

# EXTRA!

FROM THE OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC

TIME TO MAKE COOKIES!

“THE BEST CHRISTMAS PRESENT I EVER HAD!”

HOW TO SURVIVE BLIZZARDS,  
COLD SNAPS, AND POWER OUTAGES

**HOST SOME HOLIDAY CYCLAMENS**



DECEMBER 2022

PHOTO: LS9907/GETTY IMAGES

## FEATURES

### GARDENING

Host Some  
Holiday Cyclamens

### AMUSEMENT

“The Best Christmas  
Present I Ever Had!”

### FOOD

Time to Make  
Cookies!

### LIVING NATURALLY

How to Survive  
Blizzards, Cold  
Snaps, and Power  
Outages



### WEATHER FORECASTS

How We Make  
Our Predictions

December U.S.  
and Canadian  
Weather Forecasts

Weather Update

## DEPARTMENTS

### CALENDAR

December Holidays,  
Full Moon Names,  
and More

### ASTROLOGY

Best Days to  
Do Things

Gardening by the  
Moon's Sign

### ASTRONOMY

Sky Map for  
December

### WIT

Humor Me  
*Grins and groans  
from the Almanac*

### WHAT'S NEXT

See what we have  
in store for our  
January issue!



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# DECEMBER

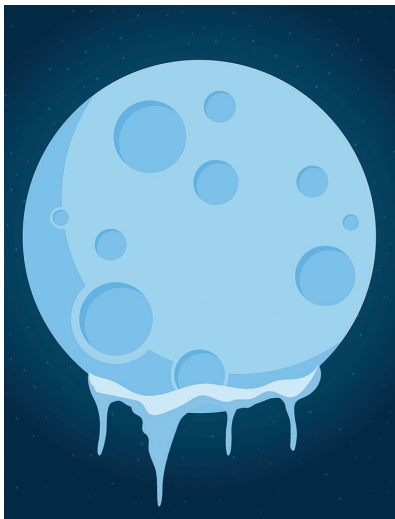
*Holidays, Full Moon Names, and More*

## DECEMBER'S BIRTHSTONES: TURQUOISE, ZIRCON, TANZANITE

- **Turquoise** can range in color from sky or greenish blue to pale green or greenish gray. At one time, it was attached to bridles to protect horses from illness. Native Americans added it to jewelry and many other items. It symbolizes protection, friendship, and good fortune.
- The oldest natural mineral on Earth, **zircon** dates back 4.4 billion years. It was once thought to promote sleep and wealth and protect from injury and evil.
- **Tanzanite**, a blue version of zoisite, was officially discovered in 1967 in Tanzania—hence its name. Because it is available only from a small area, it is likely to be depleted in the next few decades.

## HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

- Dec. 7:** National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- Dec. 15:** Bill of Rights Day
- Dec. 17:** Wright Brothers Day
- Dec. 18:** Chanukah begins at sundown
- Dec. 21:** Winter Solstice
- Dec. 25:** Christmas Day
- Dec. 26:** Boxing Day (Canada)
- Dec. 26:** First day of Kwanzaa



## EYE ON THE SKY

### DECEMBER'S FULL MOON NAMES

Cold Moon, Drift Clearing Moon, Hoar Frost Moon

### MOON PHASES

- Full Moon:** Dec. 7, 11:08 P.M. EST
- Last Quarter:** Dec. 16, 3:56 A.M. EST
- New Moon:** Dec. 23, 5:17 A.M. EST
- First Quarter:** Dec. 29, 8:21 P.M. EST



TAP FOR MORE ABOUT MOON PHASES



TAP FOR MORE ABOUT DECEMBER'S FULL MOON



## BEST DAYS TO DO THINGS

These December dates, deemed to be propitious in astrology, are based on the astrological passage of the Moon. However, consider all indicators before making any major decisions. –*Celeste Longacre*

### AROUND THE HOUSE

Bake: 9–11

Brew: 19, 20

Can, pickle, or make sauerkraut:  
9–11

Demolish: 19, 20

Dry fruit, vegetables, or meat: 12, 13

End projects: 22

Lay shingles: 12, 13

Make jams or jellies: 1, 27, 28

Paint: 17, 18

Start projects: 24

Wash floors: 1, 27, 28

Wash windows: 2, 3, 29, 30

## **PERSONAL**

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- Advertise to sell: 4–6
- Ask for a loan: 19, 20
- Begin diet to gain weight: 1, 6, 28
- Begin diet to lose weight: 15, 16
- Buy a home: 4–6
- Color hair: 4–6, 31
- Cut hair to discourage growth: 17, 18
- Cut hair to encourage growth: 4–6
- Entertain: 12, 13
- Get married: 17, 18
- Have dental care: 14–16
- Move (house/household): 7, 8
- Perm hair: 25, 26
- Quit smoking: 15, 16
- Straighten hair: 21, 22
- Travel for pleasure: 12, 13
- Wean children: 15, 16

## **OUTDOORS**

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- Begin logging: 23, 24
- Go camping: 21, 22
- Go fishing: 1–7, 23–31
- Set posts or pour concrete: 23, 24

## **IN THE GARDEN**

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- Destroy pests and weeds: 2, 3, 29, 30
- Graft or pollinate: 9–11
- Harvest aboveground crops: 4–6
- Harvest belowground crops: 14–16
- Mow to promote growth: 2, 3, 29, 30
- Mow to slow growth: 19, 20
- Pick fruit: 14–16
- Plant aboveground crops: 1, 27, 28
- Plant belowground crops: 9–11
- Prune to discourage growth: 12, 13
- Prune to encourage growth: 2, 3, 29, 30

## **ON THE FARM**

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- Breed animals: 19, 20
- Castrate animals: 25, 26
- Cut hay: 2, 3, 29, 30
- Purchase animals: 9–11
- Set eggs: 6, 7, 16
- Slaughter livestock: 19, 20
- Wean animals: 15, 16

# Take your pick!



## 2023 Almanac Calendars are Now Available!

**ORDER NOW!**



## GARDENING BY THE MOON'S SIGN

Use the December dates shown in the Moon's Astrological Place calendar below to find the best days for the following garden tasks:

TAP FOR  
MERCURY IN  
RETROGRADE  
DATES



TAP FOR  
DECEMBER  
MOON  
PHASES



**PLANT, TRANSPLANT, AND GRAFT:** Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces, or Taurus

**HARVEST:** Aries, Leo, Sagittarius, Gemini, or Aquarius

**BUILD/FIX FENCES OR GARDEN BEDS:** Capricorn

**CONTROL INSECT PESTS, PLOW, AND WEED:** Aries, Gemini, Leo, Sagittarius, or Aquarius

**PRUNE:** Aries, Leo, or Sagittarius. During a waxing Moon, pruning encourages growth; during a waning Moon, it discourages growth.

### THE MOON'S ASTROLOGICAL PLACE IN DECEMBER

**1** Pisces

**2** Aries

**3** Aries

**4** Taurus

**5** Taurus

**6** Taurus

**7** Gemini

**8** Gemini

**9** Cancer

**10** Cancer

**11** Cancer

**12** Leo

**13** Leo

**14** Virgo

**15** Virgo

**16** Virgo

**17** Libra

**18** Libra

**19** Scorpio

**20** Scorpio

**21** Sagittarius

**22** Sagittarius

**23** Capricorn

**24** Capricorn

**25** Aquarius

**26** Aquarius

**27** Pisces

**28** Pisces

**29** Aries

**30** Aries

**31** Taurus

## MERCURY IN RETROGRADE

Sometimes the other planets appear to be traveling backward through the zodiac; this is an illusion. We call this illusion *retrograde motion*.

Mercury's retrograde periods can cause our plans to go awry. However, this is an excellent time to reflect on the past. Intuition is high during these periods, and coincidences can be extraordinary.

When Mercury is retrograde, remain flexible, allow extra time for travel, and avoid signing contracts. Review projects and plans at these times, but wait until Mercury is direct again to make any final decisions.

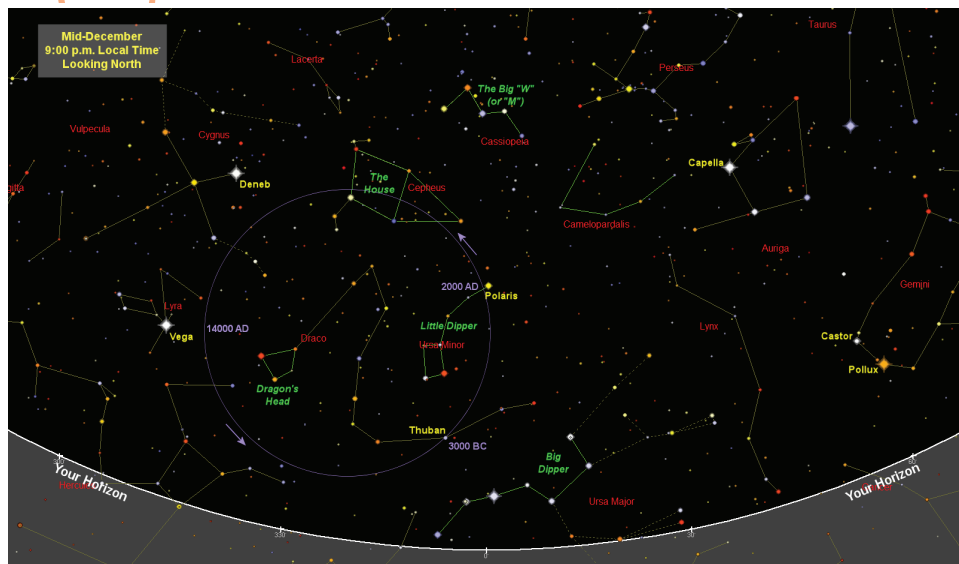
Mercury's remaining 2022 retrograde period will occur during **December 28–(January 18, 2023)**.

–Celeste Longacre

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Celebrating its 46th anniversary in 2023, the best-selling *Old Farmer's Almanac Gardening Calendar* is filled with beautiful art, helpful tips, insightful quotes, and an easy-to-use grid with holidays and Moon phases. Order yours today at [Almanac.com/Shop](https://www.almanac.com/shop).





## THE STARS GO 'ROUND AND 'ROUND

**T**he sky is always in motion. Or, to be more accurate, the sky *appears* to be in constant motion due to the rotation of Earth on its axis. For observers in the Northern Hemisphere, this motion is most obvious when you look to the north on a dark night.

The apparent motion of the sky can be compared to the movement of the hands of a clock. The center of the “sky clock” in the northern sky is Polaris, the North Star. Polaris lies very near the North Celestial Pole, the point in the sky that lies directly above Earth’s north pole. Polaris always remains nearly stationary, while all of the other stars and constellations appear to slowly revolve around it. Just as the hands of a clock revolve around the center of the clock’s face, so too does the sky appear to revolve around the Celestial Pole as Earth rotates on its axis.

The stars of the northern sky appear to rotate counterclockwise around Polaris. And just as with a clock, the movement is

TAP TO GET  
A PRINTABLE  
**DECEMBER  
SKY MAP**

TAP TO  
FOLLOW  
OHIOAN JEFF  
DETRAY'S SKY  
**ADVENTURES**



slow. Here is an example: Note the Big Dipper, located at the bottom of the map, directly below Polaris at 8:00 P.M. If you wait 6 hours—until 2:00 A.M.—and look at the northern sky again, you will see that the Big Dipper has revolved to a position directly to the right of Polaris. All of the other stars on the map will have moved, too. This apparent movement is caused entirely by the rotation of Earth on its axis.

**A** few constellations are near enough to Polaris that they never drop below the horizon, as do constellations farther from the North Star. These constellations close to Polaris are thus visible all night and every night of the year for observers at midnorthern latitudes, such as in the 48 contiguous United States and much of Europe, and are known as circumpolar constellations. There are six of them, highlighted in green on our map: Ursa Minor, the Lesser Bear (including Polaris); Ursa Major, the Greater Bear (including its Big Dipper asterism); Camelopardalis, the faint Giraffe; Cassiopeia, the Queen (with her distinctive Big W or M shape); Cepheus, the King (looking like a child's drawing of a house); and Draco, the Dragon (whose four-sided head is especially distinctive). These six circumpolar constellations perpetually chase one another around Polaris.

*However . . .* On a cosmic time scale, different stars take turns as our North Star. This is because Earth slowly wobbles as it spins through space, just as a spinning toy top wobbles as it slows down. This means that the axis of Earth does not always point at Polaris or indeed toward any bright star. Over a period of about 26,000 years, Earth's axis traces out a huge circle on the sky, shown in purple on our map. For much of this time, the axis points toward mostly empty space, so there are long periods when we have no North Star! We're lucky to live during a time when Earth's axis points toward Polaris.

Between 4,000 and 6,000 years ago, Earth's axis pointed at Thuban, a not-so-bright star in the body of Draco, so Thuban—much dimmer than Polaris—was then the North Star. Looking ahead, about 12,000 years from now, Earth's axis will point toward the vicinity of the extremely bright star Vega, which will then be our dazzling North Star for a few thousand years, much brighter than our current North Star, Polaris. And in 26,000 years, the axis will once again point at Polaris, making it our North Star once more!

—Jeff DeTray



# Host Some Holiday Cyclamens

*How to keep the flowers coming*

**A**n increasingly popular alternative to the traditional holiday poinsettia or Christmas cactus—and an attractive easy-care houseplant that will bloom continuously throughout the winter months—is the Florist’s cyclamens (*Cyclamen persicum*). These plants offer an array of showy, bright-color flowers in white, vivid red, pink, purple, and bicolor. The backswept blossoms resemble a gathering of tiny butterflies, each one perched on top of a slender, translucent stem that rises above the dark green foliage.

Much of cyclamens’ charm comes from their intricately veined, green (often marbled with silver) heart-shape leaves that can be maroon underneath. Given the right conditions, cyclamens brought in to bloom for the holiday

season will continue blossoming for up to 3 months. Here’s how to make that happen.

As each flower fades, remove the entire flower stalk from where it attaches to the tuber by giving it a sharp tug. New flowers will emerge from one of the many buds waiting just below the foliage.

The trick to growing healthy cyclamens is to keep them in a cool room with bright light and good air circulation.

Daytime temperatures of 60° to 65°F with nights at around 50° are ideal. Cyclamens actually prefer a drafty old house to one that is toasty and well insulated, which probably explains why your grandmother’s cyclamens grew so well. If your house is warm, keep your plants by a cool window—even in the garage—until you want to bring them out for display.

Cyclamens grow from

tubers that are half-buried in potting soil. When watering, avoid getting water directly on the tubers, which could cause them to rot. A safer method is to place each pot in a saucer of water for about 5 minutes, or until the soil is uniformly moist. While cyclamens are in bloom, feed them every other week with a half-strength portion of liquid houseplant fertilizer.

In early spring, cyclamens stop blooming; their leaves will turn yellow as the plants go dormant. Gradually reduce water until June, then set the plants outside in partial shade and water and feed regularly. Bring them back inside in early fall. They will usually start producing new leaves and flower buds soon thereafter, and you will have recycled your cyclamens.

—*Almanac editors*

AMUSEMENT



# “The Best Christmas Present I Ever Had!”

*A holiday classic originally published in the 1984 Almanac*

**E**very Christmas Eve, John M. Horan, the postmaster in Stow, Massachusetts, placed two refrigerator shelves beneath the family tree in the living room of his home.

These were ordinary shelves similar to those in most refrigerators manufactured in the 1940s and '50s. Yet, Horan preserved them carefully, guarded them from rust, and always placed them under the family tree on the great day. Here's why.

On December 18, 1955, paratrooper Johnny Horan was a passenger aboard an Air Force C-45 high above the Cascade Mountains in the state of Washington. He had hitched Air Force rides to the West Coast for a reunion in Seattle with his Japanese bride, Teruko, who was arriving in the United States with their three children the next day.

Soon after becoming

airborne, the trip became a nightmare. The wings of the small aircraft started to ice up and the C-45 began to tilt to one side. Then the pilot ordered all aboard to bail out.

"I went first," said Horan. "I already had my parachute on. I weighed about 160 pounds. Add to that the weight of the chute and the heavy winter clothes that I was wearing, and I estimate 200 pounds left that plane when I leaped out. It was my 29th jump."

The others on the plane never jumped. After Horan bailed out, the plane righted itself. Without Horan, the C-45 was able to land safely at a nearby Air Force base.

"I landed waist deep in snow. I folded up my chute, tucked it under my arm, and started downhill. I figured eventually I'd hit a highway. Little did I realize how long it would take me to get down off that mountain."

Darkness came and Horan kept moving.

He didn't have any matches. All the brush he passed was damp or buried under heavy snow anyway, so it was impossible for him to start a fire. His only course of action was to keep heading down the mountain. When daybreak arrived, he was still completely surrounded by snow.

Finally—it was about 11 o'clock in the morning, which was the time his wife and children were due to arrive in Seattle aboard a ship—up ahead, he saw a small cabin. It took him more than an hour to reach the shelter.

The cabin was empty. The only food available was a can of cocoa. There was a woodstove, an old bed, and a refrigerator—but no electricity.

Horan found some wood in a corner and started a fire in the stove with some matches that he had found on a shelf. Then he melted some snow and enjoyed a cup of cocoa, after which he

hung up his soaking-wet clothes to dry.

In Seattle, his wife and youngsters were aware by then that he was lost somewhere on the mountain. “I did the only thing that I could do,” said Teruko. “I prayed for my husband’s safe return.”

Three days later, her prayers were still unanswered. A search had been conducted by the military and local authorities, but no trace of the paratrooper had been found.

Horan remained in the cabin for 3 days, waiting for help to arrive. It never came. “I was starving,” he said. “The cocoa was gone, and I knew I’d have to do something if I wanted to survive. I decided to start walking again.

“To do that, I figured I’d need snowshoes, so I tore off some large shingles from the cabin, and tied them to my boots with cord from my ‘chute. I was off again—but not for long. I got about a half-mile

when the shingles broke. It was back to the cabin again. I started looking around for something else to try as snowshoes. I spotted a refrigerator shelf on the floor. There was a second shelf inside the ice box. I tied a shelf onto each of my boots, and I was off again.

“This time, those shelves kept me up on top of the snow and I was able to move right along.

“Still, I had a long way to go. Night came, but I couldn’t afford to stop. I was hungry. I was freezing, too.

“The next day, I was still moving. By then, there was less snow. Only up to my knees, I’d guess. Still, there was nothing in sight except snow. I was beginning to get discouraged.

“Then I heard voices. Two men were talking and laughing. They were somewhere up ahead—beyond the trees. I shouted again and again. They heard me and came running through the snow

toward me. They knew who I was the minute they saw me. There had been quite a bit in the newspaper about me.

“Those men picked me up, snowshoes and all, and carried me to a place called the Rustic Inn, which is on the outskirts of a small town called Easton. I remember that the first thing I had was a cup of tea. It was the most delicious tea I ever tasted.

“I remember talking to my wife on the phone. Then an ambulance came, and they took me away to the hospital. I remember, just as they were carrying me out on the stretcher, asking one of the men to give me those two refrigerator shelves. ‘They are the best Christmas present I ever had,’ I told him. ‘They saved my life.’”

—Richard Pritchett

*Editor’s note: John M. Horan passed away in 2017 at the age of 85, more than 61 years after surviving 4 days in the Washington state wilderness.*

FOOD



# Time to Make Cookies!

*The holidays are approaching, and this means that it's time to make cookies. Whether you're invited to join in a cookie swap or need to make host/hostess gifts, sharing cookies is a deliciously fun option.*

PHOTO: LANA M/SHUTTERSTOCK



FOOD

# Chocolate Peppermint Creams

PHOTO: AIMEE TUCKER

## CHOCOLATE PEPPERMINT CREAMS

### COOKIES:

3 cups all-purpose flour  
1-1/4 teaspoons baking soda  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
3/4 cup (1-1/2 sticks) butter  
1-1/2 cups brown sugar  
12 ounces semisweet chocolate chips  
2 eggs

### FILLING:

3 cups confectioners' sugar  
1/3 cup butter, softened  
1/4 teaspoon peppermint extract, or to taste  
1/4 cup milk

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.

*For cookies:* In a bowl, sift together flour, baking soda, and salt.

In a saucepan over low heat, combine butter, brown sugar, and 2 tablespoons of water. Stir as the butter melts. Add chocolate chips and stir as the chocolate melts. Remove pan from the heat and set aside to cool slightly. Add eggs and, with an electric mixer, beat to blend. Add flour mixture and stir to combine.

Drop by heaping teaspoonfuls onto prepared baking sheets. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, or until edges are dry but cookies are still soft in the middle. Transfer cookies to a rack to cool completely.

*For filling:* Using a stand or hand mixer, combine all of the filling ingredients and mix until smooth.

Spread 1 teaspoon of filling on one cookie, then top with another cookie.

**Makes 3 dozen sandwich cookies.**



# Butterscotch Icebox Cookies

## BUTTERSCOTCH ICEBOX COOKIES

1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, softened

1-1/4 cups brown sugar

1 egg

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1-1/2 cups all-purpose flour

1-1/2 teaspoons baking powder

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup chopped nuts

Using a stand or hand mixer, cream together butter and brown sugar. Add egg and vanilla and mix well.

In a bowl, sift together flour, baking powder, and salt. Add to butter mixture and mix well. Stir in nuts. Form dough into a 2-inch-diameter log and wrap in foil or wax paper. Chill for 12 to 24 hours.

Preheat oven to 400°F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.

Cut log into slices and place on prepared cookie sheets. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, or until golden.

**Makes about 5 dozen cookies.**

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FOOD

# Snowball Cookies

## SNOWBALL COOKIES

3/4 cup (1-1/2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened

1/3 cup sugar

1/4 cup confectioners' sugar, plus more for finishing cookies

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1-3/4 cups all-purpose flour

1/3 cup yellow cornmeal

1/4 teaspoon salt

Adjust oven rack to lower third of oven and preheat to 350°F. Line baking sheets with parchment paper.

Using a stand or hand mixer, cream together butter, sugars, and vanilla.

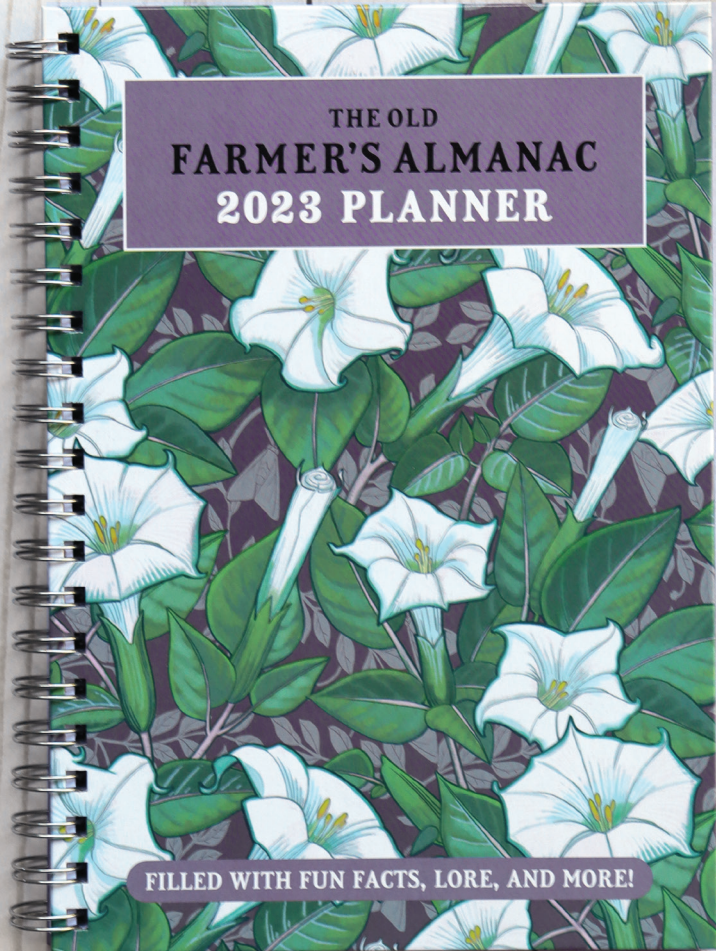
In a bowl, combine flour, cornmeal, and salt. Add dry ingredients to butter mixture and stir to create a soft dough.

Shape dough into 1-inch balls and space about 1-1/2 inches apart on prepared baking sheets. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes, or until bottoms are lightly colored.

While cookies are still warm on baking sheets, use a small sieve to sprinkle confectioners' sugar over cookies. When thoroughly cool, dredge them in confectioners' sugar for a second coating.

**Makes about 3 dozen cookies.**

# Everything you need to stay on track in 2023!



**ORDER NOW!**

LIVING NATURALLY



# How to Survive Blizzards, Cold Snaps, and Power Outages



## LIVING NATURALLY

**U**p here in northern New England, we have had our fair share of walloping nor'easters. One year, blizzard conditions rolled into town at night, and we'd accumulated 10 inches of wet, heavy snow and lost power within hours.

When we lose power, though, our two woodstoves—one of them a modern cookstove with an oven—keep us warm and well fed and prevent our pipes from freezing.

### **BEFORE THE BLIZZARD**

This is our emergency-preparation routine:

- **We leave the chickens indoors**, with plenty of food and water.
- **We assemble charged flashlights and kerosene lamps** on the kitchen table.
- **We load the wood boxes.**
- **We set the snow shovels and roof rake inside the greenhouse** (our entry to the rest of

the house).

- **We take showers and leave the tub half-filled** with flushing water, in anticipation of a power outage.
- **We fill a couple of big stockpots** with drinking and cooking water.

### **AFTER THE BLIZZARD**

During a particularly bad nighttime blizzard, after a fitful sleep, we awoke to 14 inches of snow, still wet and heavy, still coming down. By midmorning, the snow had stopped.

#### **Be sure you have strong shovels on hand!**

After the snow stopped, we donned outdoor gear and tackled 2-plus hours of heavy shoveling. Our fridge and root cellar were full. We had nonperishable food and water in the pantry.

**Stock a battery-powered radio (rechargeable with a hand crank).** As telephone cables were downed by the blizzard,

our radio told us that hundreds of thousands were without power. Roads in town couldn't even be plowed until utility crews arrived to saw up downed trees and untangle dangerous wires on the road.

By then, our utility's emergency phone line was telling us to prepare for a "multiday event." They'd called in hundreds of utility-line workers from eastern Canada and as far south as Tennessee. My big concern: lack of power to the two big freezers in the cellar that hold a season's worth of homegrown fruit and vegetables—our winter stash. I threw insulating quilts over them and hoped for the best. You might consider a generator.

### **WHAT-IFS**

I've lived most of my life in rural towns in northern New England, and, over the decades, I've learned a few hard

## LIVING NATURALLY

lessons about winter. No matter how well prepared I think I am, I sometimes forget essentials, and things come up that I hadn't imagined.

• **What do you do when your septic system freezes?** The year my daughter Molly was 2, our aged septic drainpipe cracked underground, leaked, and froze solid from early December until mid-April. (We've long since replaced it.) That winter we sponge-bathed, tossed dishwater into the bushes behind the woodshed, and fashioned a series of makeshift toilets in the basement: 5-gallon buckets and ample amounts of wood ashes. Come spring, we trucked the pails far into the sugarbush, dug holes, and buried the contents.

• **What happens if you hurt yourself?** During a 3-day blizzard, I sliced my finger to the bone hacking away at a winter squash. The gash really needed stitches, but

there was no way that we could get out and drive the 20 miles to an urgent care center. I disinfected it, bathed it in a strong infusion of dried yarrow leaves (with styptic, antimicrobial, and anti-inflammatory properties), and then applied pressure with a sterile bandage until the bleeding slowed. I wrapped it with a dry, sterile gauze pad and bound it tightly with a big wad of duct tape. The next morning, I undid the bandage. The bleeding had stopped, and I was pleased to note no swelling or oozing. I disinfected the area again, applied four butterfly bandages to keep the wound edges together, and again wrapped it with duct tape.

The message for rural dwellers: Maintain a well-stocked first-aid kit, with bandages of all sizes and shapes, including butterfly bandages, self-adhesive elastic

bandages, and a big roll of duct tape. I also keep bottles of over-the-counter painkillers and liquid antihistamine, plenty of disinfectant, a digital thermometer, and a pair of fine-pointed tweezers for removing splinters.

### LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE MOST RECENT STORM

• **Have a backup plan for the landline.** Last summer, our small town finally got wired with fiber-optic cable, and we signed up. One thing that the sales and technical folks failed to tell us was that the optical cable—and along with it, our landline—would fail along with the power. Despite an 18-hour backup system in the basement, our phone did fail, and we spent one night and half the next day without any connection to the outside world. That was frightening. The high cost and poor cell service



## DISASTER PREPARATION LIST

- WATER
- NON-PERISHABLE FOOD
- BATTERY RADIO
- BATTERIES
- FIRST AID KIT
- FLASHLIGHT
- BLANKET
- CELL PHONE
- MATCHES
- WHISTLE
- CASH & KEYS
- HAND SANITIZER
- BASIC TOOL SET
- TRASH BAGS
- BABY SUPPLIES
- EMERGENCY CONTACTS
- PERSONAL HYGIENE ITEMS

in our area has kept us from going mobile, but we've since found a very-low-cost, pay-as-you-go phone that connects with the most reliable service.

• **Keep an eye on the fire extinguishers.** Midway through the storm, I thought to check the three that we keep on hand: two all-purpose ones for the wood-stove areas and a smaller one for kitchen fires perched on the shelf alongside the herbs and spices over the gas stove. All

had expired! We tend our stoves with care, keep combustibles far from both the stoves, and store the ashes in a covered metal trash barrel on a cement floor, but an accident, a moment of carelessness, or an electrical problem could cause a blaze.

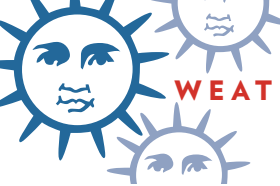
• **Keep fresh batteries in the smoke detectors.** I suddenly remembered that we hadn't changed the backup batteries in our hard-wired smoke detector system since

it had been installed 3 years before. Guess what? We were out of the 9-volt batteries that the system required.

After we recovered from the storm, I headed off to buy three new fire extinguishers, a cell phone, and a package of 9-volt batteries for the smoke alarms.

—Margaret Boyles

TAP TO READ MORE OF MARGARET BOYLES'S POSTS IN HER "LIVING NATURALLY" BLOG



# WEATHER FORECASTS

THE NEARER THE NEW MOON TO CHRISTMAS DAY,  
THE HARDER THE WINTER.

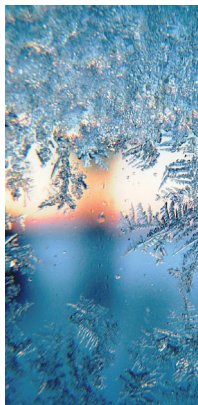
## HOW WE MAKE OUR PREDICTIONS

We derive our weather forecasts from a secret formula that was devised by the founder of this Almanac, Robert B. Thomas, in 1792. Thomas believed that weather on Earth was influenced by sunspots, which are magnetic storms on the surface of the Sun.

Over the years, we have refined and enhanced this formula with state-of-the-art technology and modern scientific calculations. We employ three scientific disciplines to make our long-range predictions: solar science, the study of sunspots and other solar activity; climatology, the study of prevailing weather patterns; and meteorology, the study of the atmosphere. We predict weather trends and events by comparing solar patterns and historical weather conditions with current solar activity.

Our forecasts emphasize temperature and precipitation deviations from averages, or normals. These are based on 30-year statistical averages prepared by government meteorological agencies and updated every 10 years. Our forecasts are based on the tabulations that span the period 1991 through 2020.

We believe that nothing in the universe happens haphazardly, that there is a cause-and-effect pattern to all phenomena. However, although neither we nor any other forecasters have as yet gained sufficient insight into the mysteries of the universe to predict the weather with total accuracy, our results are almost always very close to our traditional claim of 80 percent.

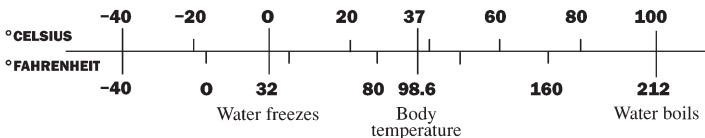


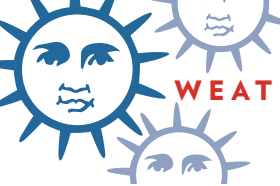
TAP TO FIND OUT THE WEATHER HISTORY OF THE DAY



LOVE ALL THINGS WEATHER? TAP FOR THE WEATHER FOLKLORE OF THE DAY

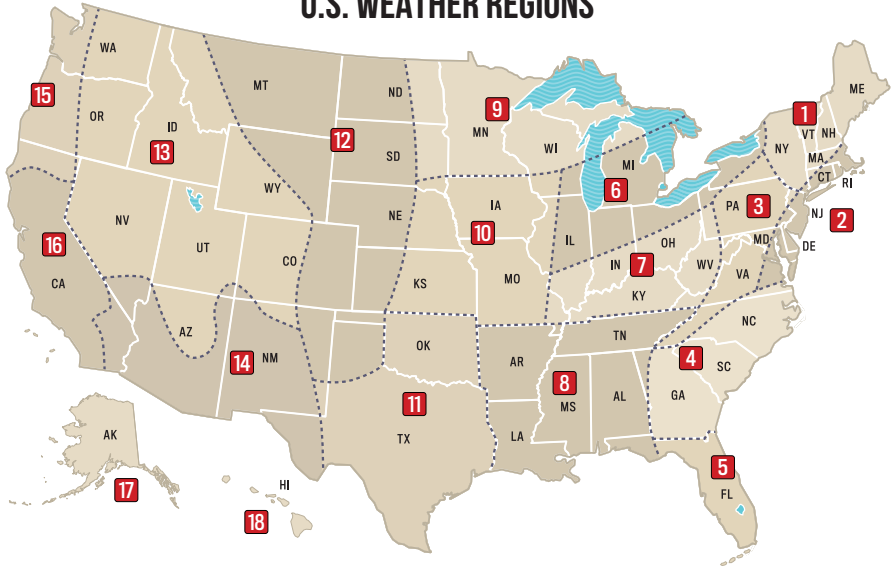
### CELSIUS-FAHRENHEIT TABLE





# WEATHER FORECASTS

## U.S. WEATHER REGIONS



## CANADIAN WEATHER REGIONS



CLICK HERE TO  
FIND DECEMBER  
WEATHER  
PREDICTIONS  
FOR THE U.S.  
AND CANADIAN  
REGIONS





## WINTER RULES

**O**n National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, December 7, it will be rainy and mild across Hawaii and much of the mainland U.S., although snowy in the Northeast and Intermountain West. Sunny and warm conditions will be the rule across the Desert Southwest.

December 15 is Bill of Rights Day in the U.S., where you may be wishing for an amendment to the weather in most eastern areas, as it will be chilly with showers in the Southeast and chilly with rain and snow from the Northeast through the Great Lakes and across to the northern Rockies. Rainy weather will dampen the Southwest, but it will be sunny and dry across the southern Plains.

The winter solstice on the 21st will bring the shortest day and longest night of the year in North America. Snow or rain will block the Sun from the Midwest and Great Lakes through the Ohio Valley and from the Intermountain West to the Pacific Coast. Mainly clear skies will be good for stargazing along the East Coast but don't forget extra blankets. Expect snow showers and cold conditions from Atlantic Canada westward into southern British Columbia.

On Christmas, December 25, the weather will be chilly with snow in the



air from the Northeast through the Upper Midwest and southeastward into the Appalachians and from the Intermountain West through to the Pacific Northwest. Rain will cause slow holiday travel across Florida and the rest of the Southeast, as well as in the southwestern U.S. and in Hawaii. Snowy and cold conditions will be the rule across southern Canada.

December 26 is Boxing Day in Canada and the first day of Kwanzaa. Sunny and cold conditions will be the rule from the Southeast and Deep South into the Heartland, while most other areas will see snow, mixed rain and snow, or periods of rain. Expect snow or flurries from Atlantic Canada through British Columbia.

For those attending New Year's Eve celebrations, expect dry and cold conditions for the ball to drop in New York city and dry and warm conditions in Orlando, but keep the umbrella handy for rain in Las Vegas and San Francisco. Expect cold and snowy conditions in Montreal and Vancouver.

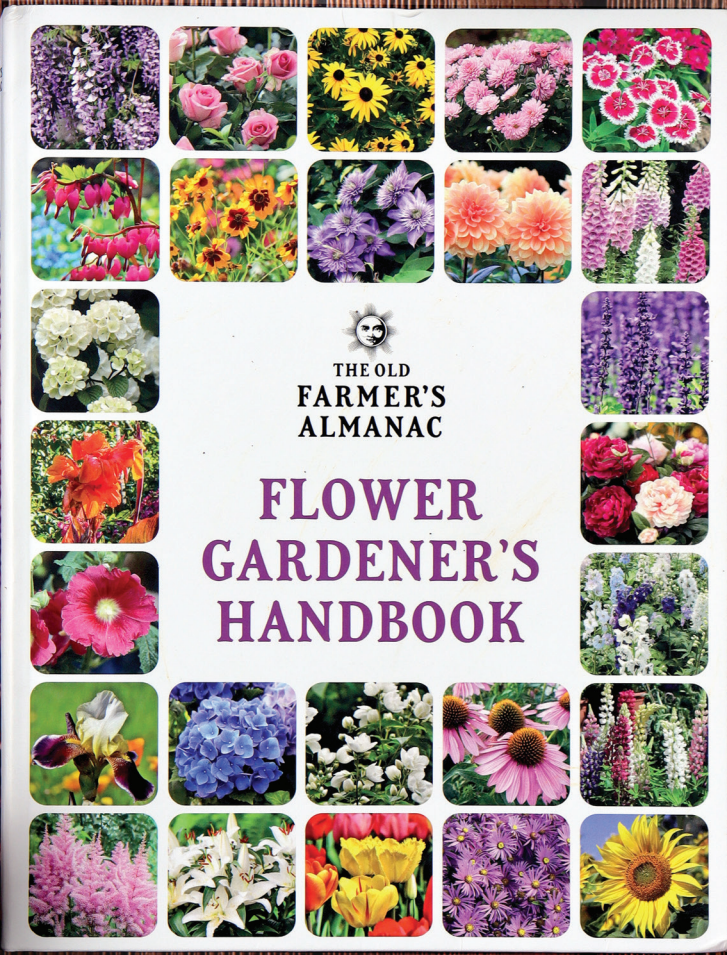
**D**ecember temperatures will be colder than normal from the East Coast to the Mississippi River and across southern Alaska and near to above normal elsewhere. Precipitation will be above normal along the Atlantic seaboard, across the Great Lakes and Upper Midwest, and along the Pacific Coast and near to below normal elsewhere. Canadian temperatures will be near to below normal across much of the country. Precipitation will be near to above normal in most places, although below normal over southwest British Columbia.

Important factors in the upcoming winter include a weak La Niña, which would be for a rare third winter in a row. We expect a warm phase in the Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation (AMO) and a cool phase of the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO). Oscillations are linked to ocean-atmosphere patterns that influence the weather over periods of weeks to years.

We're also monitoring solar activity, as there is a relationship between solar energy and the stratospheric winds near the equator (known as the QBO). Under certain conditions, the polar vortex can be displaced from the North Pole, which could open the door for cold shots across the central and eastern United States and southern Canada during this upcoming winter.

*-Bob Smerbeck and Brian Thompson, Old Farmer's Almanac meteorologists*

# A Flowering Future



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FARMER'S  
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# HUMOR ME

GRINS AND GROANS FROM THE ALMANAC



## BLOWN AWAY

Tom went out to order a pair of gloves for his sweetheart for Christmas and to make a purchase for his father. Of course,

as fate would have it, the orders got mixed up and the young lady received a pair of heavy woolen men's socks with the following note:

“Dear Helen: Please accept these in consideration of my love for you. Oh, that I were to be the only one to see them when you wear them. If you find



any difficulty in getting them on, blow in them. Yours affectionately, Tom”

### AUTO PILOT

“Where is the car?” demanded Mrs. Diggs. “Dear me!” responded Professor Diggs. “Did I take the car out?”

“You certainly did! You drove it to town.”

“How odd! I remember now that after I got out, I turned around to thank the gentleman who gave me the lift and wondered where he had gone.”

### CHECKING IT TWICE

“As you don’t seem to know what you’d like for Christmas, Tommy,” said his mother, “here’s a printed list of possible presents for a good little boy.”

Tommy read over the list and said:

“Mother, haven’t you a list for a bad little boy?”

### ACTING UP

The teacher was giving the class a natural history lecture on Australia.

“There is one animal,” she said, “that none of you has mentioned. It does not stand up on its legs all the time. It does not walk like other animals, but takes funny little skips and hops. What is it?”

Yelled the class as one: “Charlie Chaplin!”

### UNDERCOVER SANTA

Johnny, 7, and Bennie, 5, had agreed to stay awake to try to watch Santa Claus fill their stockings. The Sandman was

too much for Bennie, though, and he fell asleep. At about 11:00 o’clock, he roused enough to sleepily ask Johnny:

“Did he come?”

“Yes.”

“Did you see him?”

“Yes.”

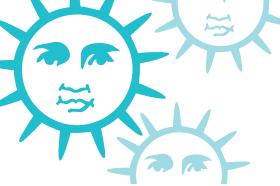
“What did he do?”

“Oh, he just fussed with our stockings a bit and then went and got into bed with Mother.”

### WRITE TO THE TOP

Instead of his usual pre-Christmas letter to Santa Claus, Robbie decided to go right to the top and write a letter to God.

After enumerating the many and varied presents that he wanted very much, he concluded with: “And remember, God, the Lord loveth a cheerful giver.”



# WHAT'S NEXT



## AMUSEMENT

Don't Be Off Your Rocker!—how to choose and enjoy a rocking chair



## CALENDAR

Moon phases; January holidays and full Moon names; New Year's Neujahrsbrezel



## ASTRONOMY

Explore with our Sky Map



## FOOD

Must-Make Maple Recipes



## LIVING NATURALLY

The Power of One Small Thing



## GARDENING

A Bit of Light Reading—all about grow lights

Plus: Weather Update • U.S. and Canadian Weather Forecasts • Gardening by the Moon's Sign • Best Days to Do Things • Humor • and much more in the January *EXTRA!*

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