature and humidity, a forecast is made each afternoon during the frost season of the minimum temperature during the following night. Very accurate forecasts are made. In one district of California during a recent winter 95 forecasts of dangerous temperatures were issued. These were very definite as to the minimum expected, and 91 per cent. of them proved correct within 2 degrees or less, while the others were only slightly more in error.

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