

## The Katydid Forecast

Ah, those folks at Life Care Center of Winter Haven don't miss a trick. They are tuned in, perceptive and inquisitive. I received an e-mail Wednesday from Rusti Chaney of that facility, who said: "Your Winter Haven fans are curious to know if the legend of the katydids held true. You wrote on June 30 about the katydids. Did you get the first frost of the season today?"

Well, Rusti, you were right on time. Wednesday would have been the day that we should have seen frost in the Tennessee River valley if those funny-looking, weird-sounding prognosticators were right.

The katydid, for those of you who may not have read that earlier Perspective, is a big, green insect with large antennae (feelers). It is a type of long-horned grasshopper. Its name comes from the love call of a certain male species in the eastern United States. Katydids rub the bases of their front wings together to make their sounds. Many katydids begin their songs at twilight and continue all night.

Old-time farmers will tell you that when the first katydid's song is heard, the first frost will cover the earth 90 days later. I heard the first katydids' serenade on June 29 in the tall trees behind our house. If the legend is true, then our part of the country should have had its first frost on September 27, which was Wednesday.

Well, it didn't happen. The early-morning low was in the low 50s -- too warm for frost. The best chance for frost, it appears, will be Friday and Saturday mornings, when the low is predicted to be in the low- to mid-40s.

At any rate, it has gotten a little too cool for katydids. Most of their "songs" in the night are quieter now.

One lesson in all of this is obvious: You can't pull the wool over the eyes of those associates at Life Care Center of Winter Haven. Which causes one to wonder: How did that wool analogy get started? But that's another story.

--Beecher Hunter