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Snow Crystals (Dover Pictorial Archive)



Synopsis

"Offers valuable material not only to students of crystallography but also to those of the arts." â ”
The New York Times
Did you ever try to photograph a snowflake? The procedure is very tricky. The work must be done rapidly in extreme cold, for even body heat can melt a rare specimen that has been painstakingly mounted. The lighting must be just right to reveal all the nuances of design without producing heat. But the results can be rewarding, as the work of W. A. Bentley proved. For almost half a century, Bentley caught and photographed thousands of snowflakes in his workshop at Jericho, Vermont, and made available to scientists and art instructors samples of his remarkable work. In 1931, the American Meteorological Society gathered together the best of these photomicrographs, plus some slides of frost, glaze, dew on vegetation and spider webs, sleet, and soft hail, and a text by W. J. Humphreys, and had them published. That book is here reproduced, unaltered, and unabridged. Over 2,000 beautiful crystals on these pages reveal the wonder of nature's diversity in uniformity; no two are alike, yet all are based on a common hexagon. The introductory text covers the technique of photographing snow crystals, classification, the fundamentals of crystallography, and markings. There are also brief discussions of the nature and cause of ice flowers, windowpane frost, dew, rime, sleet, and graupel. The book is of great value both to students of ice forms and for textile and other designers who can use the natural designs of these snow crystals in their work. Every photograph is royalty-free; you may use up to 10 without fees, permission, or acknowledgement. "A most unusual and very readable book." â ” Nature

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book has 226 pages, most of which consist of black and white photographs of snow and ice crystals. You might think that photographing snow crystals is no different than photographing other inanimate objects, but it's not true. Obtaining high-quality photographs of snow and ice crystals takes great work and perseverance, and you don't just find a library of such things lying about anywhere. The book contains more than just photographs. Part one has some really interesting stuff on different techniques used throughout history for reproducing the images of snow and ice crystals, along with some very interesting descriptions about the preparation and effort that go into taking a high-quality photographic plates. This section also describes how the crystals are classified, and some meteorological background information about how these crystals form, and how their structure leads to other phenomena in nature, such as the rings you sometimes observe around a bright moon on a cold winter night. Part 2 is only a few pages long (compared with part 1, which is 20) and discusses related phenomena such as the frost on windowpanes, dew and frost, rime ice, and glaze. Most of the book (pages 24 through 226) consists of reproductions of photographic plates showing snow crystals, with examples also of ice, window-pane frost, dew and frost, and glaze. A typical page shows 12 snow crystals, so there well over 2,000 examples in this book of just about every six-pointed crystal you can imagine. Now for the really interesting part. You've heard that no two snowflakes are the same. Right? Well, read this book very carefully.

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