

EXTRA!

FROM THE OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC

**FEEL SICK?
TAKE ACTION!**

**SUMPTUOUS SLOW
COOKER RECIPES**

**FROZEN
ARCTIC WINDS**

WARM UP!



FEBRUARY 2020

PHOTO: AFRICA STUDIO/SHUTTERSTOCK

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*... and be ready to
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FEBRUARY

Holidays, Fun Facts, and More

HOLIDAY TRADITIONS AROUND THE WORLD

Leap Day (various countries)



Leap Day, an extra (29th) day added to February every few years to keep the calendar aligned with Earth's revolution and seasons, occurs about 97 times every 400 years. It's rarer than a blue Moon (which occurs about every 33 months). As a result of this infrequency, an odd tradition arose

in ancient times, the influence of which is still being felt today. Known in various places as Ladies' Privilege, Ladies' Day, Bachelor's Day, or similar, the day's decree is this: Only on February 29 (or in some traditions, during the entire leap year) could a woman ask a man to marry her.

No one knows for sure how this tradition began, but part of its roots lie in Ireland and Britain. One tale suggests that in the 5th century, St. Brigid of Kildare approached St. Patrick, remarking that men were taking much too long to pop the question. After some debate, St. Patrick allowed that to help move things along, during every Leap Day, women could ask men to marry them. Legend says that inasmuch as it happened to be Leap Day when this monumental announcement was made, St. Brigid then dropped to her knees and asked St. Patrick to marry her. He gently

refused, giving her a kiss on the cheek and a silk gown to make her feel somewhat better. Many scholars doubt that this

+ TAP FOR MORE ON LEAP YEARS AND SADIE HAWKINS DAY

ever happened, especially because St. Brigid was likely a youngster when St. Patrick died.

Whether the tale is true

or not, the penalty for refusing a lady's Leap Day proposal traditionally has been a silk gown (or the fabric to make one) or, in later years, a fur coat. In Britain, if ever a lady was refused on Ladies' Privilege day, she would be owed a pair of gloves (some lore says 12 pairs), purportedly to hide her ringless finger.

Nowadays, even

though in many places the rules have changed and anyone can ask at any time, many ladies, with a twinkle in their eye, take up the traditional banner and propose to their loved one on Leap Day. At the very least, they might get a pair of gloves in return for their leap of faith. At most? A happily ever after.

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

Feb. 2: Groundhog Day

Feb. 12: Abraham Lincoln's Birthday

Feb. 14: Valentine's Day

Feb. 17: Presidents' Day

Feb. 22: George Washington's Birthday

Feb. 25: Mardi Gras

Feb. 25: Shrove Tuesday

Feb. 26: Ash Wednesday

Feb. 29: Leap Day

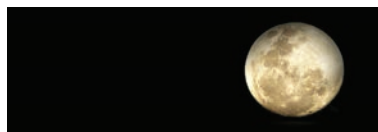
JOKE OF THE MONTH

Q: What do you call two birds in love?

A: Tweetharts



PHOTO: PIXABAY



EYE ON THE SKY

MOON PHASES

First Quarter: Feb. 1,
at 8:42 P.M. EST

Full Wolf Moon: Feb. 9,
at 2:33 A.M. EST

Last Quarter: Feb. 15,
at 5:17 P.M. EST

New Moon: Feb. 23,
at 10:32 A.M. EST

▶ TAP FOR MORE ABOUT MOON PHASES

▶ TAP FOR MORE ABOUT FEBRUARY'S FULL MOON

DID YOU KNOW?

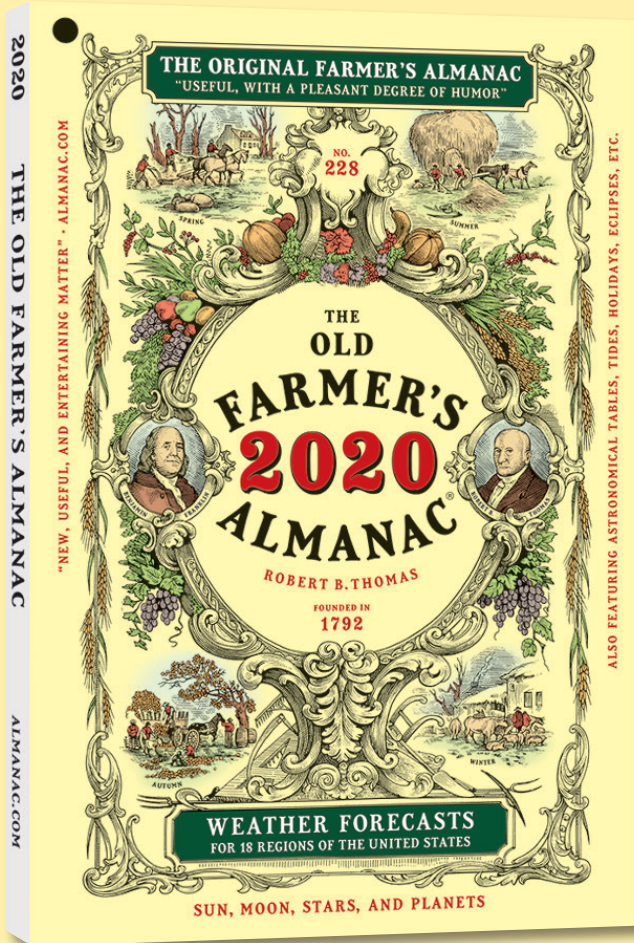
Leap years are those in which the year number is divisible by 4; in century years, it must be divisible by 400. Without Leap Day, the calendar would be off by about 5 hours, 48 minutes, and 45 seconds each year.

DID YOU KNOW?

Ladies' Privilege may have been the inspiration for Sadie Hawkins Day in the United States. Cartoonist Al Capp, creator of the "Li'l Abner" cartoon strip, conceived of a day in fictitious Dogpatch, U.S.A., when all unmarried ladies (including the character Sadie Hawkins) could pursue their men. If the men were caught, marriage was unavoidable. The idea took off in real life—and in November 1938, the first recorded "girls-ask-boys" Sadie Hawkins Day dance was held. Today, the observance is usually celebrated on a Saturday in early November.

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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: 28, 29

Ask for a loan: 11, 15

Begin diet to lose weight: 11, 15

Begin diet to gain weight: 2, 7, 29

Buy a home: 2, 7

Color hair: 1, 2, 28, 29

Cut hair to discourage growth: 12, 13

Cut hair to encourage growth: 23–25

Get married: 12, 13

Have dental care: 10, 11

Move (house/household): 3–5

Perm hair: 21, 22



Quit smoking: 3, 7
Straighten hair: 16, 17
Travel for pleasure: 8, 9
Wean children: 3, 7

AROUND THE HOUSE

Bake: 6, 7
Brew: 14, 15
Can, pickle, or make sauerkraut: 14, 15
Demolish: 14, 15
Dry fruit/vegetables/meat: 16, 17
End projects: 22
Lay shingles: 8, 9
Make jams/jellies: 23–25
Paint: 12, 13
Start projects: 24
Wash floors: 23–25
Wash windows: 26, 27

OUTDOORS

Begin logging: 18–20
Go camping: 16, 17
Go fishing: 1–9, 23–29
Set posts or pour concrete: 18–20

IN THE GARDEN

Destroy pests and weeds: 26, 27
Graft or pollinate: 6, 7
Harvest aboveground crops: 28, 29
Harvest belowground crops: 10, 11
Mow to slow growth: 14, 15
Mow to promote growth: 26, 27
Pick fruit: 10, 11
Plant aboveground crops: 23–25
Plant belowground crops: 14, 15
Prune to discourage growth: 16, 17
Prune to encourage growth: 26, 27

ON THE FARM

Breed animals: 14, 15
Castrate animals: 21, 22
Cut hay: 26, 27
Purchase animals: 6, 7
Set eggs: 2–4, 12, 13
Slaughter livestock: 14, 15
Wean animals: 3, 7



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

+ TAP FOR
MERCURY IN
RETROGRADE
DATES

▶ TAP FOR
FEBRUARY
MOON PHASES

MERCURY IN RETROGRADE

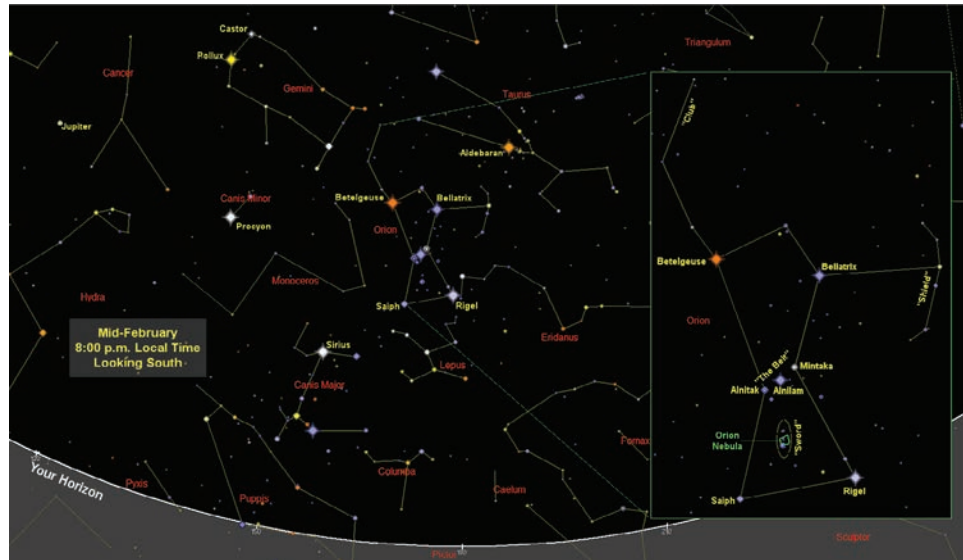
Sometimes the other planets appear to be traveling backward through the zodiac; this is an illusion. We call this illusion *retrograde motion*.

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 2020 retrograde periods: **February 17–March 10, June 18–July 12, and October 14–November 3.**

–*Celeste Longacre*



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 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

LIVING NATURALLY



**Feel Sick?
Take Action!**

PHOTO: STOLYEVYCH YULIYA/SHUTTERSTOCK

Feeling tired and achy? Scratchy throat? Queasy stomach? Suspect that you may be coming down with that bug that's going around?

Here are a few tried-and-true home remedies:

- **Ease the pain of a sore throat.** Cheap and effective, a warm saltwater gargle (1/2 teaspoon salt to 1 cup of warm water) relieves a sore throat as well as anything. Astonishingly, Japanese researchers found that people who gargled with plain water three times a day during cold and flu season developed 40 percent fewer upper respiratory infections than those who didn't or those who gargled with an iodine mouthwash.

- **Relieve congestion.** Cheap, effective, and safe, a saltwater nasal rinse is an ancient remedy for treating sinus problems, nasal

congestion, or postnasal drip. You may find the practice a bit challenging at first, but give it a try. (Always be sure to use a sterilized container for any liquid destined for the nose.)

- **Calm a cough.** Although coughing is the body's way to clear mucus from the airways, you may want help in soothing a severe cough, and especially a nighttime one. For children older than 1 year and adults, research has confirmed that a spoonful of honey (with or without lemon juice) works better than over-the-counter cough medicines, without any of the undesirable side effects. Researchers suggest that darker honey may be better.

- **Quiet a digestive upset.** Dried or fresh gingerroot in tea or capsules (or even flat ginger ale) helps to quell nausea as well as any over-the-

counter medicine does. (Don't use ginger if you take blood-thinning drugs.) Peppermint and chamomile have been used for centuries to calm queasy stomachs and quiet gurgling guts. I like to grate a little fresh ginger into a pot of peppermint/chamomile tea, add a touch of ground cinnamon, and sip it warm or cold. This quartet of tasty herbs in tea soothes the stomach, tastes good, and helps to keep you hydrated.

- **Soothe aches and pains.** My own favorite remedy for the aches and chills of winter infections: a long soak in a hot bath, followed immediately by a long nap. The hot water causes sweating, so to replace the fluid you've lost, sip a pot of hot ginger tea while you soak—both to replace lost fluid and to take advantage of the known anti-inflammatory and

A spoonful of honey (with or without lemon juice) works better than over-the-counter cough medicines.



You may want to pass up canned soup and stick with homemade.

antibiotic compounds in the ginger.

ABOUT THAT CHICKEN SOUP

Yes! Stock up!

Generations of grandmas in cultures around the world have relied on chicken soup to treat the congestion, fever, aches, and chills of respiratory infections.

University of Nebraska physician and medical researcher Stephen Rennard took his wife's family recipe into the lab and discovered that chicken soup did indeed have the power

to reduce inflammation and congestion in the respiratory tract.

Subsequent research confirmed that almost any recipe for chicken soup should confer the same benefits. But current thinking suggests that you may want to pass up canned soups and stick with homemade.

Natural health advocates Dr. Andrew Weil and ethnobotanist James Duke recommend studding your soup with plenty of chopped garlic, onions, leeks, peppers (especially hot peppers),

parsley, chopped basil, rosemary, black pepper, and ginger—plants all known to contain a host of anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and antibiotic compounds.

A FINAL WORD

If you (or a sick family member for whom you're caring) don't get well within a few days on home remedies—or if your symptoms worsen—call your doctor. —Margaret Boyles



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



Sumptuous Slow Cooker Recipes

Forget about fast food—slow food is on trend! Using a slow cooker allows you to have home-style meals even with a busy schedule. If you haven't discovered the joy of slow cooking, give these recipes a try and soon you'll have delicious meals plus a lot more time outside of the kitchen.

 TAP FOR RECIPE

Sweet Tea Peach Pork Ribs

SWEET TEA PEACH PORK RIBS

- 3 pounds boneless country-style pork ribs
- 3 fresh peaches, peeled, pitted, and sliced
- 1 sweet onion, sliced
- 1 lemon, halved and seeded
- 1 cup sweet tea*
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon ground cloves
- 4-1/2 cups hot cooked rice pilaf
- 1/4 cup toasted pecans

*To make sweet tea, brew a cup of black tea with 1 tablespoon of sugar mixed in.

Place all ingredients, except rice and pecans, in slow cooker. Stir to coat. Cover and cook on low for 7 to 9 hours.

In a bowl, stir together rice and pecans. Drizzle with juices from slow cooker and serve alongside pork.

Makes 6 servings.

SHARE
THIS
RECIPE

 TAP FOR
RECIPE

Smoky Chili

 SHARE
THIS
RECIPE

SMOKY CHILI

- 1 pound stew meat
- salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 slices bacon, chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 yellow bell pepper, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 2 cans (14.5 ounces each) fire-roasted tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons ancho chili powder
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1-1/2 teaspoons cumin
- 1-1/2 teaspoons paprika
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup red wine
- 1 cup brewed coffee
- 1 can (4 ounces) diced green chiles
- 1 can (15 ounces) red kidney beans
- 1 can (15 ounces) cannellini beans
- 1 avocado, peeled and sliced, for topping (optional)
- shredded cheddar cheese, for topping (optional)
- chopped green onions, for topping (optional)

Pat meat dry and season with salt and pepper.

In a skillet over medium heat, warm the oil. Add stew meat, bacon, and onions and brown. Add remaining ingredients, except beans and toppings. Stir well, then transfer to slow cooker and cook on high for 5 hours. About 15 minutes before serving, add beans. Ladle into serving bowls and serve with taco toppings of your choice.

Makes 6 servings.

FOOD

Creamy Chicken Tacos



TAP FOR
RECIPE

CREAMY CHICKEN TACOS

- 3 boneless chicken breast halves (about 1.5 pounds)
- 1 container (8 or 10 ounces) cream cheese
- 1 packet (1.25 ounces) taco seasoning
- 1 can (15 ounces) black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) fire-roasted tomatoes with chiles
- hard or soft taco shells
- shredded cheddar cheese, for topping (optional)
- chopped green onions, for topping (optional)
- shredded lettuce, for topping (optional)

SHARE
THIS
RECIPE

Place chicken in slow cooker.

In a bowl, completely mix together cream cheese and taco seasoning. Add to slow cooker on top of chicken. Add black beans and tomatoes. Cook on low for 5 to 7 hours.

Remove chicken and shred with two forks. Ladle out some of the juice from the slow cooker. Add chicken back into slow cooker and stir.

Serve in taco shells with taco toppings of your choice.

Makes 6 servings.



WEATHER

Frozen Arctic Winds

*Learning about The Great Arctic Outbreak
of 1899 and its frigid “QBO” winds will send chills down
your spine—and everywhere else.*

PHOTO: M. CORNELIUS/SHUTTERSTOCK

WEATHER

Among what are known as “Arctic outbreaks”—unusual pushes of frigid northern air to relatively southern latitudes in North America, Europe, and Asia—the Great Arctic Outbreak of 1899 was one of the most widespread ever recorded in the United States.

The temperature dropped to -61°F in Logan, Montana, on February 11. The next day, it fell to -22°F in Kansas City and -8°F in Fort Worth. Ice floes were observed in the Mississippi River at New Orleans, the first such occurrence since 1784. On February 13, temperatures sank to 6.8°F in New Orleans, -1°F in Mobile, 7°F in Pensacola, and -2°F in Tallahassee, the lowest



In Baltimore, Maryland, The Great Arctic Outbreak of 1899 started with a foot of snow on Feb. 5 and struck again with 21 inches on Valentine’s Day.

A snowball fight takes place on the capitol steps in Tallahassee, Florida, on Feb. 13, 1899.



temperature ever recorded in Florida.

It was -15°F in Washington, D.C., and the East saw record snowfalls as well. The massive pool of Arctic air picked up moisture and became known as the Great Eastern Blizzard of ’99. Downtown Charleston, South Carolina, experienced its greatest modern snowfall to date—3.5 inches. Incredibly, the same storm system brought enough snow to Tampa, Florida, to make snowballs, and snowflakes were seen in the air at Fort Myers, 120 miles to the south.

THE QUASI-BIENNIAL OSCILLATION, OR QBO

In the early 1950s,

The temperature dropped to -61°F in Logan, Montana. The next day, it fell to -22°F in Kansas City.

QBO winds from the west + high solar activity = Arctic outbreaks • QBO winds from the east + low solar activity = Arctic outbreaks

scientists discovered the influence of a puzzling seesaw of winds some 20-plus miles above the Equator, known as the quasi-biennial oscillation (QBO).

Given the spin of Earth, there seems to be no reason for these high winds to blow from any direction but east. Yet about every 30 months, they gradually start blowing from the west, propagating down through the stratosphere, only to reverse direction in another 30 months or so.

When the QBO winds are from the west, the arctic vortex expands during high solar activity and contracts during low solar activity. When the winds are easterly, the opposite effect happens: The vortex expands

during low solar activity and contracts during high solar activity. Analysis shows that the chance is less than 1 in 100 that either of these patterns could occur by accident.

In addition to identifying the effect of QBO winds on The Great Arctic Outbreak of 1899, scientists have

used careful analysis of the correlation between weather patterns and solar activity to find evidence of other past QBO activity.

- In 1971, it was colder in Milan than in Moscow. France fell to -29°F and Venice to -13°F . Thousands of cars headed for the Riviera were stranded by high



Residents cleaning the streets of New York City after the Great Eastern Blizzard of 1899.

“We always knew it would be a cold day in hell when a New Yorker got elected governor of West Virginia.” (It was.)

snowdrifts in France.

- In January 1985, MIT professor and solar forecaster Hurd Willett gave some advice on the upcoming second Reagan inaugural, to be held during a period of low sunspot activity and an easterly QBO: “Don’t plan any outside ceremonies or activities.” Inauguration Day was the coldest on record.

- An Arctic outbreak on March 9, 1998, plunged temperatures to well below normal from the Dakotas south, with near-record lows in Florida, including 23°F in Tallahassee.

- One other inauguration deserves note. In 1977, recently elected West Virginia governor Jay Rockefeller refused to move his ceremony indoors



A man stands amid snow piles in Washington, D.C..

Edgard, Louisiana, residents viewing ice in the Mississippi River



despite a forecast of 0°F. Twenty-five people suffered from frostbite that day, prompting West Virginia wags to comment, “We always knew it would be a cold day in hell when a New Yorker got elected governor of West Virginia.”

It was.

—Clifford Nielsen

This article is excerpted from *The 1999 Old Farmer’s Almanac*. Mr. Nielsen passed away in 2001.

GARDENING



Warm Up!

... and be ready to garden pain-free this spring!

PHOTO: ALEKS333/SHUTTERSTOCK

If you're a veteran gardener, you know the feeling. After a particularly vigorous spring gardening weekend, you wake up feeling stiff and sore. What have you done wrong?

A while back, we consulted movement analyst Carole Crewdson, who taught body-wise gardening workshops in New York City, to learn how to warm up for the gardening season. She offered these suggestions.

“Learn to work with less tension and use your whole body,” Crewdson advised. A disciple of the Alexander technique, a practice of adjusting body posture to relieve and avoid muscular and skeletal stress, she added: “Think of lifting gently, not pushing or shoving, and moving in a way that lengthens and uses your whole body.”

Before you start

working, warm up. Walk around your garden and then march in place. Gently stretch your lower-back, leg, and

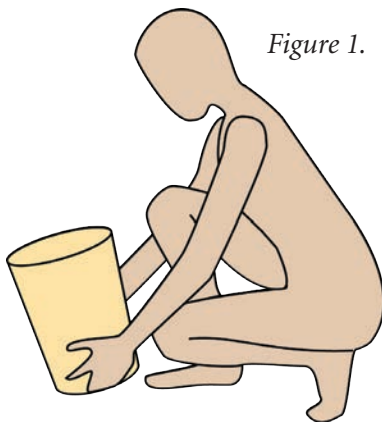


Figure 1.

arm muscles. Circle the shoulders and arms. Pretend to take off a pullover sweater and then do the breast stroke. Open and close your fingers. Stretch your whole body.

If you're weeding, planting annuals, or doing another job close to the ground, don't put your weight on your hands. Instead, squat with one leg up and frequently shift your weight (see Figure 1). Wear knee pads or

use a garden stool.

When hoeing or raking, lunge slightly and step forward in the direction that you're working, keeping the forward knee bent and your back straight, easily shifting your weight as you work (see Figure 2). Let the motion come from your lower abdominal muscles and torso. Don't plant your feet on the ground while you use only your upper body.

Avoid lifting a heavy load and twisting just

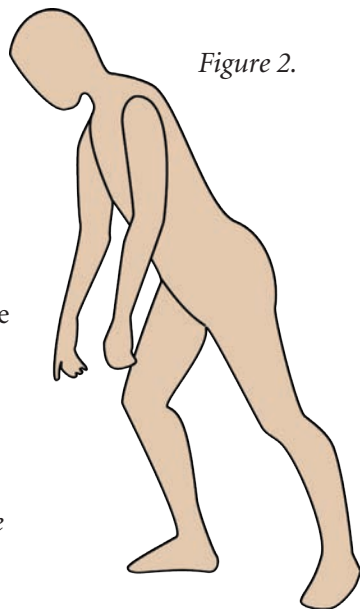


Figure 2.

GARDENING

the upper part of your body at the same time, as you might do if you're shoveling dirt. Keep your spine long and turn your whole body to the side instead, facing the direction you're working

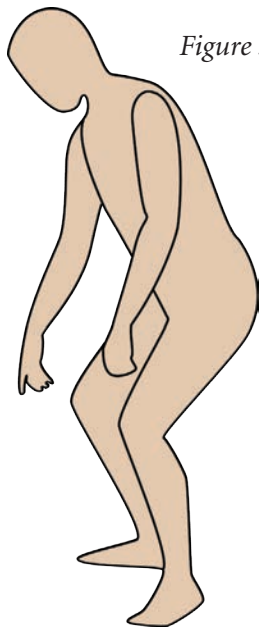


Figure 3.

and lunging to take a step forward. (If you suffer back strain, apply ice and then lie down on the floor and elevate your legs onto a stool, advised Crewdson.)

When lifting heavy

objects, use a position known as “the monkey”: With your back straight and your knees bent, bend forward from the hips and use the thigh and buttocks muscles to stand up, keeping the object close to your body as you straighten your hip joints (see Figure 3). Do not bend from the waist or keep your knees straight.

Bending from the middle of your back can put it under a great deal of unnecessary strain, especially when the movement is repeated often. Instead, keep your body relaxed, bend your knees slightly, and move in fluid motions (see Figure 4).

Cool down when you're finished, stretching your muscles, including fingers and hands.

Regardless of what you're doing in the garden, Crewdson

recommended pausing, stretching, and alternating jobs every 20 minutes. (Set a kitchen timer as a reminder.)

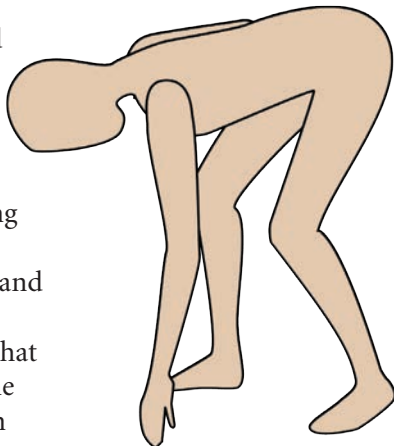
Always use tools that fit your body, avoiding those that force you to bend or stoop awkwardly.

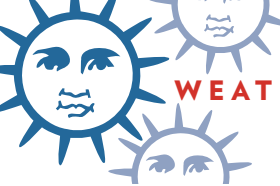
And add some year-round activity, such as walking, to keep you in shape during nongardening months.

“It's important to prepare your body just as you prepare your soil,” she emphasized.

—*Almanac editors*

Figure 4.





IF IN FEBRUARY YOU HEAR THUNDER,
YOU WILL SEE A SUMMER'S WONDER.



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.

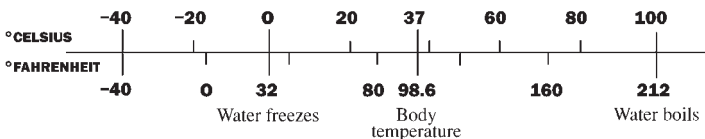


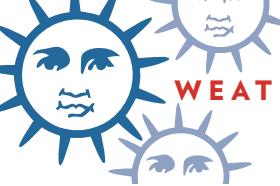
TAP TO FIND OUT THE WEATHER HISTORY OF THE DAY



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

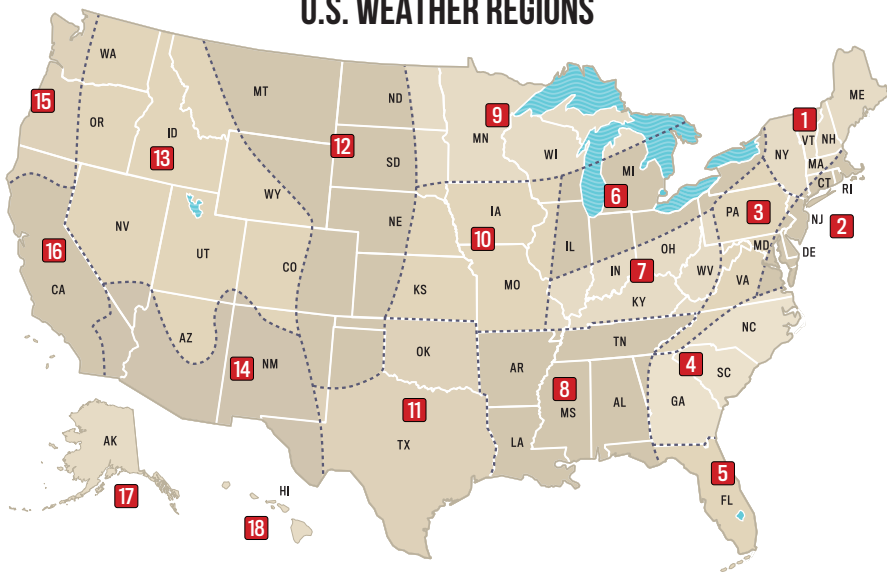
CELSIUS-FAHRENHEIT TABLE



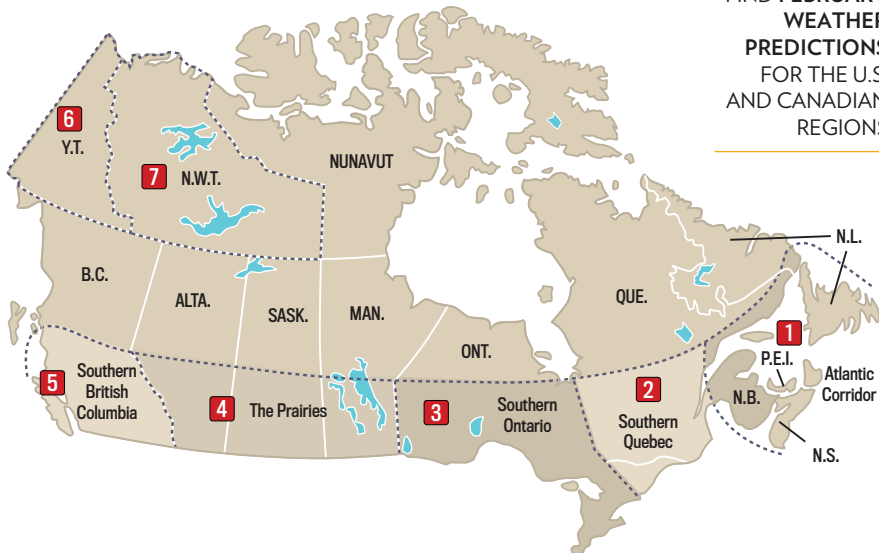


WEATHER FORECASTS

U.S. WEATHER REGIONS

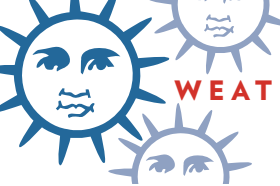


CANADIAN WEATHER REGIONS



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





WEATHER UPDATE



ANNOUNCING SUPER GROUNDHOG BOWL DAY

What do you get when you cross the Super Bowl with Groundhog Day? Why, February 2, 2020, of course!

The two most important events of the year for many both occur on the same day this year—February 2—when Pennsylvania groundhog Punxsutawney Phil and Ontario’s Wiarton Willie will both likely be looking for their shadow only during commercial breaks in the early-morning TV run-up to Super Bowl LIV, which will be taking place that evening in Miami Gardens, Florida’s partially covered Hard Rock Stadium.



(And don't worry, Canadian friends: We will be keeping an eye on the weather for November 22, when the CFL's title game will be held in Regina, Saskatchewan's open-air Mosaic Stadium.)

Once Phil emerges into the hoopla that goes on in his eponymously named town, he will probably see his shadow (as will Willie, some 375 miles to the north), as clouds and flurries will be breaking for some sunshine—and this means 6 more weeks of winter. Of course, given how generally mild winter has been in most places, this may not mean particularly cold temperatures.

We do expect some cold weather at least in Canada and the northern and eastern parts of the United States, and February will be colder, on average, than January.

February temperatures will be above average across the southern tier of states, while cold weather will make inroads into much of Canada and the northern Plains and western states.

Watch for a snowstorm in the Northeast in early February, in the Midwest and Heartland at midmonth, and in the Pacific Northwest in February's second week. In southern parts of Ontario and Quebec, be ready for a snowstorm around the 20th.

If you're watching or attending the other big event on February 2, you can expect mostly clear skies above the flying footballs. Temperatures during the game will seem quite mild to visitors but on the chilly side for Miami natives, as they fall from 72°F at kickoff to 67° by game end.

Now, there is one other big day in February, and my wife would be quite upset if I forgot about it—not to mention her. Valentine's Day arrives on February 14, so: *Attention, everyone!*

Of course, Phil will be back asleep by then, so he will likely miss what should be a mild day across most of the country, including western Pennsylvania. Rain will be limited to a small part of the southern states and snow to only a few locations in the northern Plains, Great Lakes, and Pacific Northwest, while most of Canada will be experiencing a mild day with sporadic rain showers or snow flurries, depending on location.

—Michael Steinberg, *Old Farmer's Almanac meteorologist*



HUMOR ME

GRINS AND GROANS FROM THE ALMANAC



NOT THE RIGHT PLACE

A bashful young couple, evidently much in love, entered a crowded streetcar.

“Do you suppose that we can squeeze

in here?” he asked, looking doubtfully at her blushing face.

“Don’t you think, dear, that we had better wait until we get home?” was the low, embarrassed reply.

LIKE MOTHER, LIKE SON

Vincent was altogether too garrulous in school to please his teachers. Such punishments as



the institution allowed to be meted out were tried without any apparent effect on the boy, until finally the headmaster decided to mention the lad's fault on his monthly report card.

Hence the next report to his father had these words: "Vincent talks a great deal."

Back came the duly signed report card by mail, but with these words written in red ink under the headmaster's comment: "You ought to hear his mother."

ATTENTION-GETTER

Two women at a reception were strangers to one another.

After a few moments' desultory talk, the first said rather querulously: "I don't know what's

the matter with that tall, blond gentleman over there. He was so attentive a while ago, but he won't look at me now."

"Perhaps," said the other, "he saw me come in. He's my husband."

CLIP BAIT

A certain man was recently very sad because his wife had gone out of town on a visit, which she would not shorten despite his appeals to her to come home.

He finally hit upon a plan to induce her to return and sent her a copy of each of the local papers with one item clipped out. When his wife wrote to find out what it was that he had clipped out, he refused to tell her.

The scheme worked admirably! In less than

a week, she was home to find out what had been going on that her husband didn't want her to know about.

A JUDICIOUS CURE?

Associate Justice Matthews, while serving on the Supreme Court in Washington, D.C., took several fellow justices for a sail out into Chesapeake Bay. A stiff wind sprang up, and Justice Gray was decidedly getting the worst of it.

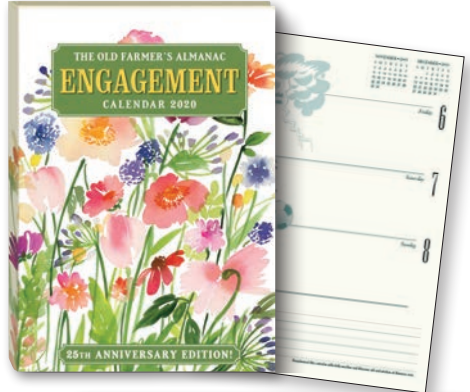
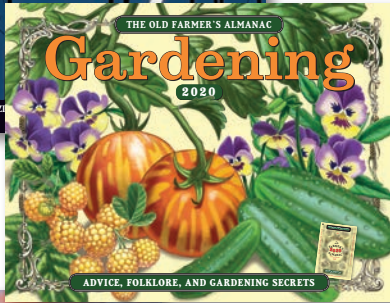
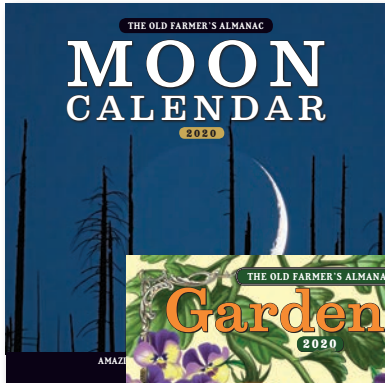
As Gray leaned over the rail in great distress, Matthews touched him on the shoulder and asked in a tone of deepest sympathy, "Is there anything that I can do for you, Gray?"

"No, thank you," replied the sick judge, "unless you can overrule this motion."

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FEBRUARY 2020

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29						

Fast Facts | **Historical Events** | **Birthdays** | **Deaths**

Fast Facts: February is the only month with 28 days. It is also the only month that can be a leap month. The name 'February' comes from the Latin word 'Februarius', which means 'to purify'.

Historical Events: 1787: The Constitution was signed. 1918: The Spanish Flu pandemic began. 1954: The first heart transplant was performed.

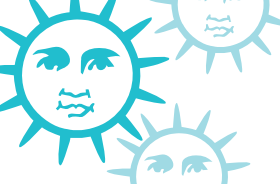
Birthdays: George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr., and many others.

Deaths: George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and many others.

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