turing rapidly declines, beginning near the cut end and ending finally on the ridge farthest from the cut surfaces.

Preliminary observations indicate that the change in color of the exuded juice may be used as a maturity test and that the best time to harvest the fruit is when the exuded juice has become almost or wholly colorless. Earlier picking results in an inferior product and later picking reduces the keeping quality. The complete results will be published later when the experiments now in progress are concluded.

HAMILTON P. TRAUB
T. RALPH ROBINSON
H. E. STEVENS

BUREAU OF PLANT INDUSTRY
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

BALLOONING OF AN ADULT BLACK WIDOW SPIDER

IT is generally known among workers that the young of the black widow spider (*Latrodectus mactans* Fabricius) are dispersed by means of ballooning. Illingworth (1931)[1] states that in Hawaii black widow spiderlings are dispersed by the wind blowing them along with their thin, light ballooning threads; even going out to sea.

However, on September 16, 1935, at about 11 A.M. I was walking across a vacant lot in East Denver. The day was fair and slightly breezy. When I was about half-way across the lot, I happened to look up and see a mature black widow spider ballooning. The spider had its appendages contracted, and it was about eight feet above the ground; as I watched, it continued to rise higher and finally disappear. The several threads of silk supporting the spider in mid-air were about seven to eight feet long. Further observations of like occurrences may possibly bring out the significance of this phenomenon.

ALBERT MILZER

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

AIR-MASS AND FRONTAL ANALYSIS BY TELETYPE AND RADIO

TRANSMISSION by teletype and radio of the analysis of the morning weather map, in accordance with the air-mass system employed in the Division of Meteorological Physics of the Central Office of the Weather Bureau, Washington, D. C., was begun last October 15. The data, in code form, are placed on the teletype circuit daily at Washington, except Sundays and holidays, at 11:36 A. M. (E. S. T.) and are relayed to all airway communication circuits for entry on the manuscript maps at the various airports and for subsequent study and use of persons consulting them. City offices of the Weather Bureau receive the information by teletype, telephone or mail from nearby airports. Data for Sundays and holidays are transmitted the next working day immediately following the current day's analysis.

SNOWDEN D. FLORA

THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

LOCAL BRANCHES

IT is almost a year since the first Local Branch of the American Association for the Advancement of Science was organized. Six such branches are now operating, and several added groups have held preliminary meetings, looking toward organization. It is too early to discuss the success of these branches, but a descriptive statement about their operation and suggestions may be given that will be useful to those who plan other branches. The idea of local branches was discussed at length by Dr. J. McKeen Cattell in SCIENCE for December 21, 1934.[1] Reprints of that discussion may be had by application to the general secretary of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

The six branches already approved by the Council of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, in the order of their organization, are: The Lancaster (Pa.) Branch of the A. A. A. S., the Kingston (R. I.) Branch of the A. A. A. S., the South Florida (Miami) Science Association, the Phoenix (Ariz.) Branch of the A. A. A. S., the Westchester (Yonkers) Institute of Sciences, and the Mobile Academy of Science. Each of these branches is autonomous in its procedures. Each elects a president or chairman, a secretary and a treasurer. Some also have one or more vice-presidents, an executive committee, a program committee and other committees on special needs relating to place of meeting, research, publicity, membership and luncheons or dinners. In most cases the organization is simple, the officers serving as the executive committee, with authority to appoint temporary special committees, as occasion may make desirable. In some branches there is an honorary president or chairman. This plan permits the branch to recognize and gain help from an outstanding citizen who can hardly be expected to attend committee meetings regularly.

Membership in the branches includes persons with

[1] J. F. Illingworth, *Proc. Hawaiian Ent. Soc.*, 7: 410–414, 1 pl., 1931 (cited by Charles E. Burt).

[1] J. McKeen Cattell, SCIENCE, Vol. 80, 1934.