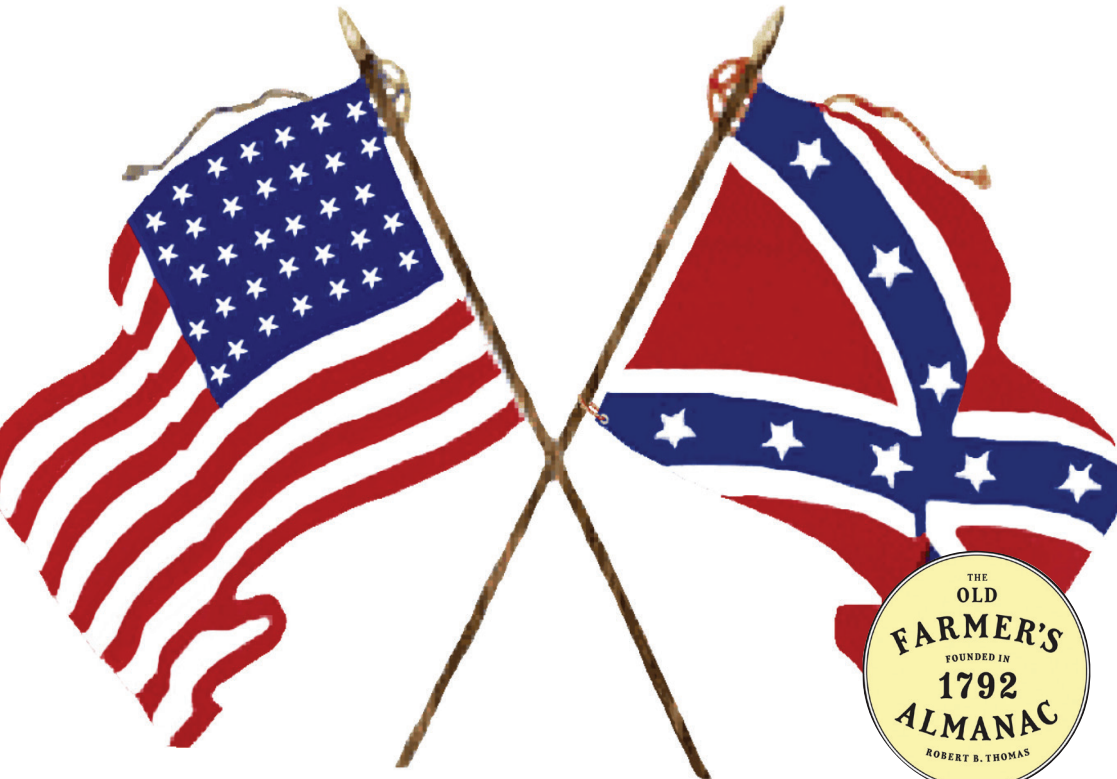


# EXTRA!

FROM THE OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC

## WITNESSES TO THE SURRENDER

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



MAY 2024

# MAY

*Holidays, Full Moon Names, and More*

## HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

- May 1:** First day of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month
- May 5:** Orthodox Easter
- May 5:** Holocaust Remembrance Day begins at sundown
- May 5:** Cinco de Mayo
- May 12:** Mother's Day
- May 18:** Armed Forces Day
- May 20:** Victoria Day (Canada)
- May 22:** National Maritime Day
- May 27:** Memorial Day, observed

## BIRTH FLOWERS: MAY

### LILY-OF-THE-VALLEY AND HAWTHORN

- The lily-of-the-valley may symbolize sweetness, purity, humility, or the return of happiness.
- The hawthorn represents hope.



## EYE ON THE SKY

### MAY'S FULL MOON NAMES

Flower Moon, Egg Laying Moon, Planting Moon

### MOON PHASES

- Last Quarter:** May 1, 7:27 A.M. EDT
- New Moon:** May 7, 11:22 P.M. EDT
- First Quarter:** May 15, 7:48 A.M. EDT
- Full Moon:** May 23, 9:53 A.M. EDT
- Last Quarter:** May 30, 1:13 P.M. EDT



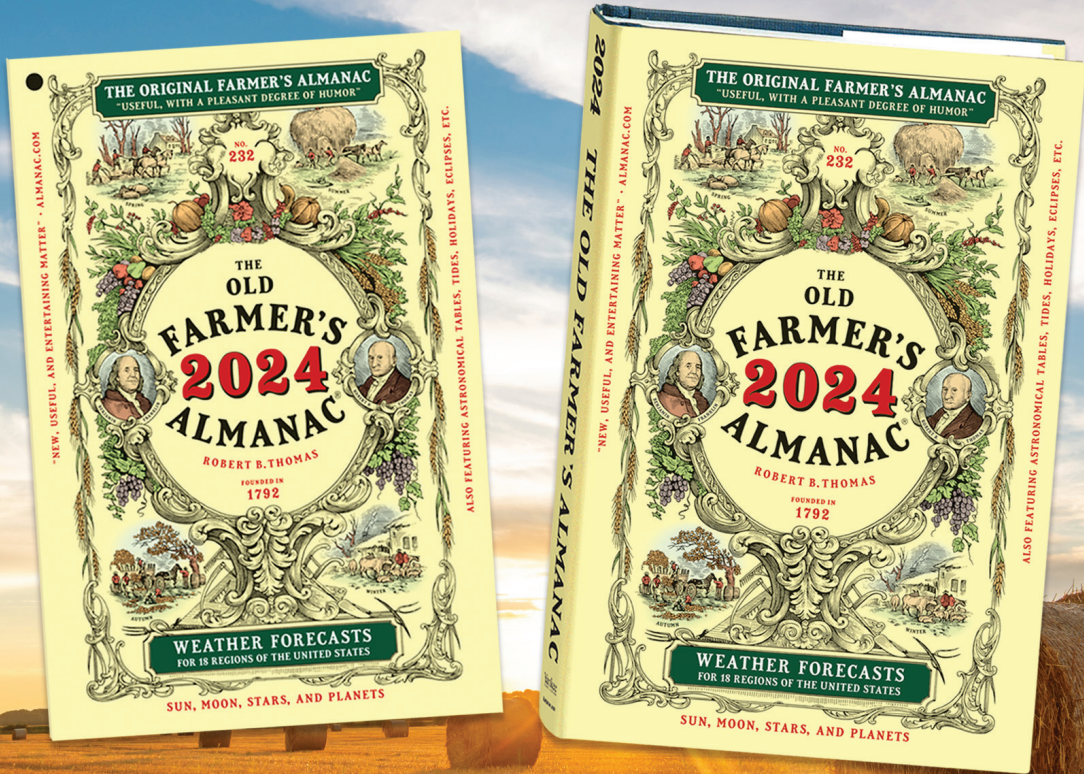
TAP FOR MORE ABOUT MOON PHASES



TAP FOR MORE ABOUT MAY'S FULL MOON

The Old Farmer's Almanac Garden Planner software makes gardening easier! Try it free for 7 days at [GardenPlanner.Almanac.com](http://GardenPlanner.Almanac.com)—no credit card required!

# ORDER YOUR 2024 ALMANACS!



We're happy to offer you this handy yellow book in both hardcover and soft cover!

**SHIPPING NOW!**



## BEST DAYS TO DO THINGS

These May 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: 7, 8, 21, 22

Ask for a loan: 5, 6

Begin diet to gain weight: 13, 18

Begin diet to lose weight: 5, 24

Buy a home: 8, 21, 22

Color hair: 7, 8

Cut hair to discourage growth: 3, 4

Cut hair to encourage growth:  
18–20

Entertain: 13–15

Get married: 18–20

Have dental care: 16, 17

Move (house/household): 9, 10



Perm hair: 1, 2, 28, 29  
Quit smoking: 5, 24  
Straighten hair: 23, 24  
Travel for pleasure: 13–15  
Wean children: 5, 24

### **AROUND THE HOUSE**

---

Bake: 11, 12  
Brew: 21, 22  
Can, pickle, or make sauerkraut: 3, 4, 30, 31  
Demolish: 21, 22  
Dry fruit, vegetables, or meat: 5, 6  
End projects: 22  
Lay shingles: 13–15  
Make jams or jellies: 3, 4, 30, 31  
Paint: 7, 8  
Start projects: 8  
Wash floors: 3, 4, 30, 31  
Wash windows: 5, 6

### **OUTDOORS**

---

Begin logging: 25–27  
Go camping: 23, 24

Go fishing: 7–23  
Set posts or pour concrete: 25–27

### **IN THE GARDEN**

---

Destroy pests and weeds: 5, 6  
Graft or pollinate: 11, 12  
Harvest aboveground crops: 16, 17  
Harvest belowground crops: 25–27  
Mow to promote growth: 11, 12  
Mow to slow growth: 3, 4, 30, 31  
Pick fruit: 16, 17  
Plant aboveground crops: 11, 12  
Plant belowground crops: 3, 4, 30, 31  
Prune to discourage growth: 5, 6  
Prune to encourage growth: 13–15

### **ON THE FARM**

---

Breed animals: 21, 22  
Castrate animals: 1, 2, 28, 29  
Cut hay: 5, 6  
Purchase animals: 11, 12  
Set eggs: 1, 17–19, 27, 28  
Slaughter livestock: 21, 22  
Wean animals: 5, 24



## GARDENING BY THE MOON'S SIGN

Use the May 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  
MAY 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 MAY

**1** Aquarius  
**2** Aquarius  
**3** Pisces  
**4** Pisces  
**5** Aries  
**6** Aries  
**7** Taurus  
**8** Taurus

**9** Gemini  
**10** Gemini  
**11** Cancer  
**12** Cancer  
**13** Leo  
**14** Leo  
**15** Leo  
**16** Virgo

**17** Virgo  
**18** Libra  
**19** Libra  
**20** Libra  
**21** Scorpio  
**22** Scorpio  
**23** Sagittarius  
**24** Sagittarius

**25** Capricorn  
**26** Capricorn  
**27** Capricorn  
**28** Aquarius  
**29** Aquarius  
**30** Pisces  
**31** Pisces

## 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.

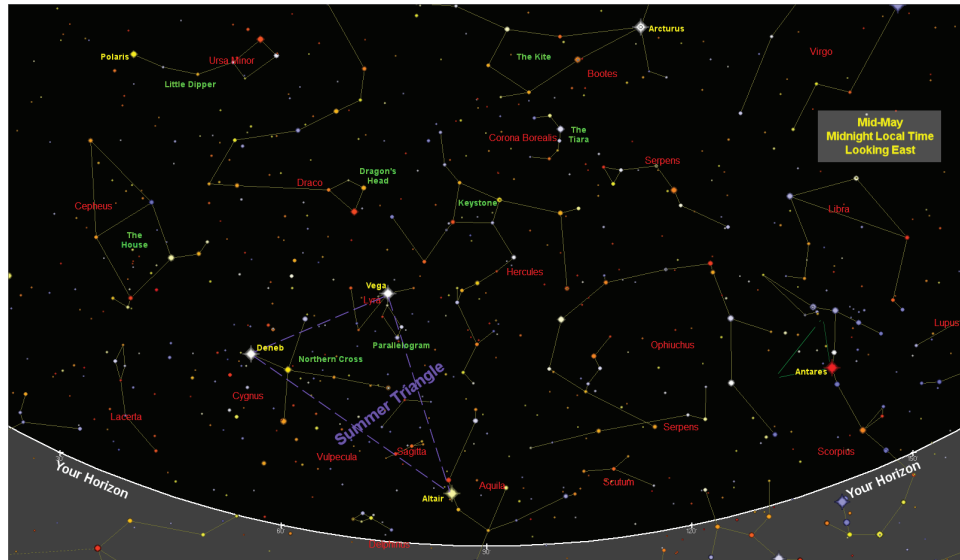
When Mercury is retrograde, remain flexible, allow extra time for travel, and avoid signing contracts. Review projects and plans at these times, but wait until Mercury is direct again to make any final decisions.

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

—Celeste Longacre

---

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).



## ALL ABOUT ASTERISMS

**A**n asterism is an easily recognized star pattern that lies within a constellation. Unlike constellations, asterisms are entirely “unofficial.” There is no international organization or governing body that assigns names to asterisms. Their names have come into popular usage because they are a convenience—an easy way to navigate the sky. If you wish, feel free to identify and name your own asterisms. Who knows? Your names might catch on!

For a fine example of an asterism, look near the center of this month’s star map for the Keystone, a compact pattern of four stars that lies within the constellation Hercules, the Hero. Hercules is a sprawling constellation, the fifth largest in the sky, but the distinctive shape of the Keystone really stands out.

Above and to the right of the Keystone is the constellation Corona Borealis, the Northern Crown. To me, this semicircle

 TAP TO GET  
A PRINTABLE  
MAY SKY MAP

 TAP TO  
FOLLOW  
OHIOAN JEFF  
DETRAY’S SKY  
ADVENTURES





of stars looks far more like a tiara than a crown, so The Tiara it is, at least for me.

Higher in the sky lies Boötes, the Herdsman, whose main stars form an asterism known as The Kite. It's a sloppy-looking kite, to be sure, but the shape is certainly suggestive of one—enough so that it can help you to get your bearings and find Boötes. The bright star Arcturus anchors the tail of The Kite.

Off to the left, look for the Little Dipper asterism, part of the constellation Ursa Minor, the Lesser Bear. At the end of the dipper's handle is Polaris, the North Star. From brightly lit suburbs, you'll see only Polaris and the brighter stars of the dipper's bowl. Leave town to see the whole dipper.

Between the Little Dipper and The Kite slithers the body of Draco, the Dragon, which culminates in the Dragon's Head, a four-sided asterism that shows up well when viewed from a dark location.

Below the Dragon's Head, look for two very bright stars that point the way to a great pair of asterisms, one small and the other quite large.

The star Vega in the small constellation Lyra, the Lyre, achieved notoriety as home to the fictional aliens who sent a message to Earth in the 1997 Jodie Foster film *Contact*. Beneath Vega is a small but beautifully symmetrical asterism, the Parallelogram. Its exquisite and geometrically perfect shape is a wonder.

To the lower left is the bright star Deneb, marking the tip of the Northern Cross, which lies on its side at this time of year. Deneb and the Northern Cross are part of the large constellation Cygnus, the Swan. The name "Deneb" is derived from the Arabic word for "tail," and indeed Deneb sits at the tail of the Swan.

The left side of our Sky Map features The House, an asterism within the constellation Cepheus, the King. Yes, it's a lopsided house, but no more lopsided than the ones we all drew as children.

We've already mentioned that Vega and Deneb can help you to find two lovely asterisms. These two stars, plus brilliant Altair, comprise the three corners of the large asterism known as the Summer Triangle, marked in purple on our Sky Map. The Summer Triangle will be prominent in the sky from now well into autumn.

-Jeff DeTray

HISTORY



# Witnesses to the Surrender

*What became of the men present at the conclusion  
of the Civil War in 1865?*

## HISTORY

**W**hen Robert E. Lee surrendered his army to Ulysses S. Grant in Appomattox Court House, Virginia, on April 9, 1865, effectively ending the Civil War, only 16 men witnessed the event in Wilmer McLean's parlor. Although some faded into obscurity over the next six decades, there were 10 who were to continue to make history.

**Lieutenant General Grant** became the 18th president of the United States. Some historians regard him as a failure in that office, but in his own time, he was enormously popular. First elected in 1868, he was returned to office by a landslide in 1872.

Grant wrote his memoirs, which were published by Mark Twain, while in a race with throat cancer. In spite of his illness, he wrote more than 270,000 words in less than a year and completed the book shortly before his death

in 1885. It was a best-seller and remains one of the greatest military memoirs ever put to paper.

**General in Chief Lee**, who might have been tried for treason had it not been for the personal intervention of Grant, became president of Virginia's Washington College (now Washington and Lee University). To avoid any suggestion that he might return to the fight, he refused to even march in step with his college's cadets. He died in 1870, revered by millions.

One of the first surrender witnesses to die was former **Illinois newspaperman Lt. Col. Theodore S. Bowers**, known to his friends as "Joe." He had come into the army as a private, been assigned to headquarters as a clerk, won Grant's liking, and became commissioned as a staff officer.

Early in the war, Bowers grew angry about traders who were buying cotton from secessionist farmers.

In Grant's presence, he once burst out, "Well, I think I'll resign and go into cotton. At least I would if I had the money." Grant tossed him a silver half-dollar and said, "Here, Joe, take this for a stake." Bowers had those words engraved on the coin, which he kept as a good luck charm. It was in his pocket when he was killed in a railroad accident 11 months after Appomattox.

**Brig. Gen. Orville E. Babcock** became President Grant's private secretary. In this position, he wielded enormous influence and power and faced many temptations.

In 1875, he was indicted by a St. Louis grand jury in a scandal known as the Whiskey Ring. With the help of a deposition filed in his defense by President Grant—a type of White House intervention not occurring before or since—he was acquitted in the following year.

After being indicted,

## HISTORY

tried, and acquitted in a second corruption case, Babcock was able to escape Washington politics thanks to an appointment by Grant as an inspector of lighthouses. He drowned when his small boat overturned in 1884.

**Maj. Gen. Philip H. Sheridan** commanded the Union cavalry at the end of the war. Grant said, "I believe that General Sheridan has no superior as a general, either living or dead, and perhaps not an equal." He backed up his high opinion of Sheridan by relying on him to carry out the toughest assignments during and after the war.

After Lee's surrender, Grant immediately sent Sheridan to the Southwest to restore Texas and Louisiana to Union control and help the Mexican leader Benito Juárez get rid of a French occupying army.

Sheridan's next assignment was to pacify the Plains Native Americans, which he

achieved using the same scorched-earth tactics that he had employed against the Confederates. Although he was reputed to have said "the only good Indian is a dead Indian" (he denied it all his life), in 1878 he spoke up for his former foes: "We took away their country and their means of support, broke up their mode of living, their habits of life, introduced disease and decay among them, and it was for this and against this they made war. Could anyone expect less?"

Even in peacetime, Sheridan moved swiftly and decisively. He mobilized troops to fight the Great Chicago Fire of 1871, and, in the 1880s, was instrumental in preserving the Yellowstone wilderness in the face of commercial development. Sheridan died in 1888.

**Lt. Col. Adam Badeau** served as one of Grant's aides. Capt. Robert Todd Lincoln, who was also on Grant's staff, told Badeau

how he had once fallen off a train platform, only to be pulled to safety by the famous actor Edwin Booth. Badeau, who knew both Edwin and his younger brother, John Wilkes Booth, from his days writing theater reviews in New York, wrote to Edwin to thank him for saving the president's son.

Badeau aided Grant in the preparation of the president's memoirs, but there was a dispute about payment and credit. Badeau subsequently settled with Grant's heirs for \$10,000. He died in 1895, having written several books about his Civil War experiences.

**Lt. Col. Ely S. Parker**, a full-blooded chief of the Seneca nation, wrote out the final copy of the terms of Lee's surrender. When he was introduced to Parker, Lee said, "I am glad to see one real American here." Parker later stated, "I shook his hand and said, 'We are all Americans.'"

In 1869, President

## HISTORY

Grant appointed Parker as the first Native American Commissioner of Indian Affairs.

Parker did his best to promote Grant's policy of peaceful relations with the western tribes but was undercut by white bureaucrats and criticized by his own people for marrying a white woman. He left the government, made a fortune on Wall Street, lost it, and ended his days as a clerk in the New York City Police Department. He died in 1895. In 1897, his body was reinterred in Buffalo, New York, next to the famous Seneca chief Red Jacket, one of his ancestors.

As assistant provost marshal, **Brig. Gen. George H. Sharpe** paroled 28,000 Confederate Army soldiers—including General Lee—after the surrender. In 1867, he went to Europe looking for Americans who might have been involved in the assassination of President

Lincoln. He managed to bring back John Surratt, son of one of the convicted conspirators, whose eventual trial ended in a hung jury. Sharpe lived until 1900.

**Lt. Col. Horace Porter**, who had been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his conduct at the Battle of Chickamauga, was the U.S. ambassador to France from 1897 to 1905. He spent 6 years of his tenure and a great deal of his own money searching Paris for the long-lost grave of Revolutionary War hero John Paul Jones. Porter found the leaden coffin in a long-abandoned Protestant cemetery and hired experts to identify the body. Satisfied that it was Jones, Porter notified President Theodore Roosevelt, who sent four Navy warships to accompany the body home, where it was reinterred at the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. He

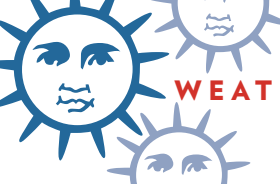
died in 1921.

The aforementioned **Capt. Robert T. Lincoln**—the youngest and lowest-ranking officer present at the surrender—was the president's oldest son. A strange series of coincidences put Lincoln at or near the sites of three Presidential assassinations. He had turned down an invitation to accompany his parents to Ford's Theatre. Sixteen years later, he witnessed the shooting of President James Garfield at a train station in Washington, D.C. And he was in Buffalo, New York, at President McKinley's invitation, when that president was assassinated in 1901.

Later, he refused another presidential invitation, saying, "There is a certain fatality about presidential functions when I am present."

Lincoln died in 1926, the last surviving witness to Lee's surrender.

—Tim Clark



MANY THUNDERSTORMS IN MAY,  
AND THE FARMER SINGS "HEY! HEY!"



TAP TO FIND  
OUT THE  
WEATHER  
HISTORY OF  
THE DAY



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

## HOW WE MAKE OUR PREDICTIONS

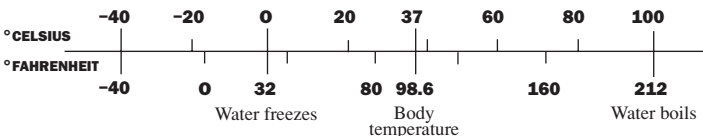
We derive our weather forecasts from a secret formula that was devised by the founder of this Almanac, Robert B. Thomas, in 1792. Thomas believed that weather on Earth was influenced by sunspots, which are magnetic storms on the surface of the Sun.

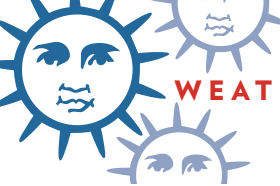
Over the years, we have refined and enhanced this formula with state-of-the-art technology and modern scientific calculations. We employ three scientific disciplines to make our long-range predictions: solar science, the study of sunspots and other solar activity; climatology, the study of prevailing 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.

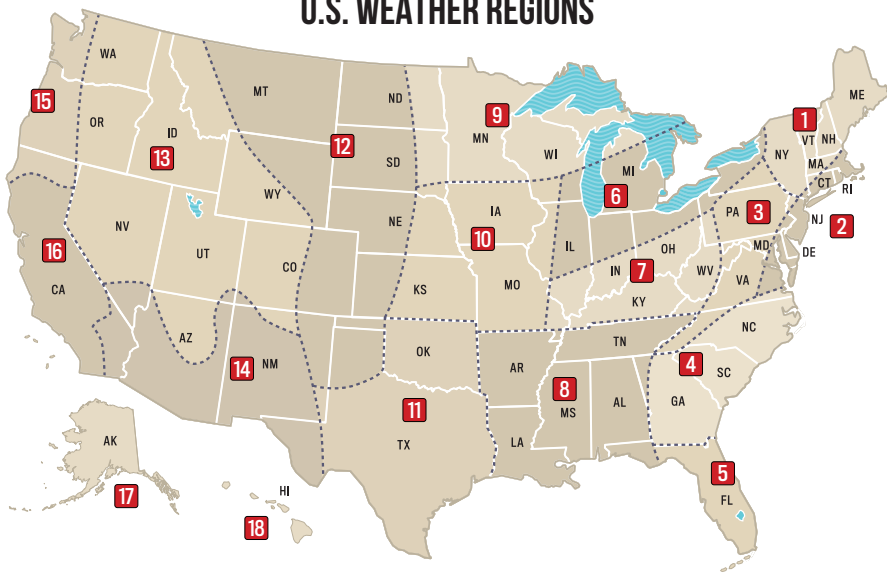
### CELSIUS-FAHRENHEIT TABLE



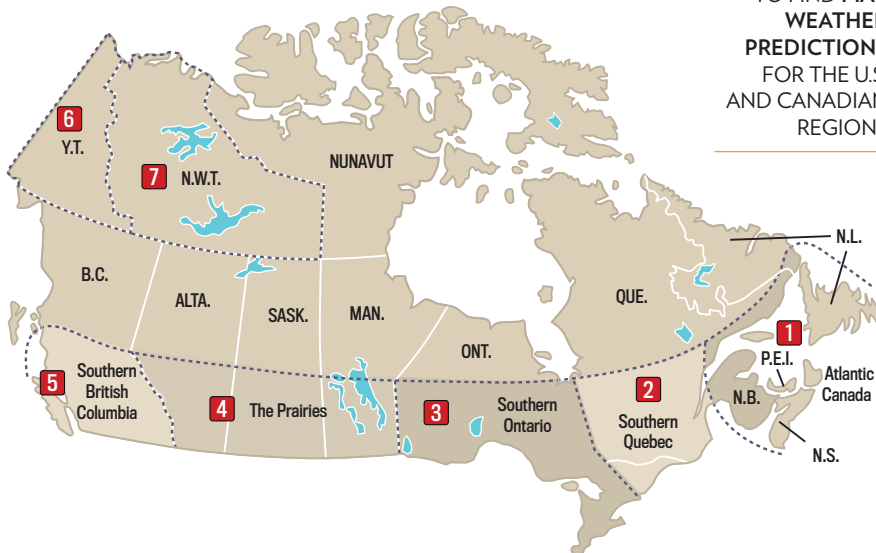


# WEATHER FORECASTS

## U.S. WEATHER REGIONS



## CANADIAN WEATHER REGIONS



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





## TAKING MAY BY STORM?

**M**ay 4 will feature the 150th running of the Kentucky Derby in Louisville, where it looks to be a warm afternoon with the potential for some showers.

Mother's Day will come up on the 12th, when showers may arrive along much of the East Coast. The Great Lakes and Ohio Valley will soak in some sunshine on a mild day. Some rain will move across parts of the Upper Midwest, with May thunderstorms rolling through the Heartland and Deep South. Sunshine is expected across Texas, Oklahoma, and the West Coast, while some showers will be showing up in the Rockies. Canada will also be showery in Atlantic Canada, Southern Ontario, the Prairies, and southwestern British Columbia, with some snowflakes perhaps still flying across the Northwest Territories.

For Victoria Day in Canada on the 20th, showers will move across Quebec and the Maritimes, while some sunshine will favor locales from Ontario back through the Prairies. There may be a couple of showers from British Columbia up into southern parts of the Yukon.

Back in the U.S., Memorial Day weekend on the 25th–27th will be hot and largely dry across the West for the unofficial start of summer, with just a couple of isolated showers in the Rockies. Much of the Plains will be sunny and warm, although some t-storms may fire up across portions of Oklahoma and Texas. Showers and thunderstorms are also expected across much of the





mid-Atlantic, Appalachians, Southeast, and Florida, while sunshine will be common from New England back through the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley.

Overall, May looks to be warm across much of the eastern U.S., including the Great Lakes, eastern Ohio Valley, and much of the South. We do expect below-average temperatures from the Plains to the Upper Midwest. The West Coast of the U.S. and much of the Rockies will be warmer than average, along with Alaska. Above-average temps will be found from the Maritimes back through Quebec and in the Northwest Territories, while they will be near to below average temperatures across central and western Canada.

Along with this warmth in the eastern U.S., we do expect a wet May, which could mean a good amount of thunderstorm activity. Near- to below-average rainfall is expected from the Great Lakes and Ohio Valley westward to the Upper Midwest and Heartland, as well as the northern Plains and northern Rockies. Wetter weather will get suppressed farther south from the southern Plains back through the Desert Southwest. The West Coast will generally be on the drier side. Above-average precipitation is forecast from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick back through Quebec, Ontario, the Northwest Territories, and the southern Yukon. Near- to below-average precipitation looks likely throughout much of central and western Canada.

The Atlantic hurricane season gets under way on June 1, although May storms have become more common in recent years. In the past 10 years, tropical storms have formed during May in 2015, 2016, 2018, 2019, 2020 (when there were two May storms) and 2021. The strong El Niño that has been in place in recent months has pretty much peaked, so we expect the ENSO (El Niño Southern Oscillation) to turn neutral by late in the spring and perhaps even back to a La Niña by later in the summer. This would lead to the potential for an active season in the Atlantic. Our main area of concern will in the Gulf Coast states, where we're watching for a hurricane strike in Florida or the Southeast in late August, and along the Gulf Coast in early July and early September. There will also be the potential for a tropical storm to hit parts of Texas and the Deep South on a couple of occasions from July to September. We'll also have to watch for a tropical storm along the mid-Atlantic coast in late August. This year will likely end up more active than 2023, which was relatively quiet for much of the Atlantic basin.

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