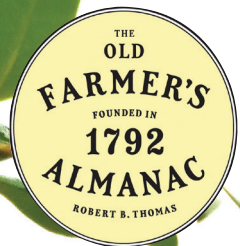


# EXTRA!

FROM THE OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC

## THE 6 BEST SHRUBS FOR SONGBIRDS

PLUS: • Best Days to Do Things • Gardening by the Moon's Sign  
• Monthly Calendar • Astronomy • Weather



JULY 2024

PHOTO: SDBOWER/GETTY IMAGES

# JULY

*Holidays, Full Moon Names, and More*

## HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

**July 1:** Canada Day

**July 4:** Independence Day

**July 5:** Earth at aphelion

**July 7:** First of Muharram  
begins at sundown

**July 14:** Bastille Day

**July 20:** International Moon  
Day

**July 27:** National Day of the  
Cowboy

## BIRTH FLOWERS: JULY

### LARKSPUR AND WATER LILY

- In general, larkspur may symbolize positivity, lightheartedness, dedication, or protection. White may represent happiness and joy; pink, fickleness; blue, dignity and grace; purple, first love.
- Water lily represents purity, innocence, rebirth, or enlightenment, especially with regard to white varieties. Pink can mean joy and friendship; red, romance; yellow, energy and new beginnings; blue, calm and wisdom.



## EYE ON THE SKY

### JULY'S FULL MOON NAMES

Buck Moon, Raspberry Moon,  
Salmon Moon

### MOON PHASES

**New Moon:** July 5, 6:57 P.M. EDT

**First Quarter:** July 13, 6:49 P.M. EDT

**Full Moon:** July 21, 6:17 A.M. EDT

**Last Quarter:** July 27, 10:52 P.M. EDT



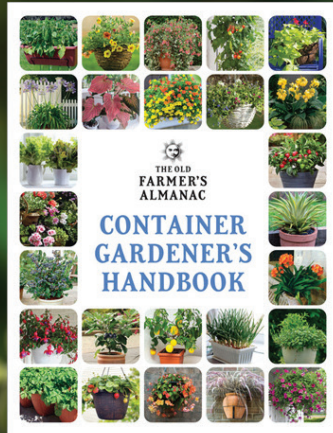
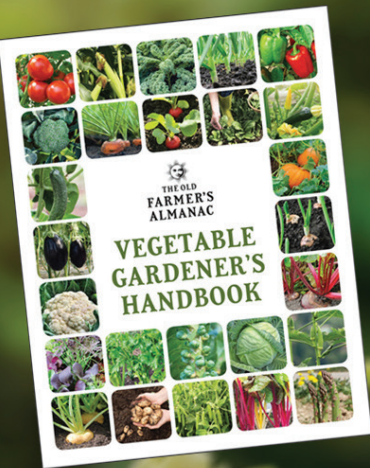
TAP FOR MORE ABOUT MOON PHASES



TAP FOR MORE ABOUT JULY'S  
FULL MOON

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## BEST DAYS TO DO THINGS

These July 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: 14–16

Ask for a loan: 1, 28, 29

Begin diet to gain weight: 12, 17

Begin diet to lose weight: 25, 30

Buy a home: 14–16

Color hair: 1, 28, 29

Cut hair to discourage growth: 28, 29

Cut hair to encourage growth: 12, 13

Entertain: 7, 8

Get married: 12, 13

Have dental care: 9–11

Move (house/household): 2–4, 30, 31

Perm hair: 21, 22



Quit smoking: 25, 30  
Straighten hair: 17, 18  
Travel for pleasure: 7, 8  
Wean children: 25, 30

### **IN THE GARDEN**

---

Destroy pests and weeds: 25–27  
Graft or pollinate: 5, 6  
Harvest aboveground crops: 9–11  
Harvest belowground crops: 1, 28, 29  
Mow to promote growth: 14–16  
Mow to slow growth: 23, 24  
Pick fruit: 9–11  
Plant aboveground crops: 14–16  
Plant belowground crops: 23, 24  
Prune to discourage growth: 25–27  
Prune to encourage growth: 7, 8

### **AROUND THE HOUSE**

---

Bake: 5, 6  
Brew: 14–16  
Can, pickle, or make sauerkraut:  
23, 24  
Demolish: 14–16

Dry fruit, vegetables, or meat:  
25–27  
End projects: 20  
Lay shingles: 7, 8  
Make jams or jellies: 23, 24  
Paint: 12, 13  
Start projects: 6  
Wash floors: 23, 24  
Wash windows: 25–27

### **OUTDOORS**

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Begin logging: 19, 20  
Go camping: 17, 18  
Go fishing: 5–21  
Set posts or pour concrete: 19, 20

### **ON THE FARM**

---

Breed animals: 14–16  
Castrate animals: 21, 22  
Cut hay: 25–27  
Purchase animals: 5, 6  
Set eggs: 21, 22  
Slaughter livestock: 14–16  
Wean animals: 25, 30



## GARDENING BY THE MOON'S SIGN

Use the July 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 JULY

<b>1</b> Taurus	<b>9</b> Virgo	<b>17</b> Sagittarius	<b>25</b> Aries
<b>2</b> Gemini	<b>10</b> Virgo	<b>18</b> Sagittarius	<b>26</b> Aries
<b>3</b> Gemini	<b>11</b> Virgo	<b>19</b> Capricorn	<b>27</b> Aries
<b>4</b> Gemini	<b>12</b> Libra	<b>20</b> Capricorn	<b>28</b> Taurus
<b>5</b> Cancer	<b>13</b> Libra	<b>21</b> Aquarius	<b>29</b> Taurus
<b>6</b> Cancer	<b>14</b> Scorpio	<b>22</b> Aquarius	<b>30</b> Gemini
<b>7</b> Leo	<b>15</b> Scorpio	<b>23</b> Pisces	<b>31</b> Gemini
<b>8</b> Leo	<b>16</b> Scorpio	<b>24</b> Pisces	

 TAP FOR  
MERCURY IN  
RETROGRADE  
DATES

 TAP FOR  
JULY 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.

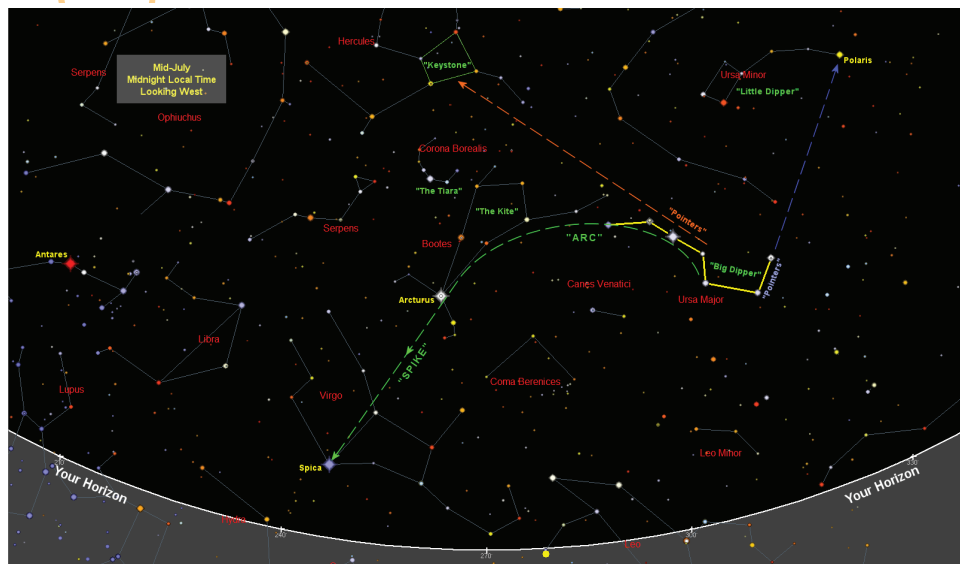
When Mercury is retrograde, remain flexible, allow extra time for travel, and avoid signing contracts. Review projects and plans at these times, but wait until Mercury is direct again to make any final decisions.

Mercury's remaining 2024 retrograde periods are **August 4–27** and **November 25–December 15**.

—Celeste Longacre

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Celebrating its 47th anniversary in 2024, 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 BIG DIPPER POINTS THE WAY

The Big Dipper, in the constellation Ursa Major, the Greater Bear, is one of the brightest and most easily recognized asterisms (unofficial star patterns) in the night sky. Depending on the time of year and time of night, the Big Dipper will often appear upside down or sideways. Late at night in mid-July, however, the Big Dipper is very easy to spot. It's almost right-side up, with its handle curving to the upper left and its bowl on the right, as shown on this month's Sky Map. This makes July an ideal time to learn how the Big Dipper can help you to navigate the sky.

Various parts of the Big Dipper's bowl and handle can serve you as "pointers" to other stars and constellations.

The first set of pointers that every budding stargazer should learn is the two stars forming the outermost side of the Big Dipper's bowl. These are labeled in purple on the Sky Map. If you mentally extend the line of these two stars up

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

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





and away from the bowl, you'll find Polaris, the North Star. Polaris, in turn, marks the end of the handle of the Little Dipper. Most of the stars of the Little Dipper are rather dim. You may not see them unless you are far from city lights, but Polaris should be visible from the suburbs, and the pointers of the Big Dipper's bowl will help you to find it.

There is another set of pointers in the Big Dipper. The first three stars of the Big Dipper's handle point directly to the four-sided Keystone asterism in the constellation Hercules, the Hero. The Keystone pointers are labeled in orange on this month's map. Once you have located the Keystone, look directly below it for Corona Borealis, the Northern Crown, or "Tiara."

**T**he final example of the Big Dipper's helpfulness is a bit more complicated, but once learned, it's easy to remember. A simple phrase summarizes this bit of celestial navigation: "Arc to Arcturus, then drive a Spike to Spica." Look for the green dashed lines on the Sky Map.

If you extend the arc of the Big Dipper's handle, you'll see that it points directly to the bright star Arcturus in the constellation Boötes, the Herdsman. The body of Boötes is often described as "kite-shape," and the extended arc of the Big Dipper's handle follows the curved edge of the Kite on its way to Arcturus.

Once you arrive at Arcturus, straighten out the arc and drive a spike directly to the star Spica (pronounced SPY-kuh) in Virgo, the Virgin. And there you have it: "Arc to Arcturus, then drive a Spike to Spica." Like the Big Dipper's other pointers, it's an easy way to remember the arrangement of the stars and constellations in the northern sky.

Bear in mind that at other times of year, the Big Dipper may appear at a different angle or even upside down. However, it's a very distinctive asterism, and with practice you'll learn to recognize it no matter how it's oriented.

For those of us who live in the 48 contiguous states, southern Canada, and most of Europe, it's visible every night of the year. Being able to find the Big Dipper is an essential part of your stargazing education, so look for it every time you are under the stars.

*-Jeff DeTray*

# The 6 Best Shrubs for Songbirds

## GARDENING

**N**atural foods rule the roost for many songbirds. Vivid tanagers, orioles, rose-breasted grosbeaks, bluebirds, waxwings, and other beautiful birds that are tops on our “most wanted” list have learned to visit feeders. But once insects and wild fruit are back in season, most of these avian beauties desert the feeders . . . unless you provide them with a feast, ready and waiting.

### **KEEP THE CUSTOMERS SATISFIED—WITH SHRUBS**

Your shrubs will be the birds’ buffet, as long as you keep your hands off the pesticides. These bushes will be crawling with delectable insects on their foliage and at their flowers.

At night or in harsh weather, shrubs become a bed-and-breakfast, offering cardinals, thrashers, native

sparrows, and other songbirds a safe place to sleep or shelter within the branches. Shrubs are stepping-stones, too, which birds use to travel from place to place without exposing themselves to hawks and other dangers.

And now the secret weapon to bring in songbirds: irresistible berries in perfectly bite-size servings. Birds will come from far and wide to seek their share of these temptations.

Ready to set out the smorgasbord? Try this sextet of super songbird shrubs. All are easy to grow, thrive in sun to partial shade, and, unless noted, are hardy in USDA Zones 3 to 8. Plus, they’re every bit as appealing to our eyes as they are to the birds’ palates.

### **SERVICEBERRY**

What’s in a name? Lots of lore surrounds the nomenclature for this pretty deciduous

shrub. It’s been called “shadblow” because it blooms (“blows”) at the time when shad fish are moving up rivers from the ocean to spawn; “juneberry” because this is when its sweet, dark blue berries ripen; and “sarvisberry”—which just represents, well, another pronunciation of “serviceberry.” And “serviceberry”? Some say that when this bush bloomed, circuit-riding preachers could reach their mountain “flocks.” Less fun but probably more accurate: “Service” comes from *syrf*, an Old English word for *Sorbus*, a genus that includes the European service tree, with its somewhat similar berries.

Serviceberry’s bountiful white flowers bloom in spring, when songbirds are just beginning to return from migration. But it’s the abundant crop of juicy berries that really brings in the birds. Rose-breasted grosbeaks,

## GARDENING

scarlet tanagers, cedar waxwings, bluebirds, robins, gray catbirds, and brown thrashers are among the top customers.

Serviceberries can take dry conditions, once established. In fall, the leaves turn burnished red and orange. The tree can top out at 15 to 25 feet tall when mature.

### ELDERBERRY

The speed demon among shrubs, elderberry can zoom to 5 feet tall or better in just its first season. Salad-plate-size clusters of heavily perfumed, creamy flowers are followed by equally big clusters of tiny blue, purple-black, or red berries that bow the branches with their weight.

Blooms attract orioles, tanagers, black-headed grosbeaks, indigo buntings, and other migrant songbirds, and the feast of berries in late summer to early fall catches their attention

when they're fattening up for the return trip. Waxwings and bluebirds are special fans, too.

Elderberries can reach 12 feet tall. For an unusual tropical touch, look for elderberries with dramatic, dark purple leaves ('Black Lace', which also boasts pink flowers) or lacy, lime-green foliage ('Sutherland Gold').

### REDTWIG DOGWOOD

This shrubby cousin of the flowering dogwood tree doesn't come close to its show-off kin for "wow!" power—except in winter, when its vivid, bare red stems outshine everything else in the yard. The low-key clusters of fuzzy white flowers that appear in late spring and small white berries that follow in summer are highly tempting to insect- and fruit-eating songbirds. You'll be lucky to admire the white berries for a week, because they disappear fast when

bluebirds, thrushes, native sparrows, robins, and thrashers find them.

Plant redbird dogwood where its typical suckering habit will be a pleasure, not a peeve. It thrives in wet soils as well as in average conditions. Most varieties, including brilliant 'Cardinal', are 6 to 9 feet tall; 'Arctic Fire' and 'Kelsey's Dwarf' are about half that height.

### WINTERBERRY

All varieties are traffic-stoppers when the leaves drop to reveal thickly studded red, orange, or gold berries. But as bird magnets? Maybe not. Once a surefire way to attract any bluebird within a mile, some winterberries lost their bird appeal when plant breeders focused on bigger, better berries in more colors.

'Winter Red', an oldie but goodie, is a robust grower that won't disappoint the bluebirds. Stroll the outdoor rows

## GARDENING

of a nursery in fall to see which winterberries are hosting a hungry robin or mockingbird. Or take your chances, if another cultivar catches your eye.

Large but graceful, winterberry grows 6 to 8 feet tall and wide. Water weekly if rain is scarce and plant a male and female to get an abundant crop of beautiful berries.

### **EVERGREEN HOLLY**

Hollies may say “Christmas” to us, but songbirds seek them out year-round. The dense, prickly foliage is superb protection from hawks, cats, raccoons, and other predators, as well as shelter from the weather.

Much as we love these berries, that opaque red color wasn't designed with holiday decorations in mind. It attracts birds to a vital food source when others are limited, providing a much-needed energy boost. Thrushes and bluebirds will make a dent in the

crop in fall when they're bulking up for their long journey or refueling en route. Cedar waxwings, robins, mockingbirds, and other winter birds will clean off the rest.

Hardiness varies, depending on the parent plant; some are hardy only to Zone 6 or even 7. Size varies, too: 'Nellie R. Stevens' is a tall girl, at 15 to 25 feet; 'Dwarf Burford', 6 feet. You'll need a male plant for pollination, unless nearby neighbors have one that can do the honors.

### **NORTHERN BAYBERRY**

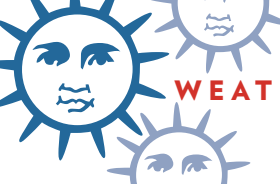
Tall, evergreen bayberry provides valuable shelter for birds, plus welcome color in a winter yard. The tiny, waxy, gray berries tempt cedar waxwings, yellow-rumped warblers, woodpeckers, and even tree swallows from fall to late winter. Snip some berried branches and poke them into a window box or doorstep urn to bring

berry-eaters into view.

Northern bayberry is drought-tolerant once established. Southern bayberry, a similar but taller shrub, does well in dry or wet conditions. Pacific wax myrtle, which has small, brownish purple, nutlike fruit instead of gray berries, is the western counterpart. You'll need a male bayberry plant for your females, but birds will welcome this one, too, for extra cover and safe travels around your yard.

Many other shrubs provide berries for birds, so feel free to branch out to junipers, blueberries, raspberries, grape hollies, and others. Choose shrubs that appeal to you, too, whether they have berries or not. Songbirds will make use of all of them for cover, travel routes, and insects, as well as for any bonus of berries that they may offer.

—Sally Roth



NE’ER TRUST A JULY SKY.

# HOW WE MAKE OUR PREDICTIONS

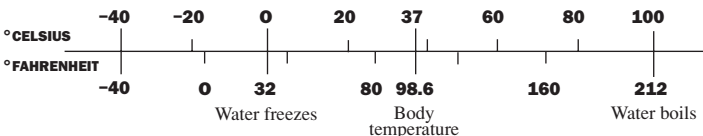
We derive our weather forecasts from a secret formula that was devised by the founder of this Almanac, Robert B. Thomas, in 1792. Thomas believed that weather on Earth was influenced by sunspots, which are magnetic storms on the surface of the Sun.

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.

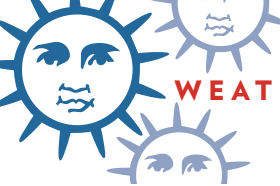
## CELSIUS-FAHRENHEIT TABLE



TAP TO FIND OUT THE WEATHER HISTORY OF THE DAY

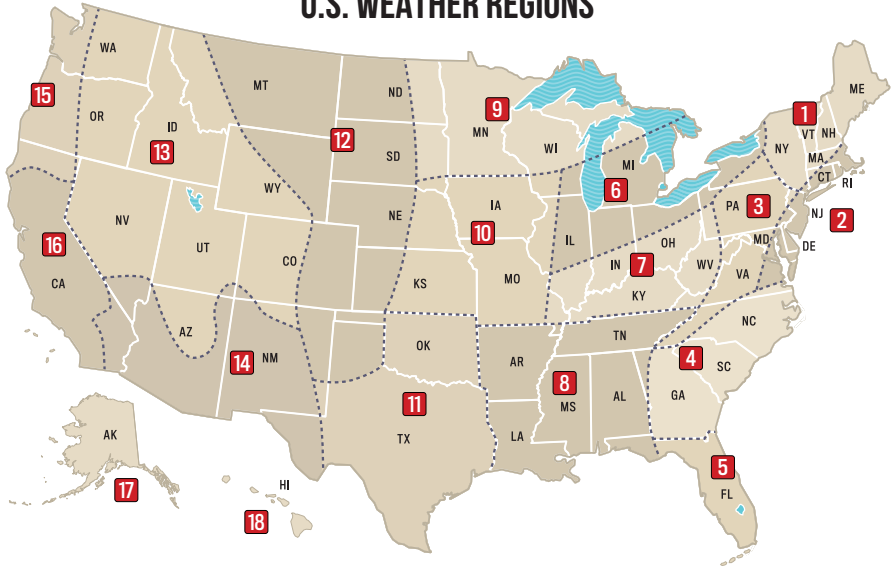


LOVE ALL THINGS WEATHER? TAP FOR THE WEATHER FOLKLORE OF THE DAY



# WEATHER FORECASTS

## U.S. WEATHER REGIONS



## CANADIAN WEATHER REGIONS



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





## WHEN THE LIVIN' IS EASY

If you're someone who lives for summertime heat and humidity, it looks like there will be plenty of this to go around this summer, especially in July, when we expect temperatures to be near or above normal across much of the U.S. and Canada. The only areas where we are forecasting below-normal temperatures include the western Ohio Valley and parts of the southern Plains and Hawaii. We expect a hotter-than-normal month across nearly all of Canada.

We believe that much of the U.S. East Coast will be on the drier side, a condition that will combine with the heat to create many opportunities to head





to the beach. The drier weather will also help to limit travel delays. Rainfall will end up above normal from the Great Lakes and Midwest to the lower Mississippi Valley, as well as in southern Texas. Drier-than-normal weather is likely across the central and southern Plains, as well as the Rockies. The Desert Southwest also looks to be dry, likely the result of a delayed start to the monsoon season. Parts of Oregon and California, though, could end up with above-normal rainfall, with thunderstorms occasionally disrupting outdoor activities. Both Alaska and Hawaii look to be drier than normal.

In Canada, near- to above-normal rainfall is forecast from the Maritimes and Quebec back through eastern Ontario, as well as in the Yukon and northern parts of the Northwest Territories. Below-normal precipitation is expected from southern parts of the Northwest Territories southward through western Ontario, the Prairies, and British Columbia. This dryness, combined with the above-normal temperatures, could lead to a high wildfire risk, which is not welcome news following such a devastating fire season last year across Canada.

For the start of the month, Canada Day on the 1st looks to see good weather across the Maritimes and Quebec, with widespread sunshine and a warm afternoon. The risk for showers will increase across central and western Canada. There will be the potential for some heavy rain across the Yukon, with some spotty showers possible in the Northwest Territories.

On the Fourth of July, the best weather for fireworks and barbecues will be found from the northern mid-Atlantic states to the northern Appalachians, with mainly dry skies and a warm afternoon. Farther west, mostly dry weather is expected from the western Plains and Intermountain region into the Southwest, although it will be quite hot in many areas. Elsewhere, there will be pockets of thunderstorms around the rest of the country.

In the Deep South, we'll also have to watch for a hurricane early in the month—as well as for a tropical storm at midmonth that may also affect the Texas coast.

For Nunavut Day on July 9, we're expecting a sunny, pleasant, and mild day across the territory. Utah's weather also looks promising for Pioneer Day on July 24, with some sunshine and a warm afternoon expected.

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