

Weather Lore Sayings

Dew-*"When the dew is on the grass,*

Rain will never come to pass.

When grass is dry at morning light,

Look for rain before the night." Again, if there is no dew on the grass, it means the sky is cloudy or the breeze is strong, both of which may mean rain.

Corona*"If a circle forms 'round the moon, 'Twill rain soon."*

The circle that forms around the sun or moon is called a halo. Halos are formed by the light from the sun or moon refracting (bending) as they pass through the ice crystals that form high-level cirrus and cirrostratus clouds. These clouds do not produce rain or snow, but they often precede an advancing low pressure system which may bring bad weather.

Plants *"When leaves turn their back 'tis a sign it's going to rain."* Some trees, such as oak and maple, have leaves that will curl when the humidity is very high and the wind is blowing strongly. Both these conditions indicate an approaching storm.

"I know ladies by the score

Whose hair foretells the storm;

Long before it begins to pour

Their curls take a drooping form." Human hair, especially blond hair, has a tendency expand in length as the humidity rises. This may cause naturally-curly hair to droop. Or it may cause straight hair to curl up a little. The higher the humidity, the more likely it is to rain.

"If smoke hovers low near the ground it is likely to rain." Smoke particles tend to absorb moisture from the air. The more moisture present in the air, the more a particle of smoke will absorb, and the heavier it gets. Heavy, moisture-laden smoke particles do not disperse as easily as the lighter, dry ones do.

"When sounds travel far and wide,

A stormy day will betide." Sound travels at different speeds through different substances. It travels faster through a solid substance than it does through air, for instance. Sound travels better in air that is heavily laden with moisture than it does in dry air.

"If birds fly low

Expect rain and a blow." When the air pressure is high, it is easier for birds to fly at a higher altitude. If the air pressure is low, indicating bad weather, birds can't fly as high because the air is less dense.

“Trace in the sky the painter’s brush,

The winds around you soon will rush.” The “painter’s brush” are cirrus clouds. These are high-level ice clouds that often precede the approach of a storm system.

“Mares’ tails and mackerel scales

Make lofty ships carry low sails.” Mares’ tails are cirrus clouds, called this because they sometimes resemble the flowing tail of a horse in the wind. Mackerel scales are altocumulus clouds. They appear broken and scaly. Neither of these cloud types will bring rain or snow themselves. They do, however, precede an approaching storm front by a day or two.

“Red sky in morning, sailors give warning. Red sky at night, sailors delight.” The weather patterns in North America generally move from west to east, when clouds arrive overhead at sunrise the sky will appear red, signaling a storm "moving in". When the storm eventually passes, the sky will clear in the western sky. If sunset occurs simultaneously, the light will cast a red glow on the clouds above, now moving towards the east.

“Pale moon rains; Red moon blows.”

White moon neither rains or snows.” The more dust particles there are in the air, the greater the chance that moisture will have something on which to form raindrops. Drops of rain cannot form unless they can form around a “condensation nucleus,” which is a dust particle, ice crystal, or some similar tiny object suspended in the air. When moonlight passes through air laden with dust particles, it appears pale or reddish. When the air is very clear, it appears white.

“If clouds move against the wind, rain will follow.” Clouds that are moving in a direction that differs from the way the wind is blowing indicates a condition known as wind shear. This sometimes indicates the arrival of a cold front. Weather fronts usually bring rain.

“You can tell the temperature by counting a cricket's chirps.”

Crickets - Crickets are accurate thermometers; they chirp faster when warm and slower when cold. They are extremely accurate. Count their chirps faster for fourteen seconds, then add forty, and you have the temperature (in Fahrenheit) of wherever the cricket is.

“Flies – Flies bite more before a rain.” This rule does not always apply, but insects do calling more during moist weather, as flying is more difficult. Heat causes human sweating, which makes you a more appetizing target. These two reasons, plus a release of more body odors when atmospheric pressure on your body lowers, will add up to the rule that flies and insects are more bothersome just before a rain than at any other time.

"The higher the clouds, the better the weather". Higher clouds indicate both dryness of air and higher atmospheric pressure. Both these qualities are present with fair weather.