

Dog Days

If you're hot and sticky and already starting to long for the crisp winey days of autumn, you're not alone. Each year in July comes weather like this, and it usually hangs around 'til Labor Day. The weathermen speak of Bermuda highs, and describe the problem as masses of tropical air being sucked up from the Gulf of Mexico, but Yankees call these Dog Days.

Some years they arrive earlier than others. In 1975 the Old Farmer's Almanac timed their arrival on the 5th of July; in '77 they weren't supposed to hit us, according to that seer, until July 25th. They're supposed to follow fast on the heels of St. Swithin's Day, this summer. And what, you may wonder, is St. Swithin's Day?

Ah, that's the 15th of July, and should it rain on St. Swithin's, legend has it, 'twill rain for the next 40 days and nights; that's what prompted Noah to build his ark.

Once here, when will Dog Days depart? It'll all be over by Labor Day. And in the meantime, keep your air conditioner set higher than usual; you'll feel the heat and humidity less when you must step outside if the contrast isn't too great.

Another myth? Maybe. Try to remember how good it would have felt, last winter, to have been able to luxuriate in 78° temperatures; and think of what it must be like to live in a city during weather such as this.

Like 'em or not, Dog Days are with us for the next several weeks. We've survived them before; chances ae we will again this summer. Just take it easy...