

EXTRA!

FROM THE OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC

GET MOVING AND
GET OUTSIDE!

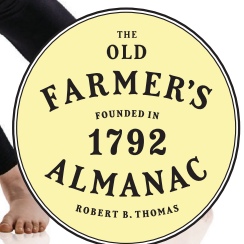
THE EVOLUTION
OF THE BARN

EYEING POTATOES

FUN AND
FLAVORFUL
CHICKEN RECIPES



APRIL 2018





FEATURES

LIVING NATURALLY

Get Moving and Get Outside!

FOOD

Fun and Flavorful Chicken Recipes

GARDENING

Eyeing Potatoes

HISTORY

The Evolution of the Barn



WEATHER FORECASTS

How We Make Our Predictions

April U.S. and Canadian Weather Forecasts

Weather Update

WIT

Humor Me
Grins and groans from the Almanac

WHAT'S NEXT

See what we have in store for our May issue!

DEPARTMENTS

CALENDAR

April Birthdays, Holidays, History, and More

ASTROLOGY

Best Days to Do Things

Gardening by the Moon's Sign

ASTRONOMY

Sky Map for April



THE MONTH OF APRIL

BIRTHDAYS, HOLIDAYS, HISTORY, AND MORE



HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

April 1: *Easter*

April 8: *Orthodox Easter*

April 22: *Earth Day*

April 27: *National Arbor Day*

April is National Humor Month. Begun in 1976 by humorist Larry Wilde, this observance serves to heighten public awareness of humor's health benefits. Laughter has been shown to reduce

stress and pain, relax muscles, boost morale, strengthen the immune system, increase blood flow, and enrich the quality of life overall.

To get the month off to a healthy start, can you answer this riddle?

Q: Which is heavier, a half Moon or a full Moon?

A: The half Moon, because the full Moon is twice as light.

MOON WATCH

Last Quarter:

April 8, at 3:18
A.M. EDT

New Moon:

April 15, at 9:57
P.M. EDT

First Quarter:

April 22, at 5:46
P.M. EDT

Full Pink Moon:

April 29, at 8:58
P.M. EDT



TAP FOR MORE
MOON PHASES



TAP FOR MORE
ABOUT APRIL'S FULL
MOON

MONTHLY MUSE

*Capricious
month of laughter
and of tears,
Inconstant April!*

—Henry Sylvester
Cornwell, American poet
(1831–86)

FASCINATING FIRSTS

On April 9, 1959, NASA introduced the first U.S. astronauts to the public: M. Scott Carpenter, L. Gordon Cooper Jr., John H. Glenn Jr., Virgil I. “Gus” Grissom, Alan B. Shepard Jr., Donald K. Slayton, and which other person?

- a. Neil A. Armstrong
- b. Charles Conrad Jr.
- c. James A. McDivitt
- d. Walter M. Schirra Jr.



Answer: d.

APRIL BIRTHDAYS



MIRAI NAGASU

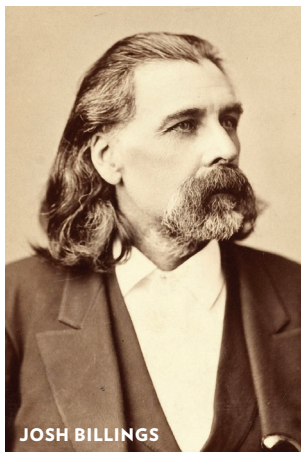
- 25 YEARS AGO (1993)**
Ian Eastwood (American dancer)
- Marcus Johns** (American actor)
- Alisha Marie** (American YouTube star)
- Mirai Nagasu** (American figure skater)

- 50 YEARS AGO (1968)**
Florian Bellanger (French pastry chef)
- Bob Pflugfelder** (American chemist and science educator)

- 100 YEARS AGO (1918)**
Louis Applebaum (Canadian composer and conductor)
- Betty Ford** (U.S. First Lady)
- William Holden** (American actor)

- 125 YEARS AGO (1893)**
Leslie Howard (English actor)
- Edna Parker** (American supercentenarian, lived 115 years, 220 days)

- 200 YEARS AGO (1818)**
Josh Billings (American humorist)



JOSH BILLINGS



BEST DAYS TO DO THINGS

These April 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: 17, 29, 30

Ask for a loan: 3, 13

Begin diet to gain weight: 22, 26

Begin diet to lose weight: 3, 13

Buy a home: 17, 22

Color hair: 16, 17

Cut hair to discourage growth: 1, 12, 13

Cut hair to encourage growth: 27, 28

Get married: 1, 27, 28

Have dental care: 25, 26

Move (house/household): 18, 19

Perm hair: 9–11

Quit smoking: 3, 13



Straighten hair: 4–6

Travel for pleasure: 23, 24

Wean children: 3, 13

AROUND THE HOUSE

Bake: 20–22

Brew: 2, 3, 29, 30

Can, pickle, or make sauerkraut: 2, 3

Demolish: 2, 3, 29, 30

Dry fruit/vegetables/meat: 23, 24

End projects: 15

Lay shingles: 23, 24

Make jams/jellies: 12, 13

Paint: 1, 16, 17, 27, 28

Start projects: 17

Wash floors: 12, 13

Wash windows: 14, 15

OUTDOORS

Begin logging: 7, 8

Go camping: 4–6

Go fishing: 15–29

Set posts or pour concrete: 7, 8

IN THE GARDEN

Destroy pests and weeds: 14, 15

Graft or pollinate: 20–22

Harvest aboveground crops: 25, 26

Harvest belowground crops: 7, 8

Mow to decrease growth: 14, 15

Mow to increase growth: 29, 30

Pick fruit: 25, 26

Plant aboveground crops: 20–22, 29

Plant belowground crops: 2, 3, 12, 13

Prune to discourage growth: 4–6

Prune to encourage growth: 23, 24

ON THE FARM

Breed animals: 2, 3, 29, 30

Castrate animals: 9–11

Cut hay: 14, 15

Purchase animals: 20–22

Set eggs: 1, 8, 27, 28

Slaughter livestock: 2, 3, 29, 30

Wean animals: 3, 13



GARDENING BY THE MOON'S SIGN

Use the April 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 APRIL

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



TAP FOR
MERCURY IN
RETROGRADE
DATES



APP EXTRA!
TAP FOR
APRIL MOON
PHASES

MERCURY IN RETROGRADE

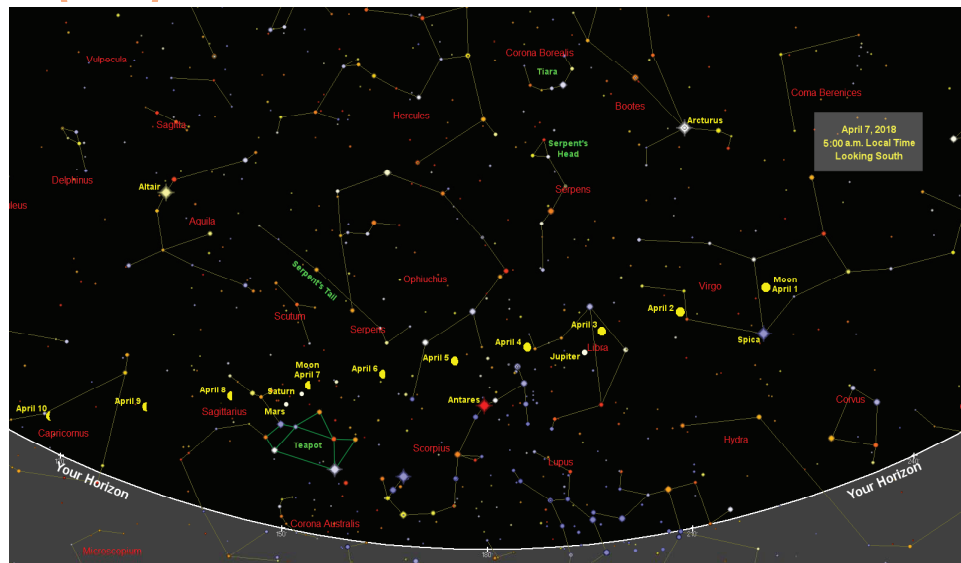
Sometimes the other planets appear to be traveling backward through the zodiac; this is an illusion. We call this illusion *retrograde motion*.

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.

In 2018, Mercury is retrograde during March 23–April 15, July 26–August 19, and November 17–December 6.

—Celeste Longacre



PLANETS ON PARADE

Most of us prefer the convenience of doing our sky-gazing in the evening. We can enjoy the night sky and still get to bed at a civilized hour. Sometimes, however, you simply *must* get up early in the morning if you want to see the best astronomical sights. So it is in April, when three bright planets are on display before dawn. You'll need to venture outside at around 5:00 A.M. to catch the show.

Most of the action on this month's sky map occurs low in the south-southeast sky. Before dawn on April 7, there is a conjunction of the Moon and the planets Mars and Saturn just above the "Teapot" asterism (unofficial star pattern) in the constellation Sagittarius, the Archer. Reddish Mars and yellowish Saturn will spend most of April in this vicinity, but the Moon joins them only on the morning of April 7.

As shown on the map, the Moon begins April far to the right, directly above the bright star Spica in the constellation Virgo, the Virgin. Through the first 10 days of April, the



APP EXTRA!
TAP TO GET
A PRINTABLE
APRIL SKY MAP



APP EXTRA!
TAP TO
FOLLOW
OHIOAN JEFF
DETRAY'S SKY
ADVENTURES



Moon moves rapidly to the left, passing near the planet Jupiter on April 3 and 4 and reaching Mars and Saturn on April 7, when it will be half-illuminated. By the morning of April 10, the Moon will be far to the left on our map, a handsome crescent just above the horizon.

Of the three planets on the map, Jupiter appears by far the brightest. Other than the Moon, it is the brightest object on the map. What makes one planet brighter than another? There are three factors: size, distance, and reflectivity (formally known as albedo).

Mars is a small, rocky planet that is not very reflective. Compare it to Saturn and Jupiter, which are both “gas giants,” huge globes wreathed in bright, highly reflective clouds.

On the other hand, Mars is much, *much* closer than the two larger planets. So, little Mars is currently brighter than gigantic Saturn! Jupiter is larger and closer than Saturn, and it’s just as reflective. Thus, at the current time, Jupiter is the brightest planet on the map, outshining Mars by virtue of being larger and more reflective and outshining Saturn because it is closer.

Saturn and Jupiter are far enough from Earth that their positions barely change all month long. Mars, on the other hand, moves steadily from right to left, passing quite close to Saturn on April 2 and 3. If you rise early and view the planets several days in a row, you’ll notice Mars’s location changing every day.

Another lovely sight on the April map is the beautiful constellation Corona Borealis, the Northern Crown, which resembles a delicate tiara at the upper center of the map.

Four bright stars grace our map. Starting in the upper right, we find Arcturus, the fourth brightest star of all. Other stellar notables include Altair, Antares (note its slightly reddish color, similar to that of Mars), and Spica. These three are the 12th, 15th, and 16th brightest stars, respectively.

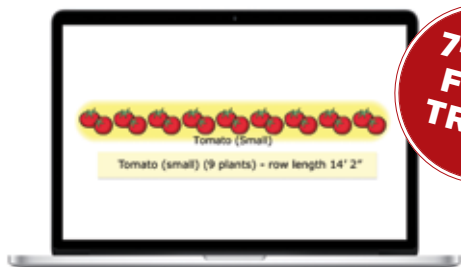
In the center of our map is the large constellation Ophiuchus, the Serpent Bearer. In his hands, Ophiuchus holds the two parts of Serpens, the Serpent. Serpens is the only constellation that is physically divided into two parts, known by their Latin names Serpens Caput (serpent head) and Serpens Cauda (serpent tail).

–Jeff DeTray

Plan Your BEST Garden

Good luck is the result of good planning.

And we've done the homework for you! Described as “the world’s best garden planning software,” the *Almanac Garden Planner* helps you create the best layout for your plant beds right on your computer!

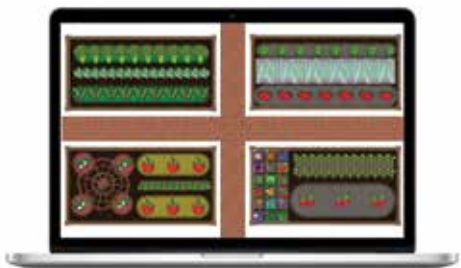


**7-DAY
FREE
TRIAL!**



- shows how many plants to set in a space, plus when to sow, plant, and harvest

- contains 250 vegetables, herbs, fruits, and flowers



- works for raised beds, square-foot gardens, and traditional rows



- customizes planting dates to YOUR location, based on local weather history

PLUS:

- keeps track of your planting to ensure proper rotation every year
- emails you twice a month, with details on which of your plants you need to sow now

**GET GROWING NOW: USE THE GARDEN PLANNER
FREE FOR 7 DAYS!**

The no-obligation 7-day trial gives you access to all the features of the software for one garden plan. If you like the *Almanac Garden Planner*, subscribe for only **\$29 per year**. Or subscribe anytime—the *Planner* will remember your plot!

PLAN TODAY AND PLANT TOMORROW! SIGN UP AT ALMANAC.COM/GARDENPLANNER

LIVING NATURALLY



**Get Moving and
Get Outside!**

PHOTO: LEONARDO PATRIZI/GETTY IMAGES



You don't need to do vigorous exercise during these brief breaks from sitting. Just get up and move around for a couple of minutes.

Do you sit for long stretches of the day and/or evening for work, crafting, entertainment, or online socializing?

If so, you may be jeopardizing your health.

As someone who has “sat for a living” for decades as a writer-editor, I was startled to discover recent studies that associate long periods of sitting with more cardiovascular disease, larger waists, more cancer, and other health risks.

The research also reveals that even an hour or more of vigorous daily exercise can't undo the health damage of long sitting.

The remedy?

Experts recommend taking short breaks every 20 to 30 minutes that get you up and moving around. Canadian blogger Paul Ingraham calls it “microbreaking.”

You don't need to do vigorous exercise during these brief breaks from sitting. Just get up and move around for a couple of minutes. At home, you could put a load of laundry in the washer, get a glass of water, take a couple of trips up and down the stairs, walk around the driveway, or pace while you talk on a cell phone. People at work could walk to the printer, copier, or restroom; walk in place; or stroll to a

colleague's desk with a question.

Don't forget, though, that these mini-movement breaks don't substitute for longer bouts of aerobic and strengthening exercise that build and maintain your fitness base.

Now, it's time to think about getting outside.

A substantial body of research affirms the numerous health benefits of spending time in natural settings: walking in woods or urban parks, canoeing down a river, tending a vegetable garden, meandering along a coastline or a lakeshore.

Researchers have found that spending time

Human health may depend on connecting with nature.

in nature strengthens a person's immune system, reduces stress hormones, lowers blood pressure, and improves social interactions. Furthermore, it may improve learning and increase empathy.

Even a dose of 5 minutes outdoors increases our sense of well-being.

Interestingly, green spaces such as parks and community gardens in urban residential environments seem to reduce crime (especially gun violence), decrease domestic violence, stimulate positive social interactions, and strengthen family

connections.

What's more, hospital patients exposed to green spaces through their windows (rather than parking lots) have better clinical outcomes. They experience less fear, anxiety, and anger; have lower blood pressure; and need fewer medications.

So there's much to be said for even just the notion of the outdoors.

AND THEN THERE'S BIOPHILIA

The term "biophilia" relates to the hypothesis that human health may depend on connecting with nature.

Biologist Edward O.

Wilson and others have hypothesized that a deep affinity that they call "biophilia" exists between humans and other living systems. Proponents of the hypothesis suggest that a connection with the plants and animals around us, including those species too small to see, is essential to our physical and mental health and productivity.

Consequently, public health advocates around the world have begun advocating immersion in nature for health.

—Margaret Boyles



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

FOOD



Fun and Flavorful Chicken Recipes

Chicken dishes are popular and budget-friendly—but chicken can get boring. If you are tired of making the same chicken recipes over and over, try one or all of these delicious options. For more chicken recipes, visit us at [Almanac.com](https://www.almanac.com).

Spicy Sweet Bacon Chicken Tenders



TAP FOR
RECIPE

SPICY SWEET BACON CHICKEN TENDERS

- 8 thick slices bacon
- 8 boneless, skinless chicken breast tenders
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons chipotle chili powder

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Wrap a bacon slice around each chicken tender. Secure top and bottom of bacon with two toothpicks per tender.

In a shallow bowl, mix together brown sugar and chipotle chili powder. Dredge bacon-wrapped chicken in mixture, then place on a rimmed baking sheet. Bake for 35 minutes, or until chicken is fully cooked and bacon is crisp. (Place under broiler, if bacon is not crispy.) Cool briefly on baking sheet, then dip in drippings and serve.

Makes 8 appetizer servings.

SHARE
THIS
RECIPE

 TAP FOR
RECIPE



Roasted Red Pepper, Mozzarella, and Basil-Stuffed Chicken

ROASTED RED PEPPER, MOZZARELLA, AND BASIL-STUFFED CHICKEN

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning, divided
- salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 jar (12 ounces) sweet roasted red peppers, sliced into 1-inch pieces
- 1 bunch fresh basil leaves
- 8 ounces fresh mozzarella, cut into 8 slices, divided
- 1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 400°F. Grease a 13x9-inch, broiler-safe casserole.

Butterfly chicken breast halves: Slice through each breast horizontally, leaving a 1/4-inch “hinge.”

Open chicken breasts and place in casserole cut side up. Sprinkle with half of the Italian seasoning and salt and pepper. On one side (half) of each breast, layer roasted red peppers, basil leaves, and 1 slice mozzarella. Fold over other side, tucking in fillings. Sprinkle with remaining Italian seasoning.

Bake for 30 to 40 minutes, or until chicken is no longer pink. Remove from oven. Turn oven to broil. Top each breast with 1 slice mozzarella. Sprinkle with Parmesan. Broil for about 5 minutes, or until cheese is browned and bubbly.

Makes 4 servings.

SHARE
THIS
RECIPE



Chicken and Cheese Enchiladas



TAP FOR
RECIPE



CHICKEN AND CHEESE ENCHILADAS

- 3 cups enchilada sauce, divided
- 4 cups well-chopped cooked chicken
- 1/3 cup sour cream
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped parsley or cilantro
- 2 tablespoons minced onion
- salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 8 to 10 corn tortillas
- 3 cups shredded sharp cheddar or pepper jack cheese, divided

Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly oil a large, shallow casserole.

Ladle 3/4 cup of enchilada sauce into casserole and spread evenly across the bottom. Set aside.

Put chicken into a bowl, add 1/2 cup of enchilada sauce, and stir. Add sour cream, parsley, onions, and salt and pepper. Stir and set aside.

Microwave tortillas in damp paper towel to soften.

Working with one tortilla at a time, spread a portion of chicken filling across the center. Sprinkle with 2 tablespoons of cheddar and roll up the enchilada. Place in casserole, seam side down. Repeat with remaining tortillas.

Spoon remaining sauce over enchiladas. Sprinkle with remaining cheddar and bake for 25 to 30 minutes, or until bubbly.

Makes 4 servings.

SHARE
THIS
RECIPE

GARDENING



Eyeing Potatoes

*Plant your 'taters when you will,
They won't come up before April.*

PHOTO: CLARK AND COMPANY/GETTY IMAGES



MAKE SURE THERE IS AT LEAST ONE EYE ON EACH TUBER TO BE PLANTED.

Folklore offers many “best days” for planting potatoes:

- Old-timers in New England planted their potato crops when they saw dandelions blooming in the open fields.

- The Pennsylvania Dutch considered St. Gertrude’s Day (March 17, aka St. Patrick’s Day) to be their official potato-planting day.

- Many Christians believe that Good Friday (March 30 this year) is the best day to plant potatoes because the devil holds no power

over them at this time.

- Yet another tradition suggests planting before the vernal equinox (March 20 this year).

The verse at the beginning of this article appears in *The 2018 Old Farmer’s Almanac* on the April Calendar Page. If you’ve missed the previous potato-planting days, now is the time!

The commonality between all of the “best” planting days is that they are in the early spring; potatoes like cool weather and soil that is about 45° to 55°F and can be turned over without clumping.

The best starters are seed potatoes—whole tubers from which “eyes” protrude. (Do not confuse seed potatoes with potato seeds or grocery produce.) Use a clean, sharp paring knife to cut large tubers into pieces that are roughly 1 to 4 ounces each, making sure that there is at least one eye on each piece. (Tubers that are smaller than a hen’s egg should be planted whole.)

With a hoe or round-point shovel, dig a trench about 6 inches wide and 8 inches deep, tapering the bottom to about 3 inches wide. Put a seed



LEAVE SOIL MOUNDED UP 4 TO 5 INCHES ABOVE GROUND LEVEL (“HILLING”).

potato piece, cut side down, every 14 inches and cover with 3 to 4 inches of soil.

In 12 to 16 days, when sprouts appear, use a hoe to gently fill in the trench with another 3 to 4 inches of soil, leaving a few inches of the plants exposed. Repeat in several weeks, leaving the soil mounded up 4 to 5 inches above ground level (this is called “hilling”).

Do not allow sunlight to fall on the potatoes, which develop under the surface of the soil, or they will turn green. Do the hilling in the morning, when

plants are at their tallest. During the heat of the day, plants start drooping.

If your garden soil is very rocky, put the seed potato pieces directly on the ground and cover them with straw or leaves, hilling the material up as the potatoes grow.

Maintain even moisture, especially from the time when sprouts appear until several weeks after they blossom. If you water too much right after planting and not enough as the potatoes begin to form, they can become misshapen.

Harvest baby potatoes 2 to 3 weeks after the plants stop flowering. For mature potatoes, wait 2 to 3 weeks after the foliage has died. On a day when the soil is dry, dig potatoes carefully to avoid cutting or bruising their skins. If the soil is very wet, let the potatoes air-dry as much as possible before putting them in bags or baskets.

—*Almanac editors*



TAP TO LEARN POTATO COMPANION PLANTS—AND ENEMIES



TAP TO LEARN HOW TO GROW POTATOES IN A TRASH CAN

POTATO COMPANION PLANTS—AND ENEMIES

Potato companion plants include beans, cabbage, corn, and scallions.

Plant horseradish (a perennial) at the corners of your potato patch to deter potato beetles.

Sunflowers inhibit the growth of potatoes. Keep the two plants as far apart as possible.

Do not plant potatoes near squash, tomatoes, or cucumbers; if you do, you will increase the chances of blight.

Grow Better, Naturally!

New from *The Old Farmer's Almanac*, the 2018 digital *Garden Guide* to help you to grow greener, cleaner vegetables, fruit, herbs, flowers, even scent-amentals!

DIGITAL EDITION AVAILABLE NOW!

GROW FOOD YOU LOVE!

- tomatoes, peas, peppers, eggplants, cucumbers, and more
- citrus for porch, patio, or playroom
- asparagus, ramps, onions, and more

GROW QUICK AND EASY!

DIY in a weekend:

- make a plant tower
- pot up herbs for indoors
- start veggie seeds successfully

GROW YOUR SENSES!

- electrify with color
- surround yourself with fragrance
- master your microclimate

GROW YOUR SKILLS!

- test your soil 5 ways
- curtail critters kindly
- plan a pleasing pathway
- bring chickens home to roost

FEAST ON FRESHNESS:

Recipes for dip, soup, salad, snacks, even dessert, using the harvest.

PLUS: the latest trends, time- and money-saving tips, gardening by the Moon, new products, and more! Grow with the 2018 *Garden Guide* and grow better!



ORDER YOUR DIGITAL COPY AT ALMANAC.COM/GARDENGUIDE

HISTORY



The Evolution of the Barn

Follow along through centuries of change.

HISTORY

It will not always be summer: Build barns.

—Hesiod, Greek poet
(c. 750–650 B.C.)

The farmer’s barn had to be built wisely because invariably it housed his greatest assets while making the most of available resources. Every new barn, therefore, was a “new and improved” version compared with past efforts, not only in construction materials and techniques but also in orientation to the Sun and prevailing

winds, as well as in accessibility and general efficiency. The good builder employed knowledge gained from neighboring barns in his construction. The characteristic looks that we associate with barns are the result of this natural evolution.

Later farms came to specialize in certain crops, and barns became specialized as well (dairy, fruit, tobacco, poultry, etc.). Most of what we learned through this natural evolution is still widely employed in the barns of small farms

today. In the years ahead, we will use still newer and more improved ideas in the continuing modification of the barn.

The early log barn typically had a thatched roof. Mortaring the spaces between the lower logs kept cold winds out. Upper spaces were left open for the circulation of air, which helped to keep moisture under control. In early barns, an open central hall provided a workspace to process grains and a breeze for “winnowing.” Storage space was on either side.

A BRACED FRAME CONSTRUCTION ALLOWED LARGER AND MORE ADAPTABLE STRUCTURES.





BARNs CONSTRUCTED OF LOGS, STONE, OR BRICK BECAME HIGHLY DEVELOPED.

Once sawn lumber was easily obtainable in the early colonies, most barns were of braced frame construction, which allowed larger and more adaptable structures. Air could circulate through the cracks between the boards. Large doors provided good light. Small barns could be attached horizontally with shed-roof additions on the sides and back.

In the early 1700s, farmers needed more room. Adding more

stories in a new barn provided more space under the same roof area and on the same-size foundation. Access to the barn was greatly improved if the barn could be situated on a hillside, allowing the farmer to drive in at several levels. Doors at opposite ends offered good cross-ventilation and allowed wagons to drive through. Rows of windows over the door became a popular method of letting in more light.

Brick barns became popular in the mid-19th century. Bricks were omitted in decorative patterns to let in air and light. Farmers adapted the styles to whatever construction materials were common in their area. Barns constructed of logs, stone, brick, or even cordwood were carried to a high degree of development. Also, the influence of various cultures and nationalities showed strongly from region to region. Many unusual examples survive.

HISTORY

The town dweller's barn became only large enough to accommodate the nonfarming home owner's transportation animals, feed, and equipment: It was the early garage. During the mid-1800s, his barn was built to look like his house, being similarly sided in board-and-batten or clapboard and paint.

As more machines were invented to help the farmer increase his yield, the farmer's barn grew in size and efficiency, too.

Simple devices such as trapdoors, hoists, ramps, chutes, and sliding doors were widely employed to move materials through the barn. The addition of a louvered cupola increased ventilation and added a dash of style.

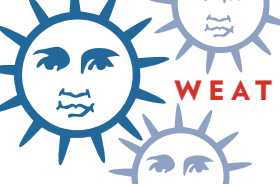
In the mid-19th century, experimental barns, such as the round barn, generated much interest among farmers in the efficient utilization of space and greatly influenced the layouts of later barns.

A gambrel roof allowed more usable space overhead than a gabled roof. With electricity providing light and ventilation, internal combustion engines replacing men and animals, and mass production techniques being employed wherever possible, many of the farmer's problems were overcome and nature's direct influence on the design of barns became less crucial.

—Carl F. Kirkpatrick

**AS MORE MACHINES WERE INVENTED,
THE FARMER'S BARN GREW IN SIZE.**





WARM APRIL, GREAT BLESSING.

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. Most-recent tabulations span the period 1981 through 2010.

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.

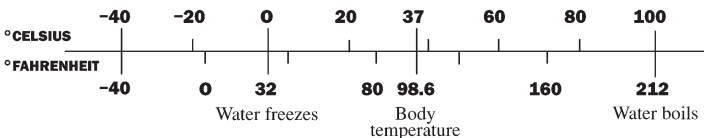


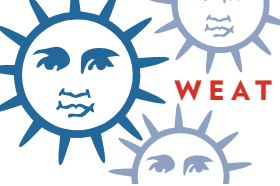
TAP TO FIND OUT THE WEATHER HISTORY OF THE DAY



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

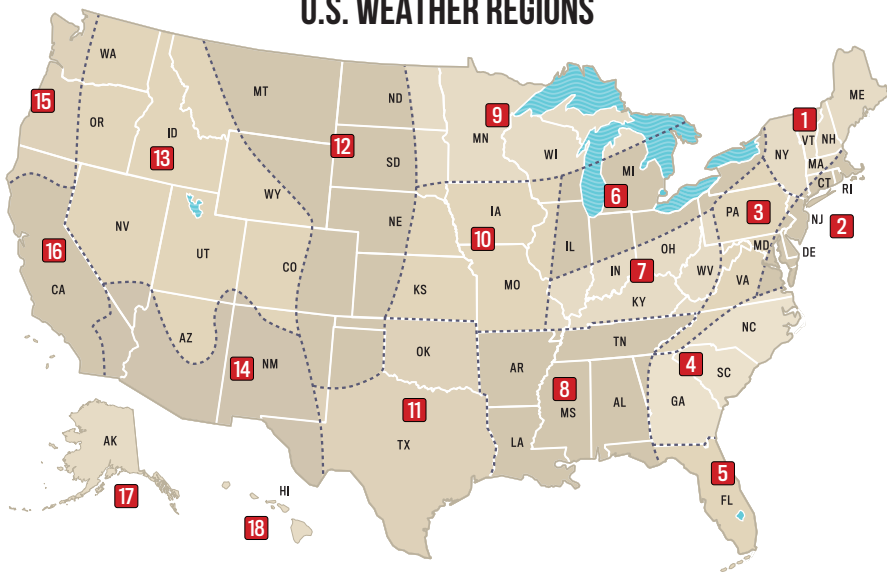
CELSIUS-FAHRENHEIT TABLE





WEATHER FORECASTS

U.S. WEATHER REGIONS

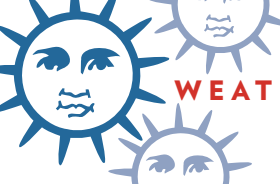


CANADIAN WEATHER REGIONS



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





CHILLING NEWS

Things are heating up where warmth is least expected.

Winter season temperatures through February have been colder than we forecast in many parts of the country, and recent cold and snow in Europe have made news headlines. But the most unusual weather this winter is going on at the North Pole as I write this (in late February), where temperatures have surged into the mid-30s Fahrenheit, which is more than 50 degrees warmer than normal.

Keep in mind that at the North Pole, the Sun set on December 21, on the solstice, and would not rise again until the start of spring on March 20—a 3-month-long night. The normal temperature at the North Pole does not rise

AVERAGE MONTHLY ARCTIC SEA ICE EXTENT JANUARY 1979–2018

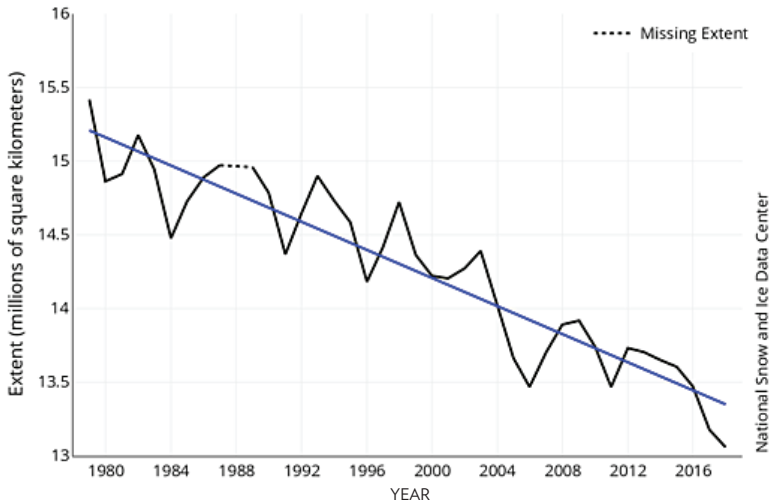


Fig. 1. Arctic sea ice, January 2017.

to freezing until late May and never rises above the 30s, even at the peak of summer.

The average temperature for the entire region above 80° north latitude rose to its highest February level since measurements began in 1958; this is also likely to be the highest temperature there in hundreds or even thousands of years.

According to Zack Labe, a climate scientist working on his PhD at the University of California at Irvine, “No other warm intrusions were very close to this. I was taken by surprise by how expansive this warm intrusion was.”

Although this is the most extreme example of polar warmth in winter, unusually warm weather has occurred there much more frequently in recent years than in the past. Robert Graham, lead author of a study published last July by the Norwegian Polar Institute, notes that this type of winter event occurred only four times in the decades from 1980 to 2010, “but has now occurred in four out of the last five winters.”

Land & Ocean Temperature Departure from Average Jan–Dec 2017
(with respect to a 1981–2010 base period)

Data Source: GHCN–M version 3.3.0 & ERSST version 4.0.0

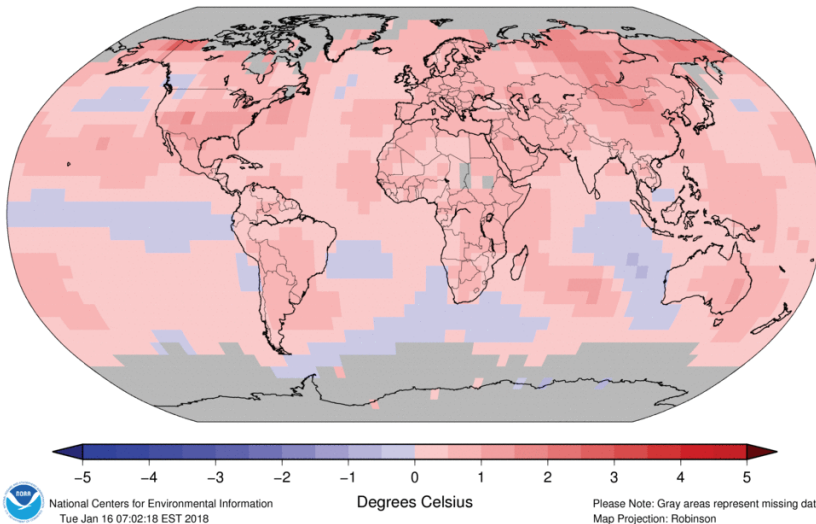


Fig. 2. Temperature departures, 2017.

Meanwhile, some 400 miles south of the North Pole, the northern tip of Greenland has already been above freezing for 61 hours in this calendar year (as of late February), shattering its previous record for hours above freezing through April, which was set at 16 hours in 2011.

Although North America and Europe have had their share of cold weather this winter, most of the Northern Hemisphere has had average temperatures higher than normal, and this has resulted in the lowest extent of wintertime Arctic ice cover ever recorded (see Fig. 1).

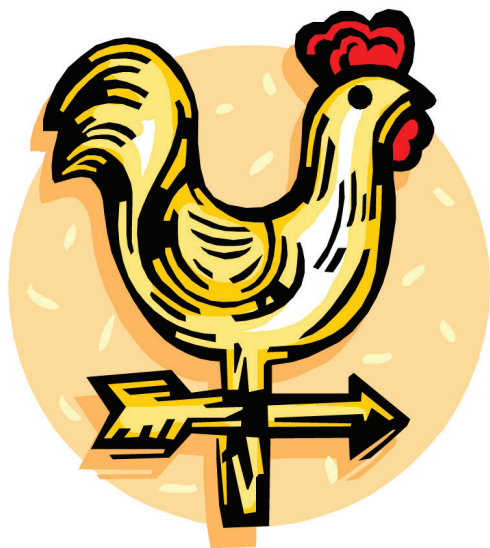
And while 2017 was not as warm a year as 2015 or 2016 when averaged across the entire Earth, most locations experienced above-normal temperatures, including nearly all of North America (see Fig. 2).

–Michael Steinberg, Old Farmer’s Almanac meteorologist



HUMOR ME

GRINS AND GROANS FROM THE ALMANAC ARCHIVES



THE WRONG BIRD

The irascible old gentleman had ordered a chicken from the menu, but when he got it, he wasn't satisfied.

"Waiter!" he yelled. "Bring a charge of dynamite and a hatchet and a double steam

power jackhammer—that's the only way I can carve this bird!"

The waiter was desolate. "Very sorry, sir," he said, "but that always was a peculiar bird. It even objected to being killed, although we

always do everything with the greatest of kindness. But this bird, sir, actually flew away and we had to shoot it, sir—yes, shoot it—it flew onto the top of the house and—"

"Say no more," said the old gentleman. "I see it all now. You shot at it and brought down the weathervane by mistake."

Truer Words ...

"Papa, is Mr. Robertson a politician?"

"No, son, he's a reformer. He'll be a politician later."

SOMETHIN' FISHY

"This fishin' fever seems to be



contagious,” said the stranger, noting the long row of anglers perched upon the creek bank.

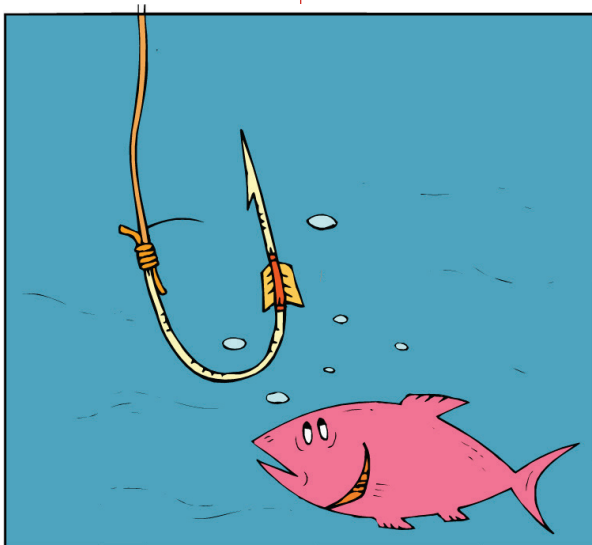
“Yes, it’s contagious, all right,” said the man who had been fishing for 4 hours without a nibble, “but not catchin’.”

A MUTUAL SERVICE

He: “I am very unfortunate; it seems I can please nobody.”

She: “Come, cheer up. I have no one to admire me either.”

He: “Tell you what: Let’s found a society for mutual admiration.”



Limited

“Did the doctor limit you to any particular diet?”

“No, but his bill did.”

I, for instance, admire your beautiful eyes. And what do you admire about me?”

She: “Your good taste.”

Library Talk

“I got this expensive set of Shakespeare mainly for its looks.”

“A de looks edition, as it were.”

APRIL FOOLED

An elderly lady was telling her age and remarked that she had been born on the 22nd of April.

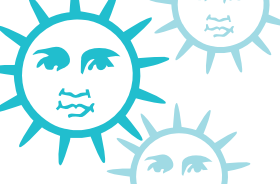
Her husband, who was nearby, jocularly observed: “And I always thought that you were born on the first day of April.”

“Indeed not,” responded the equally mirthful matron, “although people might well have judged so considering the choice I made for a husband!”

Oops!

Mother: “Why didn’t you come the first time I called you?”

Son: “Because I didn’t hear you till the third time.”



WHAT'S NEXT



GARDENING
Strawberry Fields
Forever



CALENDAR
Monthly Muse, Moon
Watch, May birthdays,
Lei Day, 1928 trivia



**LIVING
NATURALLY**
The Secret Lives of
Peanut Butter



SPORTS
Game-changing
inventions



FOOD
Mother's Day Recipes



ASTRONOMY
Explore with our
Sky Map

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 May *EXTRA!*

CELEBRATING THE ALMANAC'S 226TH YEAR!