

EXTRA!

FROM THE OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC

THE ABCs OF PLANTAR WARTS
RISE AND SHINE—IT'S MUFFIN TIME!
STATE SONG HIT PARADE, A-M
MAKE THE MOST OF COMPOST



FEBRUARY 2023

ILLUSTRATION: NATALIE./GETTY IMAGES

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Humor Me
*Grins and groans
from the Almanac*

WHAT'S NEXT

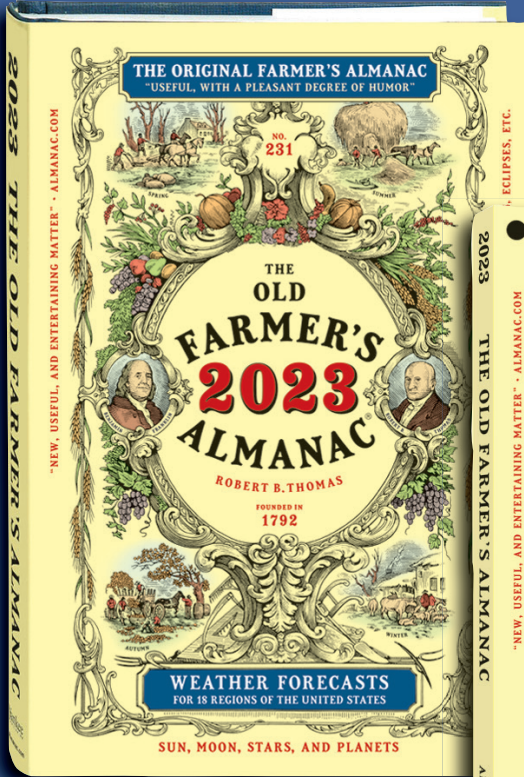
See what we have
in store for our
March issue!



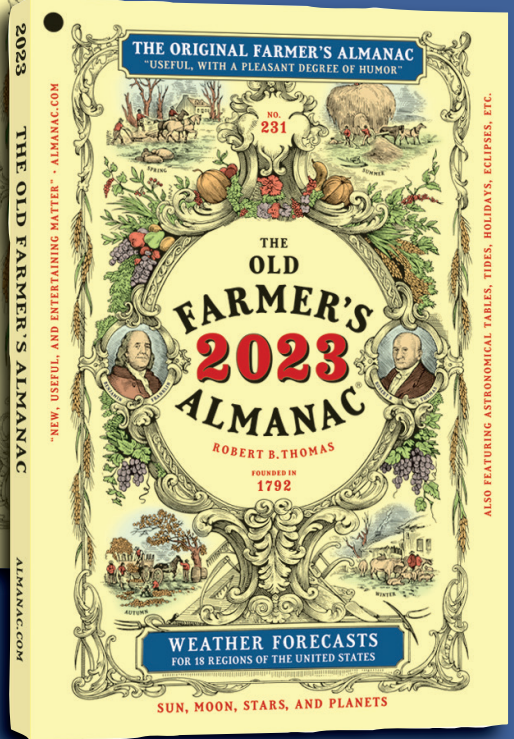
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FEBRUARY

Holidays, Full Moon Names, and More

CALENDAR THIS 'N' THAT

George Washington, the first U.S. president, was born on February 11, 1731, according to the Julian calendar, which was in use at the time. After the Gregorian calendar was adopted in 1752, his equivalent birth date in the new calendar became February 22, 1732.

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

- Feb. 2:** Groundhog Day
- Feb. 12:** Abraham Lincoln's Birthday
- Feb. 14:** Valentine's Day
- Feb. 20:** Presidents' Day
- Feb. 21:** Shrove Tuesday
- Feb. 21:** Mardi Gras
- Feb. 22:** Ash Wednesday
- Feb. 22:** George Washington's Birthday
- Feb. 27:** Orthodox Lent begins



EYE ON THE SKY

FEBRUARY'S FULL MOON NAMES

Snow Moon, Black Bear Moon, Raccoon Moon

MOON PHASES

Full Moon: Feb. 5, 1:29 P.M. EST
Last Quarter: Feb. 13, 11:01 A.M. EST
New Moon: Feb. 20, 2:06 A.M. EST
First Quarter: Feb. 27, 3:06 A.M. EST

 TAP FOR MORE ABOUT MOON PHASES

 TAP FOR MORE ABOUT FEBRUARY'S FULL MOON

Make plans for 2023! Order your calendars at [Almanac.com/Shop](https://www.almanac.com/shop).



BEST DAYS TO DO THINGS

These February 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*

PERSONAL

Advertise to sell: 24, 25

Ask for a loan: 12, 13

Begin diet to gain weight: 22, 26

Begin diet to lose weight: 8, 13

Buy a home: 24, 25

Color hair: 24, 25

Cut hair to discourage growth:
9–11

Cut hair to encourage growth: 24, 25

Entertain: 4–6

Get married: 9–11

Have dental care: 7, 8

Move (house/household): 1, 26–28



Perm hair: 18, 19
Quit smoking: 8, 13
Straighten hair: 14, 15
Travel for pleasure: 4–6
Wean children: 8, 13

AROUND THE HOUSE

Bake: 2, 3
Brew: 12, 13
Can, pickle, or make sauerkraut: 12, 13
Demolish: 12, 13
Dry fruit, vegetables, or meat: 14, 15
End projects: 4
Lay shingles: 4–6
Make jams or jellies: 20, 21
Paint: 9–11
Start projects: 21
Wash floors: 20, 21
Wash windows: 22, 23

OUTDOORS

Begin logging: 16, 17
Go camping: 14, 15

Go fishing: 1–5, 20–28
Set posts or pour concrete: 16, 17

IN THE GARDEN

Destroy pests and weeds: 22, 23
Graft or pollinate: 2, 3
Harvest aboveground crops: 24, 25
Harvest belowground crops: 7, 8
Mow to promote growth: 2, 3, 21
Mow to slow growth: 12, 13
Pick fruit: 7, 8
Plant aboveground crops: 2, 3, 21
Plant belowground crops: 12, 13
Prune to discourage growth: 14, 15
Prune to encourage growth: 4, 22, 23

ON THE FARM

Breed animals: 12, 13
Castrate animals: 18, 19
Cut hay: 22, 23
Purchase animals: 2, 3
Set eggs: 8, 9
Slaughter livestock: 12, 13
Wean animals: 8, 13



GARDENING BY THE MOON'S SIGN

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

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 FEBRUARY

| | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| 1 Gemini | 9 Libra | 17 Capricorn | 25 Taurus |
| 2 Cancer | 10 Libra | 18 Aquarius | 26 Gemini |
| 3 Cancer | 11 Libra | 19 Aquarius | 27 Gemini |
| 4 Leo | 12 Scorpio | 20 Pisces | 28 Gemini |
| 5 Leo | 13 Scorpio | 21 Pisces | |
| 6 Leo | 14 Sagittarius | 22 Aries | |
| 7 Virgo | 15 Sagittarius | 23 Aries | |
| 8 Virgo | 16 Capricorn | 24 Taurus | |



TAP FOR
MERCURY IN
RETROGRADE
DATES



TAP FOR
FEBRUARY
MOON
PHASES

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*.

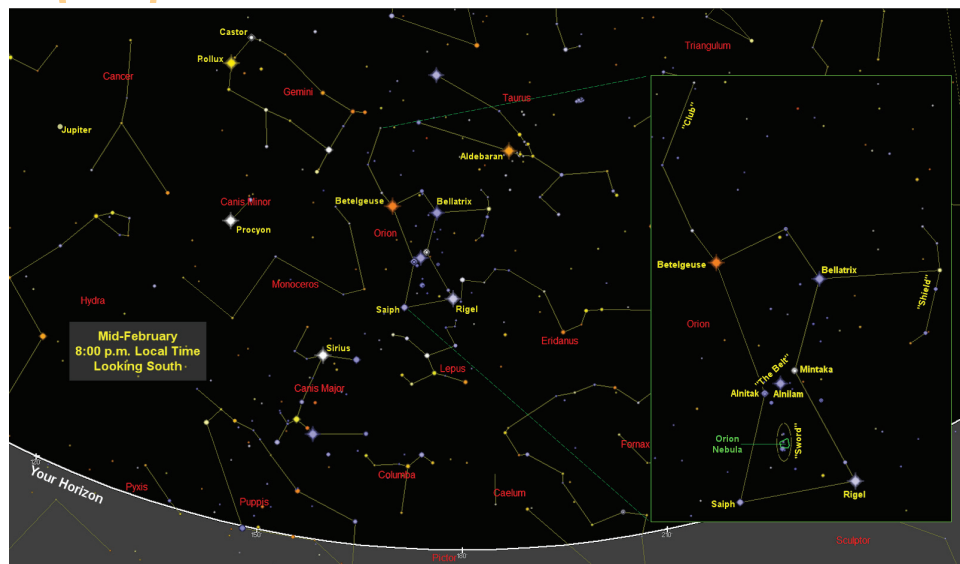
Mercury's retrograde periods can cause our plans to go awry. However, this is an excellent time to reflect on the past. Intuition is high during these periods, and coincidences can be extraordinary.

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 2023 retrograde periods: **April 21–May 14, August 23–September 14, and December 13–(January 1, 2024).**

–*Celeste Longacre*

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ALL HAIL, THE MIGHTY HUNTER!

There is no brighter constellation in the night sky than Orion, the Hunter. And there is no better time to view Orion than an early evening in February, so bundle up!

When you look to the south in February, your view is dominated by Orion, standing tall and proud. Let's examine the Hunter in detail. This month's Sky Map includes a close-up view of Orion on the right-hand side of the map.

The main figure of Orion consists of seven bright stars. The brightest of these are Betelgeuse on his right shoulder and Rigel on his left knee. Both are among the sky's 10 brightest stars, and they have distinctly different colors. At a glance, it is easy to see that Betelgeuse is a yellowish orange star while Rigel is a dazzling blue-white. In general, the colors of stars are very subtle, but the colors of these two bright stars are easy to see.

Betelgeuse and Rigel are both classified as "supergiant"

TAP TO GET
A PRINTABLE
FEBRUARY
SKY MAP

TAP TO
FOLLOW
OHIOAN JEFF
DETRAY'S SKY
ADVENTURES



stars, having about 8 and 21 times the mass, respectively, of our Sun. Where Betelgeuse really excels, however, is in its sheer size—as much as 1,000 times larger than our Sun!

On Orion's left shoulder lies the very blue star Bellatrix, meaning “female warrior.” It's no coincidence that the Bellatrix LeStrange character in the Harry Potter books is extremely warlike (and not in a good way!). Bellatrix (the star) is even bluer than Rigel, but because Bellatrix is dimmer, its color is less apparent except on especially clear, dark nights.

Completing the main outline of Orion is Saiph, marking the Hunter's right knee. This is another supergiant star, 22 times the mass of our Sun.

The three stars of the Belt are a prominent feature of Orion. These stars span the midsection of the Hunter, forming a straight bright line. Although we call it the Belt, this asterism (unofficial star pattern) has many names in various cultures and religions, including the “yardstick,” the “wand,” and the “Three Kings” (after the Christmas story).

If you are viewing Orion from a dark location, you'll be able to see his right arm rising upward from Betelgeuse. The arm is often depicted as holding a weapon of some sort, often a club. Orion's other arm extends to the right of Bellatrix and holds a shield to fend off the Hunter's enemies.

Finally, you may notice a group of three stars hanging downward below the Belt. These are said to represent Orion's sword. The middle “star” in the sword isn't a star at all, but is instead a giant cloud of glowing gas and dust known as the Orion Nebula or the Great Nebula in Orion.

This nebula is a stellar nursery, where new stars are being born at this very minute. The cloud glows because many young stars are still embedded within it. With binoculars, the Great Nebula looks like a small, glowing cloud. It is the closest star-forming region to Earth, a mere 1,300 light-years away!

-Jeff DeTray

Your Dream Garden Is Just a Tap Away



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GARDENING



Make the Most of Compost

PHOTO: ZEROCATTLE/GETTY IMAGES

How does your garden grow? If you have not enjoyed the results that you want or expected, the problem may be in your soil. More often than not, the best soil produces the best results—and almost nothing beats rich and nutritious compost as a soil additive. Compost’s ability to correct soil problems and deliver nutrients to plants makes it a gardener’s best friend.

If you’ve never made compost or had the success that you’ve sought, read on. Now is a good time to get a pile going.

The fastest way to produce rich garden humus—the beneficial organic component of soil—is to create a hot and active compost pile. A “hot” pile can reach an internal temperature of 160°F, although 140°F is ideal; “active” refers to its ability to essentially cook weed seeds and disease-bearing organisms.

A hot compost pile should have a footprint

of 4x4 feet and be about 4 feet high. The pile will shrink as the ingredients decompose. Pile up your ingredients on the ground or use a bin.

A good formula for your compost pile is . . .

- 2 parts **high-carbon material** (dry shredded plant matter such as twigs, woody stems, dried leaves, and pine needles, aka “browns”).

- 1 part **high-nitrogen matter** (plant and vegetable refuse, kitchen scraps, grass clippings, weeds, and trimmings, aka “greens”). Keep in mind that chopped food scraps (not whole fruit peels or vegetables), shredded leaves, and chipped wood generally decompose more quickly than larger pieces.

- **good-quality soil.**

HOW TO DO IT

1. Pile the ingredients as you would make a layer cake, with carbon materials on the bottom (twigs and woody stems help air to circulate by

leaving open spaces). Next, cover the layer with soil, followed by nitrogen-based plant materials, then more soil. Repeat until the pile is about 4 feet high.

2. Soak the pile and then water periodically; its consistency should be that of a damp (not wet) sponge.

3. Add air to the interior of the pile by punching holes in its sides or by pushing 1- to 2-foot lengths of hollow pipe into it.

4. Check the temperature of the pile with a compost thermometer or an old kitchen thermometer.

If there is no heat or insufficient heat, add nitrogen in the form of fresh green plant ingredients or organic fertilizer.

5. If a foul odor emanates from the pile, flip the compost to introduce more air.

6. For usable compost in 1 to 3 months, turn the pile every other week, or as soon as the center starts to cool down. Move materials from the center of the pile to the outside.

(continued)



OTHER INGREDIENTS

Add any of these items to a your compost pile.

- cardboard tubes from toilet paper/paper towel rolls, torn into pieces
- wet or dry coffee grounds and loose tea or compostable tea bags

(most tea bags are not 100 percent compostable, so tear off tags before adding)

- crushed sea shells
- dry goods (broken up crackers, flour, spices, etc.)
- dryer lint
- eggshells, crushed

- hair, fur
- nutshells
- pasta (cooked or uncooked), broken up
- seaweed
- shredded paper/newspaper
- wood ashes

–*Almanac editors*

FOOD



Rise and Shine— It's Muffin Time!

Muffins are a great choose-your-own-ingredients kind of food. They can be filled with fruit, vegetables, chocolate, cheese—almost anything! Muffins are perfect when paired with a cup of coffee or tea but can also be enjoyed as a lunchbox snack, afternoon treat, or side dish. We've gathered some of our marvelous muffin recipes here for you to try. (Tip: You might want to start preheating your oven now!)

PHOTO: MSHEV/SHUTTERSTOCK

FOOD

Lemon - Poppy Seed Muffins

LEMON-POPPY SEED MUFFINS

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons poppy seeds
- 2-1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 2 tablespoons grated lemon zest
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1/2 cup chopped walnuts (optional)

Preheat oven to 400°F. Grease a muffin tin or line with paper cups.

In a bowl, combine flour, sugar, poppy seeds, baking powder, and nutmeg.

In a separate bowl, beat eggs, milk, oil, lemon zest, and lemon juice together until well blended. Add to flour mixture and stir to combine. Fold in walnuts (if using).

Spoon batter into prepared muffin tin and bake for 20 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center of a muffin comes out clean.

Makes 12 muffins.

FOOD

Morning Glory Muffins

MORNING GLORY MUFFINS

- 4 cups all-purpose flour
- 2-1/2 cups sugar
- 4 teaspoons baking soda
- 4 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- pinch of salt
- 4 cups grated carrot
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup shredded coconut
- 2 apples, peeled and grated
- 3/4 cup chopped walnuts (optional)
- 6 eggs
- 2 cups vegetable oil
- 4 teaspoons vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease muffin tins or line with paper cups.

In a bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt. Stir in carrots, raisins, coconut, apples, and nuts (if using).

In a separate bowl, beat eggs with oil and vanilla. Add to flour mixture and stir to combine. Spoon batter into prepared muffin tins and bake for 35 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center of a muffin comes out clean.

Makes 36 muffins.

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Vidalia Muffins

VIDALIA MUFFINS

3/4 cup milk

1 egg

1/3 cup vegetable oil

1 cup old-fashioned oats

1 cup self-rising flour

1/4 cup sugar

1/2 cup chopped Vidalia onion

3/4 cup shredded extra-sharp cheddar cheese

1/3 cup chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 400°F. Grease a muffin tin or line with paper cups.

In a bowl, beat milk, egg, and oil. Stir in oats, flour, and sugar just until moistened. Fold in onions, cheddar, and pecans.

Spoon batter into prepared muffin tin and bake for 18 to 20 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center of a muffin comes out clean.

Muffins are best served warm.

Makes 12 muffins.

AMUSEMENT



State Song Hit Parade, A-M

Do any of these sound familiar?

ILLUSTRATION: VICTORIAN TRADITIONS/SHUTTERSTOCK

Enjoy this showcase of state anthems with their fun facts, then watch for songs from Nebraska through Wyoming in another edition of *EXTRA!*

• **ALABAMA:**

“Alabama” (adopted in 1931). River names are common in state songs, but Alabama has one of the most unusual: “Fair thy Coosa-Tallapoosa.”

• **ALASKA:** “Alaska’s Flag” (1955). The flag was designed by 13-year-old Benny Benson, who lived in an orphanage. This is the only state song inspired by a flag.

• **ARIZONA:** “Arizona March Song” (1919); “Arizona” (1982). One line of “Arizona” says “I love you, Arizona, Superstitions and all,” referring to the Superstition Mountains.

• **ARKANSAS:** The state’s four songs are “Arkansas” (1917); “The Arkansas Traveler” (1949); “Oh, Arkansas” (1987); and “Arkansas (You Run Deep in Me)” (1987).

• **CALIFORNIA:** “I Love You, California” (1951). This song was played in 1914 on board the steamship *Ancon*, the first merchant ship to enter the Panama Canal.

• **COLORADO:** “Where the Columbines Grow” (1915); “Rocky Mountain High” (2007). John Denver, who wrote this best-selling second song, explained that the line “I’ve seen it rainin’ fire in the sky” referred to the Perseid meteor shower.

• **CONNECTICUT:** “Yankee Doodle” (written ca. 1755, adopted in 1978). British redcoats played this

as they marched into Concord, Massachusetts, on April 19, 1775, but the Minutemen chased them back to Boston with heavy casualties in the first battle of the Revolution. The *Pennsylvania Gazette* commented that, after having played “Yankee Doodle,” the redcoats “had been made to dance to it.”

• **DELAWARE:** “Our Delaware” (1925). Each of the first three verses honors one of the state’s three counties. Added during America’s Bicentennial, the fourth verse pledges that its citizens will guard liberty and independence and “hold fast to freedom’s presence.”

• **FLORIDA:** “The Swanee River” (written in 1851, adopted in 1935). Stephen Foster never actually visited Florida, and he

misspelled the name of the Suwannee River to fit the melody. One of America's greatest songwriters, he created lyrics in this song that expressed his nostalgia for the days of slavery. As a result, Florida subsequently has added "Florida (Where the Sawgrass Meets the Sky)" (2008) and "I Am Florida" (2013).

- **GEORGIA:** "Georgia on My Mind" (written in 1930, adopted in 1979). The composer of this song, Hoagy Carmichael, also wrote the music to some of America's most popular songs, including "Stardust" and "Heart and Soul." The 1960 recording by Ray Charles topped the *Billboard* chart for 1 week and is the official version of Georgia's state song.

- **HAWAII:** "Hawai'i Pono'i" by King David Kalakaua and Henry

Berger (written in 1874, adopted in 1967). Kalakaua was the last king of Hawaii, and Berger was the Royal Bandmaster.

- **IDAHO:** "Here We Have Idaho" (written in 1915, adopted in 1931). Under the name "Our Idaho," this was the University of Idaho alma mater before it became the state song.

- **ILLINOIS:** "Illinois" (1925). In this song's four verses, the word "Illinois" is repeated 28 times.

- **INDIANA:** "On the Banks of the Wabash, Far Away" (written in 1897, adopted in 1913). Composer Paul Dresser's brother was the famous novelist Theodore Dreiser, who claimed to have written some of the lyrics. Paul had changed the spelling of his last name to an easier-to-

pronounce version when he entered show business as a teenager.

- **IOWA:** "The Song of Iowa" (written in 1897, adopted in 1911). Captured at the Civil War Battle of Lookout Mountain, composer S. H. M. Byers heard Confederate bands playing this tune and vowed "to put that tune to loyal words."

- **KANSAS:** "Home on the Range" (written in 1873, adopted in 1947). This song has been recorded by Willie Nelson, Frank Sinatra, Porky the Pig, Bugs Bunny, and Alvin and the Chipmunks.

- **KENTUCKY:** "My Old Kentucky Home" (written in 1852, adopted in 1928). Stephen Foster was the first person to have written two state songs (*see Florida*). This one is traditionally

AMUSEMENT

played each year before the Kentucky Derby. “Blue Moon of Kentucky” (1988), Bill Monroe’s 1946 waltz, is the state’s official bluegrass song.

• LOUISIANA:

“Louisiana, My Home Sweet Home” (1952); “You Are My Sunshine” (1977); “Southern Nights” (2021). By far the best known of the three, “You Are My Sunshine” was originally a campaign song for two-term Governor Jimmie Davis in 1944.

• MAINE: “State of Maine Song” (1937).

This song was chosen from 115 entries in a 1931 contest.

• MARYLAND:

Due to controversial lyrics, “Maryland, My Maryland” (1939) was dropped as the state song in 2021, leaving the Old Line State with no official anthem for now.

• MASSACHUSETTS:

“All Hail to Massachusetts” (1966) is one of four state songs that helpfully spell out the state’s name in their lyrics. The other three belong to Mississippi, Montana, and Oklahoma.

• MICHIGAN:

“Michigan, My Michigan” (1902); “My Michigan” (1937). The first was never officially recognized as the state song. Nevertheless, it is much better known than “My Michigan,” which was declared “an official song” by the state legislature in 1937.

• MINNESOTA:

“Hail, Minnesota” (1945). Written by two University of Minnesota students for a school play in 1904, this song was officially adopted four decades later with only one minor change to the wording.

• MISSISSIPPI: “One Mississippi” (2022).

Mississippi native Steve Azar composed the song for the state’s bicentennial celebration in 2017. In 2022, “One Mississippi” replaced “Go, Mississippi” as the state’s official song.

• MISSOURI: “Missouri Waltz” (1949).

The song gained in popularity when Harry Truman, a Missouri native, became the 33rd U.S. president.

• MONTANA:

“Montana” (1945); “Montana Melody” (1983). “Montana” was written overnight in 1910 by Joseph Howard, a traveling showman, and Charles Cohan, a Butte newspaperman. An effort to replace it in 1983 ended with a compromise, in which “Montana Melody” by LeGrande and Carleen Harvey, was named the State Ballad.

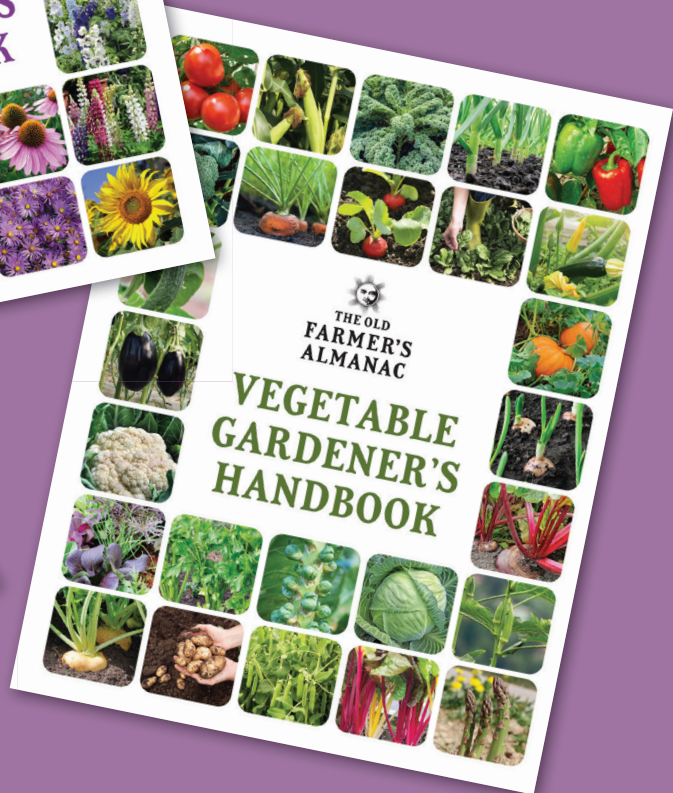
–*Almanac editors*

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A close-up photograph of a person's bare foot standing on a light-colored wooden floor. The focus is on the heel, where a small, yellowish, cauliflower-like growth (a plantar wart) is visible. The skin on the heel shows some wrinkling and texture. In the background, another foot is partially visible, slightly out of focus.

LIVING NATURALLY

The ABCs of Plantar Warts

Plantar warts are a common, frustrating problem, even with children, and it's better to try to prevent them or wait them out than to try to cure them.

PHOTO: KONSTANTIN AKSENOV/GETTY IMAGES

PLANTAR WARTS ARE CONTAGIOUS. SHAVING, SCRAPING, OR PICKING AT THEM CAN TRANSFER THE VIRUS TO OTHER PARTS OF THE FEET AND HANDS.

HOW THE SYMPTOMS START

For a few weeks, I'd been complaining of a growing tenderness on the ball of my left foot. The tenderness gradually became real pain, until every footfall felt as if I were slapping the sore spot down over a small stone.

One day, after a bruising long run, I pulled off my sock to show my running partner the spot, which had become a thick, white patch of rough skin that looked a bit like a tiny cauliflower floret punctuated by a pattern of small holes.

"Oh, that's a plantar wart," she said. "You probably picked it up in the gym shower room."

Thus began my long relationship with plantar warts.

A FEW FACTS ABOUT PLANTAR WARTS

- All warts are caused by one of the more than 150 strains of human papillomavirus (HPV).
- "Plantar" refers to the sole of the foot, although plantar warts may appear on the heel or toes or around the toenails. The same virus can also appear on the palm of the hand or around the fingernails, in which case it is called a palmar wart.
- Experts say that the HPV strains that cause plantar warts don't cause the more concerning genital warts.
- Plantar warts aren't malignant, and they don't cause cancer.
- Plantar warts are contagious. Shaving, scraping, or picking at them can transfer the virus to other parts of the feet and hands. They

can also be transmitted by the shoes and socks of someone with warts.

- Plantar warts are not always painful and usually disappear on their own in people with healthy immune systems.

PREVENTING PLANTAR WARTS

- Don't go barefoot in locker rooms or public showers or on the tiled areas around swimming pools (public or private), hot tubs, wading pools, and so on. Wear flip-flops or sandals.
- Don't try on other people's shoes (including shoes in a thrift store) without socks or nylon stockings.
- Don't share towels, razors, nail clippers, pumice stones, or emery boards.
- Avoid direct contact with your own or other

NOT REALIZING THE HIGHLY INFECTIOUS NATURE OF THE WART VIRUS, I ENDED UP WITH MANY MORE WARTS, NOT ONLY ON MY FOOT BUT EVENTUALLY AROUND THE FINGERNAILS OF MY RIGHT HAND.

people's warts. This really does include your own warts. Wash your hands thoroughly if they come in contact with a wart.

- Don't pick at your warts, as this may spread the virus to your hands.
- Keep your feet clean and dry. Change both your shoes and socks daily.

GETTING RID OF PLANTAR WARTS (WELL . . .)

My doctor froze off that first wart with liquid nitrogen, but it returned. After that, I spent 3 to 4 years trying various wart removal treatments. Here's a selection:

- I used over-the-counter salicylic acid products.
- On the advice of friends, I soaked it repeatedly with cider vinegar.

- I taped raw potato slices (then later, fresh garlic slices) over the wart.

- I smothered it with duct tape smeared over with vaseline.

- I used rough emery boards and pumice stones to try to scrape it off and then razors to shave it off.

- I tried pulling it out with sharp-pointed tweezers.

Not realizing the highly infectious nature of the wart virus, I ended up with many more warts, not only on my foot but eventually around the fingernails of my right hand. I'd sometimes get rid of one or two, only to have others appear within a few days.

I finally returned to my doctor, who reminded

me that most "successful" wart removal remedies are serendipitous, as eventually the immune system wakes up to recognize those warts as invaders and wipes them out.

He suggested that I forgo any more treatments and just try to forget about them and then one day I'd wake up to find that—Poof!—the warts would be gone.

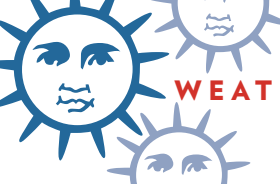
And that's exactly what happened.

I haven't had one since, although I do take exquisite precautions to avoid getting infected again.

—Margaret Boyles



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



IF FEBRUARY GIVE MUCH SNOW, A FINE SUMMER IT DOTH FORESHOW.

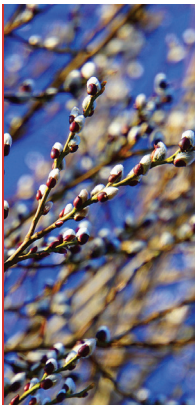
HOW WE MAKE OUR PREDICTIONS

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.

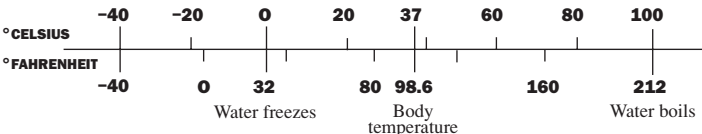


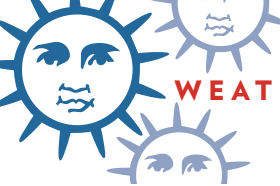
TAP TO FIND OUT THE WEATHER HISTORY OF THE DAY



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

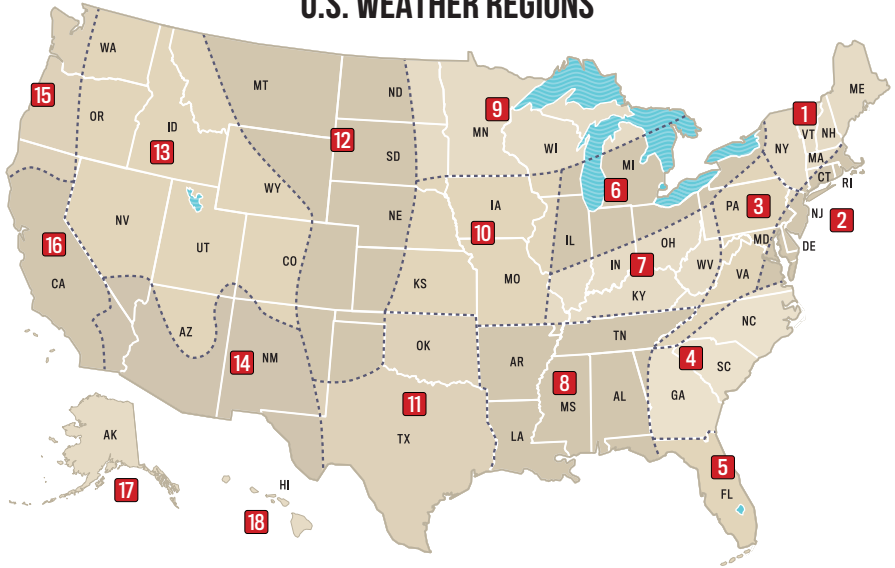
CELSIUS-FAHRENHEIT TABLE





WEATHER FORECASTS

U.S. WEATHER REGIONS



CANADIAN WEATHER REGIONS



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





FURRY FORECASTERS ALL OVER THE MAP

Punxsutawney Phil will be greeted by a sunny and cold morning as he emerges from his burrow in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, on Groundhog Day, February 2. Sunrise greetings for other notable whistle pig prognosticators will include sunny and very cold conditions for Buckeye Chuck in Marion, Ohio; periods of snow for Stormy Marmot in Aurora, Colorado; snow and wind for Shubenacadie Sam in Nova Scotia, and a chilly Sun for Wiarton Willie in Ontario. This would appear to mean 6 more weeks of winter through Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Ontario, with a sooner arrival of meteorological spring in Nova Scotia and Colorado.

On Super Bowl Sunday, February 12, Glendale, Arizona's State Farm Stadium will likely have its retractable roof open, as the day will be sunny and mild during the game. Also Abraham Lincoln's birthday, this day will be quite cold with snow flurries in Hodgenville, Kentucky, the birthplace of our 16th president.

Valentine's Day, February 14, will bring a need for you to dress warmly with hats and gloves—or to snuggle up tight—if you are heading out for date night in the eastern half of the country. Be prepared for blustery winds and snow showers in parts of the Southeast and Deep South. It will be milder with a couple of snow showers farther west to the front range of the Rockies, while much of the rest of the West will be dry and mild for outdoor plans. Hawaii will be cool with a few showers. Atlantic Canada will be mild with a passing



snow shower, while conditions will be dry and mild in the Prairies and wet with showers in southern British Columbia.

On Presidents' Day, February 20, we'll see cold with snow showers in Ford City, Pennsylvania, and Madison, Wisconsin, while it will be rainy and cold in Polk County, Florida, and Clinton, Alabama. Lake effect snow will hamper travel in Cleveland, Ohio, and rain and/or snow showers will be arriving in Harrison, Arkansas; Tyler, Texas; and Grants, New Mexico. Expect a passing shower in Bush, California, and sunshine and chilly conditions in Lincoln City, Oregon.

George Washington's birthday is February 22, and it is no lie that the snow will be falling in Westmoreland County, Virginia, his birthplace, on that day. The East will be stormy, with snow over the mid-Atlantic states, rain and snow across the Southeast, and a chilly rain from the Deep South into Florida. Snow will fly from the Upper Midwest into the Ohio Valley, while snow flurries occur farther west across the Heartland and the Plains. Rain and snow showers will fall over the Intermountain West, while rain dampens the Desert Southwest.

February temperatures will be warmer than normal from the Intermountain West to the Pacific Coast, as well as across Alaska and Hawaii, and near to below normal elsewhere. Expect below-normal precipitation from New England through the Carolinas and westward across the Great Lakes, Ohio Valley, and Deep South, as well as across the Pacific Northwest and Hawaii. It will be wetter than normal across Florida and from the central Rockies through the Pacific Southwest. Across Canada, it will be warmer than average from Atlantic Canada into eastern Quebec and along the Pacific Coast into the Northwest Territories, and colder than average elsewhere. Precipitation will be above average across eastern Quebec and the Prairies and near to below normal elsewhere.

Important factors for the rest of the winter include a weakening La Niña, a continued warm phase of the Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation (AMO), and neutral to positive phases in the North Atlantic Oscillation (NAO) and the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO). Oscillations are linked ocean-atmosphere patterns that influence the weather over periods of weeks to years. Westerly equatorial stratospheric winds (QBO) combined with increasing solar activity can weaken the polar vortex in the late winter, possibly releasing Arctic air southward.

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



HUMOR ME

GRINS AND GROANS FROM THE ALMANAC



STELLAR RETORT

“There were two actresses in an early play of mine,” said an author. “Both were very beautiful, but the leading lady was thin.

She quarreled one day at rehearsal with the other lady and ended the spat by saying quite haughtily, ‘Remember, please, that I am the star.’

“Yes, I know that you’re the star,’ the other actress shot back, eyeing with an amused smile the leading actress’s long, slim figure, ‘but you’d look



better, my dear, if you were a little meteor.”

COSTLY ADS

“Advertising costs me a lot of money.”

“Why, I’ve never even seen your goods advertised!”

“They aren’t. But a certain someone at home reads other people’s ads and that’s the problem.”

BURYING THE FAMILY TREE

He was always boasting about his ancestors, and one day he hired a genealogist to hunt them up. In due time, pedigree pursuer returned with his report.

Said the patron: “So, have you succeeded in tracing my ancestors? What’s your fee?”

“Two hundred dollars.”

“Isn’t that high?” objected the patron.

“What’s it for?”

“Principally,” responded the researcher, “for keeping quiet about them.”

DIVINE INSPIRATION

The small girl was at the table drawing, and her mother asked her what the picture was to be.

“God,” replied the child simply.

“But you can’t draw God,” protested the mother, “because you have never seen Him. No one has ever seen Him and no one knows what He looks like.”

The little lass licked her pencil and put in another touch. “They’ll all know when I finish this,” she said.

PRICEY PACE

“How fast is your car, Perkins?” asked Johnson.

“Well, it keeps about 6 months ahead of my

income, generally,” answered Perkins.

SOLID ANSWER

“Don’t be afraid,” said the aviator to a timid passenger. “All you have to do is sit quietly.”

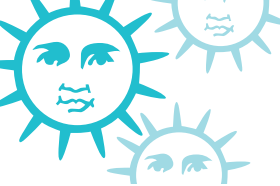
“I know all about that,” retorted the passenger, “but suppose something happens and we begin to fall?”

“Oh, in that case,” the aviator reassured him, “you are to grasp the first solid thing that we pass and hold tight.”

FOR GOOD REASON

Johnny: “What makes that new baby at your house cry so much, Tommy?”

Tommy: “It don’t cry so very much—and, anyway, if all your teeth were out, your hair off, and your legs so weak you couldn’t stand on them, I guess you’d feel like crying yourself.”



WHAT'S NEXT



ASTRONOMY

Explore with our Sky Map



CALENDAR

Moon phases; March holidays and full Moon names; how March got its name



LIVING NATURALLY

Hot Flashes: Symptom or Power Surge?



GARDENING

Catching Rain the Smart Way—by creating a rain garden



FOOD

Recipes to Welcome Spring!



AMUSEMENT

A Man and His Camera

- 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 March *EXTRA!*

CELEBRATING THE ALMANAC'S 232ND YEAR!