

EXTRA!

FROM THE OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC

A WALK THROUGH TIME

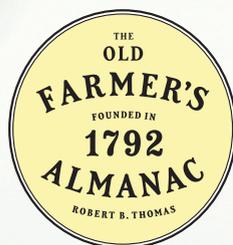
TOXIC GARDEN TOOLS?

EASTER RECIPES

“GOLLY!”-GOOD GREEN BEANS



APRIL 2017



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April



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Humor Me
*Grins and groans from
the Almanac*

WHAT’S NEXT

See what we have
in store for our
May issue!



THE MONTH OF APRIL

HOLIDAYS, HISTORY, AND FOLKLORE

ALMANAC 225TH ANNIVERSARY TIME CAPSULE

The following excerpts are from the April Right-Hand Calendar Page of The 1793 [Old] Farmer's Almanac:

Now cast around thy raptur'd eyes,
And see the lovely spring arise:
Swell'd buds invest the grove again,
And streams remurmur o'er the plain.

- April 19: Bat. at Lex. 1775.
- April 29: conjunction of Sun, Mars, and Jupiter.

Look well to your gardens; see to your roots of all kinds; turn up the ground that it may become light.

Folklore Fun

April wears a white hat [frost].



Moon View

April's full Moon, the **Full Pink Moon**, occurs on the 11th, at 2:08 A.M. EDT.

 TAP FOR MORE MOON PHASES

 TAP FOR MORE ABOUT THE FULL PINK MOON



APRIL'S BIRTHSTONE: DIAMOND

- The diamond, composed solely of carbon, is the hardest gemstone and can be cut only by another diamond. Although often colorless, it also may appear in yellow, brown, red, pink, orange, blue, or green, from pale to intense; the more saturated the hue, the more valuable the stone. Diamonds form about 90 miles deep in Earth, at tremendous pressure.
- This gem is a symbol of everlasting love and was once thought to protect against poison.

 TAP TO LEARN ABOUT THE LARGEST KNOWN DIAMOND

 TAP TO LEARN MORE ABOUT APRIL'S BIRTHSTONE

THE LARGEST KNOWN DIAMOND

The largest known diamond is 2,500 miles wide and weighs approximately 10 billion trillion trillion carats. A crystallized white dwarf star, it is located in the constellation Centaurus, about 50 light-years from Earth. It is nicknamed “Lucy,” after the Beatles song, “Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds.”



THIS MONTH IN HISTORY



APRIL 18: LIGHT THE SIGNAL!

In April 1775, it became apparent that the British in Boston were planning a campaign to seize arms, ammunition, and other stores stockpiled by American patriots in Concord, Massachusetts, and possibly, to arrest members of the illegal Provincial Congress. The question was, Which route would the British take from Boston to Concord?

In mid-April, Paul Revere, as a member of the Sons of Liberty Committee of Safety, arranged with the sexton of Boston's Old North Church, Robert Newman, for a simple system of signals: the number of lanterns lit in the belfry would indicate how the British would be advancing toward Concord. One lantern would signify that the British would come by land, via Boston Neck; two lanterns, that they would come by water, by first crossing the Charles River to Cambridge.

On the evening of April 18, 1775, Dr. Joseph Warren summoned Revere and told him that the British planned to move that night, going by way of



TAP FOR MORE
INFORMATION
ON PAUL
REVERE'S RIDE

the Charles River. He asked Revere to travel to Lexington to warn leaders Samuel Adams and John Hancock that their imminent arrest was likely.

After the meeting, Revere set plans in motion for two lanterns to be lit in the Old North Church. (Robert Newman and vestryman Captain John Pulling carried the lanterns to the steeple while Thomas Bernard stood watch outside.) Then, after a brief stop at home to dress appropriately, Revere was rowed across the Charles River, after which he traveled to Charlestown to meet with the Sons of Liberty to ensure that they saw the signal. He next borrowed a horse and headed off to Lexington, on his famous “midnight ride.”

Other patriots, including William Dawes and Samuel Prescott, spread the news along other routes.

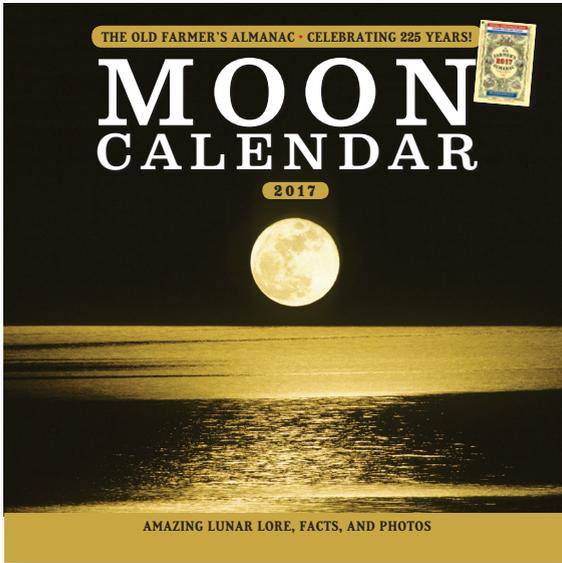
PAUL REVERE'S RIDE

The 1861 poem “Paul Revere’s Ride” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, which begins with *Listen, my children, and you shall hear / Of the midnight ride of Paul Revere*, contains historical inaccuracies. For example, Revere did not cry out his alarm through the nighttime ride, but spread the news as quietly as possible. He was on a secret mission and had to avoid British patrols.

Although he narrowly avoided several encounters, his luck ran out when he, William Dawes, and Dr. Samuel Prescott traveled to Concord to ensure that the military stores there had been hidden. Along the way, they were stopped by a patrol. Dawes, and later Prescott, escaped, but Revere was recaptured and questioned, often at gunpoint, for hours; he never made it to Concord. Prescott did, however, alerting the militia there.

On April 19, in the wee hours of the morning, Revere, along with a few other prisoners, was returned to Lexington and released. He then went over to another part of town to assist Adams and Hancock in their relocation. He was helping to move a trunk of Hancock’s that contained papers when the sound of gunshots between British troops and minutemen came from the town green. He did not know who had fired first.

AMAZING LUNAR LORE, FACTS, AND PHOTOS!



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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

Begin diet to lose weight: 13, 23
 Begin diet to gain weight: 3, 8
 Cut hair to encourage growth: 5, 6, 27
 Cut hair to discourage growth: 22, 23
 Have dental care: 7, 8
 Quit smoking: 13, 23
 Wean children: 13, 23

AROUND THE HOUSE

Can, pickle, or make sauerkraut: 21–23
 End projects: 25
 Start projects: 27

OUTDOORS

Begin logging: 17, 18
 Go camping: 14–16
 Go fishing: 1–11, 26–30
 Set posts or pour concrete: 17, 18

IN THE GARDEN

Destroy pests and weeds: 24, 25
 Graft or pollinate: 3, 4, 30
 Prune to encourage growth: 5, 6
 Prune to discourage growth: 14, 15
 Plant aboveground crops: 3, 4, 30
 Plant belowground crops: 12, 13, 22, 23
 Harvest aboveground crops: 7, 8
 Harvest belowground crops: 17, 18

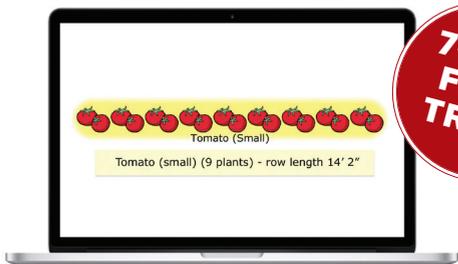
ON THE FARM

Breed animals: 12, 13
 Castrate animals: 19–21
 Cut hay: 24, 25
 Set eggs: 9, 10, 18, 19
 Slaughter livestock: 12, 13
 Wean animals: 13, 23

Plan Your BEST Garden

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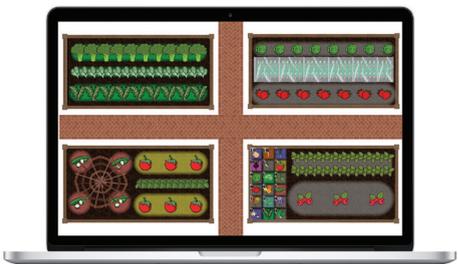


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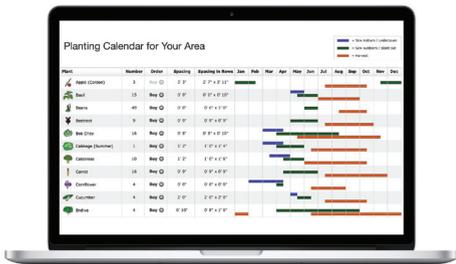


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GARDENING BY THE MOON'S SIGN

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

+ 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.

Mercury will be retrograde from April 9–May 3, August 13–September 5, and December 3–23.

–Celeste Longacre

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respect to one another, and they always returned to the same place in the sky every 365 days. These observers in antiquity also noted that a few strange “stars” seemed to wander through the sky, refusing to obey the rules. These came to be known as “planets,” from the Greek word *planétai*, meaning “wanderers.” Their names are Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn—the five planets visible to the unaided eye.

On April’s Sky Map, we have splendid examples of both fixed stars and a wanderer.

In the evening at this time of year, the southeast sky is dominated by the Spring Triangle. The bright stars Regulus, Arcturus, and Spica mark the vertices of the Triangle. Year after year, century after century, these three fixed stars have appeared in this exact location and arrangement every spring.

What’s different this year is the presence of one of those pesky wanderers. In this case, the interloper is Jupiter, the King of Planets and thus the King of the Wanderers. Jupiter wandered into the Spring Triangle last year, and over the next few months, he will slowly wander into a different part of the sky. A year from now, the Spring Triangle will return as it always does, but the Wandering King will be elsewhere.

To the right of the Spring Triangle slithers Hydra, the Water Snake, the largest of all constellations. The snake’s head is to the upper right of Regulus, while its tail ends well below Spica. Hydra is fairly dim, but the view gets better as the night wears on. Stay up past midnight for a clearer view as Hydra rises higher in the sky.

Nestled in a coil of the Water Snake’s body are the constellations Crater, the Cup, and Corvus, the Raven (or Crow). Crater is composed entirely of dim stars, so you’ll need to be in a dark location to see it well. In contrast, the main stars of Corvus are all comparatively bright, so you should find it fairly easy to locate the bird’s four-sided figure. Both of these constellations were included on a list created by the Greek astronomer Ptolemy in the 2nd century. Even back then, the stars comprising these two constellations returned to the same location each year—like clockwork.

—Jeff DeTray

“GOLLY!”-GOOD Green Beans

THIS YEAR,
TRY GROWING
THE COUNTRY'S
MOST POPULAR
EDIBLE POD.

Pole beans can reach up to 15 feet tall. Plant against a trellis for support or train up stakes formed into a teepee shape.

Native to Peru, green beans (*Phaseolus vulgaris*)—also called French beans, string beans, and snap beans—are a great addition to any garden. Tender, tasty, and versatile, they are enjoyable fresh off the plant or incorporated into a recipe.

When choosing green beans, bear in mind that there are two types: pole beans and bush beans. If plants need support to grow, they are classified as pole or vine beans; if not, they are bush beans.

As their name implies, pole beans have a vertical

growth habit and can reach up to 15 feet tall. It is a good idea to plant pole beans against a 6- to 8-foot-tall trellis for support—they can also be trained up stakes formed into a teepee shape. Easy to pick, pole beans are valued for their high yields and disease resistance. However, they are slow to mature and require cool conditions.

Growing approximately 1 to 2 feet in height, bush beans do not need staking, which makes them less labor-intensive than



TAP TO LEARN HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR BEANS

pole beans. They do well with medium to hot summer temperatures and produce all at once rather than throughout the growing season, as pole beans do.

If you are interested in growing green beans from seed, it's best to direct-sow them outdoors anytime after the last spring frost, when the soil temperature has reached at least 48°F. *Tip:* Do not start seeds indoors; they do not transplant well.

GARDENING

To plant, choose an area of your garden with well-drained soil. For pole beans, plant 1 inch deep and 3 inches apart. Add a 2-inch layer of mulch and water in. Then, set up trellises or stakes around the plants.

Bush beans should be

although fewer, can be of better quality because maturing slowly in cool temperatures improves flavor.

Caring for your green beans is easy. Water regularly in the

not to overfertilize. Begin fertilizing with natural fertilizers, such as well-rotted manure, compost, bonemeal, or cottonseed meal after heavy bloom and set of pods. Weed diligently, without disturbing the roots.



Growing approximately 1 to 2 feet in height, bush beans do not need staking.

planted 2 inches apart in double linear rows, to increase your harvest. Mulch and water after planting. Note that both spring and fall crops can be planted, depending on the length of your growing season. Spring crops generally produce higher yields while fall-harvested beans,

morning on sunny days so that foliage will not stay wet (wet leaves can be an invitation to disease spores). Beans require normal soil fertility and are “light feeders,” so be sure



TAP TO CHECK YOUR
LAST SPRING AND FALL
FROST DATES

When your beans reach a length of 4 to 5 inches and before the seeds begin to bulge, it’s time to harvest. (Green beans are picked at an immature stage, when the seeds have not yet fully developed.)

Start by picking a few

GARDENING

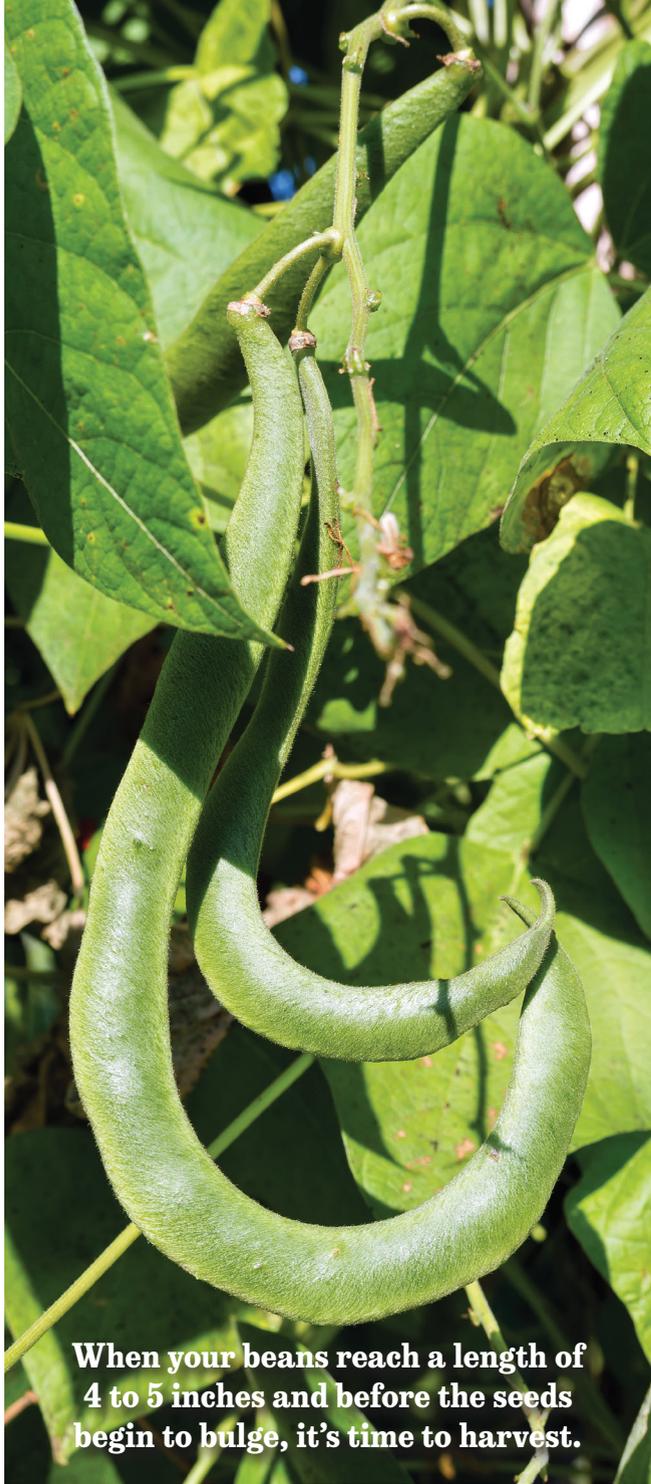
to make sure that they snap when broken—an indicator of freshness. Look for firm, sizable pods and snap or cut them off, being careful not to tear the plant.

Beans are best eaten soon after harvest. Store fresh beans in an airtight, moisture-proof container in the refrigerator, if you must delay cooking. If refrigerated, use them within 4 days. Alternatively, blanch and freeze them immediately after picking. Canning or pickling is another option.

RECOMMENDED VARIETIES

- ‘**Bush Blue Lake**’ A bush bean known for keeping its flavor long after harvest; good for canning
- ‘**Bountiful**’ An early-producing bush bean
- ‘**Bean Mascotte**’ A compact bush variety ideal for small-space or container gardens; All-America Selections winner since 1991
- ‘**Fortex**’ A French pole variety valued for its long beans
- ‘**Kentucky Wonder**’ A high-yielding pole bean

PHOTO: BJOERN WYLEZICH/SHUTTERSTOCK



When your beans reach a length of 4 to 5 inches and before the seeds begin to bulge, it's time to harvest.



TAP FOR MORE
RECIPE IDEAS

GREEN BEAN AND BASIL SOUP

Once you have your harvest in hand, try this springtime recipe.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 3 tablespoons butter | 1/2 cup fresh basil leaves (loosely packed), coarsely chopped |
| 2 medium leeks, thinly sliced | 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice |
| 1 clove garlic, minced or pressed | 1/2 teaspoon salt |
| 4 cups chicken broth | pinch of cayenne pepper |
| 2 medium mealy potatoes, peeled and cut into cubes | 1 tablespoon chopped fresh savory |
| 1 pound green beans, cut into 1-inch pieces | 1/2 cup whipping cream |
| | sliced raw mushrooms (optional) |

1. Melt butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add leeks and garlic and toss to coat. Cook until leeks are tender. Pour in chicken broth. Add potatoes and green beans. Bring to a gentle bubble. Cover pan and cook for 20 minutes, or until potatoes and green beans are tender. Stir in basil and cook, uncovered, for 5 minutes.

2. Blend or process until smooth. Return to saucepan. Stir in lemon juice, salt, cayenne, savory, and cream. Warm gently but do not allow soup to boil. Ladle into soup bowls and garnish with slices of raw mushroom, if using.

Makes 6 servings.

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- weave a wattle fence
- build a Hugelkultur bed

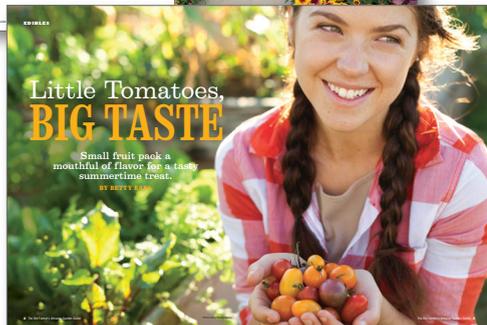
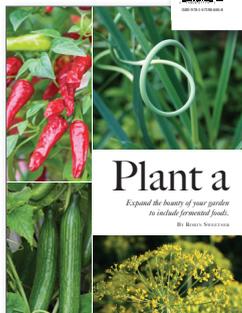
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- nasturtium salad
- kraut and kimchi
- winning apple recipes

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Hot new trends, amazing garden apps, watering wisdom, reader Q&As, composting, new products, and much more!



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Easter Recipes

This year, Easter Sunday falls on April 16. Easter is called a “movable feast,” and the date can change by up to a month. For your feast day, we’ve gathered some appetizing items that will nicely complement an Easter ham.

FOOD



TAP FOR
RECIPE

Lambropsomo

PHOTO: PASTA/SHUTTERSTOCK

LAMBROPSOMO (GREEK EASTER BREAD)

2 packets (4-1/2 teaspoons) dry yeast

1 cup warm milk

1/2 cup warm water

1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, melted

2 teaspoons salt

2 tablespoons anise extract

3 eggs, beaten

1-1/2 cups sugar

9 cups all-purpose flour

2 hard-boiled eggs, dyed red (optional)

melted butter

In a bowl, combine yeast, milk, water, butter, and salt. Add anise extract, beaten eggs, and sugar. Stir in flour, 3 cups at a time. Turn dough out onto a lightly floured work surface. Knead for 10 minutes, or until smooth.

Put dough into a greased bowl, turning once, and cover with a damp towel. Allow to rise until doubled in bulk, about 2 hours. Punch down and place in two greased 9-inch round pans, reserving just enough dough to form a cross on top of each loaf. Place an egg in the center of each loaf (if using) and form a cross over it. Let rise 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Bake for 30 minutes. Remove loaves from pans immediately and brush with butter.

Makes 2 loaves.

SHARE
THIS
RECIPE

Classic Deviled Eggs

 TAP FOR
RECIPE

CLASSIC DEVILED EGGS

8 hard-boiled eggs
3 to 4 tablespoons mayonnaise
2 tablespoons finely diced celery (optional)
2 tablespoons finely diced red onion (optional)
2 teaspoons Dijon-style mustard
1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper
kosher or sea salt and freshly ground black pepper,
to taste
paprika, for garnish

Remove shells from eggs and slice in half lengthwise. Carefully remove the yolks and transfer to a bowl.

Using a fork or pastry blender, mash the yolks. Add mayonnaise, celery (if using), onion (if using), mustard, cayenne, and salt and pepper.

Spoon filling into a zip-top bag, cut off a corner tip, then pipe into the egg white halves. Garnish with paprika. Chill, then serve.

Makes 16 eggs.



SHARE
THIS
RECIPE

FOOD

Carrot Puff



TAP FOR
RECIPE



SHARE
THIS
RECIPE

CARROT PUFF

- 1 pound carrots, peeled and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, melted
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3 teaspoons all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease a pie dish or an 8-inch square baking dish.

Place carrots in a saucepan and cover with salted water. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer, uncovered, for 20 minutes or until carrots are tender. Drain and set aside.

In a blender or food processor, combine eggs, butter, sugar, flour, baking powder, and vanilla. Add carrots a little at a time and purée.

Pour mixture into prepared baking dish. Bake for 45 minutes, or until firm.

Let stand for 5 minutes before serving.

Makes 6 servings.

FOOD

Asparagus Frittata

 TAP FOR
RECIPE

ASPARAGUS FRITTATA

9 spears pencil-thin asparagus, trimmed and cut into 3/4-inch pieces

3 tablespoons olive oil

1 large red onion, cut into 1/4-inch pieces

3/4 teaspoon kosher or sea salt

pinch of sugar

6 large eggs

3/4 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese

1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

several dill sprigs for garnish (optional)

In a pot of boiling, salted water cook the asparagus for 3 to 4 minutes, or until tender. Drain and submerge in ice water. Set aside.

In an oven-safe skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Add onions, salt, and sugar; reduce heat to medium-low and cook, stirring occasionally, for 30 minutes, or until onions are golden brown and very tender. Remove from pan, leaving as much oil in pan as possible. Let onions sit for 10 minutes, or until no longer hot.

In a bowl, whisk eggs until smooth. Add cheese, pepper, asparagus, and onions. Set skillet over medium heat. Add egg mixture, stirring briefly to distribute fillings.

Reduce heat to low and let mixture cook slowly; you should see just a few bubbles popping up around the edges. Cook undisturbed for 8 minutes, or until edges are set but middle is still liquid. Meanwhile, preheat broiler to high.

Transfer skillet to oven, positioning it 3 to 4 inches from the broiler. Cook for 2 minutes, or until top of frittata is golden brown, edges are puffed, and center is just set (it will jiggle slightly but pop right back after you poke it).

Using a spatula, remove to a warmed platter and garnish with dill sprigs, if using, and serve immediately.

Makes 4 servings.

SHARE
THIS
RECIPE

LIVING NATURALLY

TOXIC GARDEN TOOLS?

If you're like me, almost every day you read reports of some new toxic threat in food, water, cosmetics, or household cleaners.

It's a tough job keeping up with everything and especially distinguishing real threats from the hypervigilance of the worried well.



In 2012, the Michigan environmental group Ecology Center released its Garden Products Study, which reported research that examined 179 common garden products, including hoses, gloves, kneeling pads, and garden tools for evidence of toxic substances.

Researchers found more than two-thirds of the products tested contained high levels of one or more toxic substances (including

lead), chemicals linked to many such adverse health effects as “birth defects, impaired learning, liver toxicity, premature births, and early puberty in lab animals.”

Yikes!

Toxic garden hoses?

And unlike standards that govern public drinking water and the infrastructure that delivers it, no regulations establish safety standards for garden hoses and the fittings that connect them. It’s buyer beware.

Especially concerning for me: the number and amounts of toxic substances that leach from PVC garden hose.

For years, we’ve run several hundred feet of cheap PVC hose to our various gardens and the food plants inside our solar greenhouse.

Switching to drinking water–safe hose (rubber or polyurethane) and lead-free couplings requires both research and money, so allow some time for the switchover.



In the meantime, if you're using suspect existing hoses . . .

- Let the water run out of a hose before watering food crops.
- Minimize the hoses' exposure to direct sunlight. The heat of the sun on water stored in a hose increases the amount of toxins leaching from it.

Don't drink from a hose.

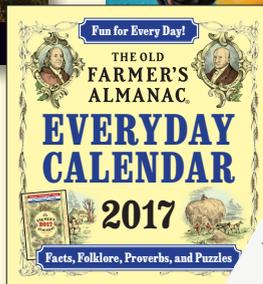
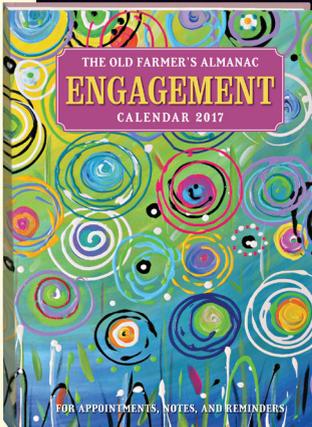
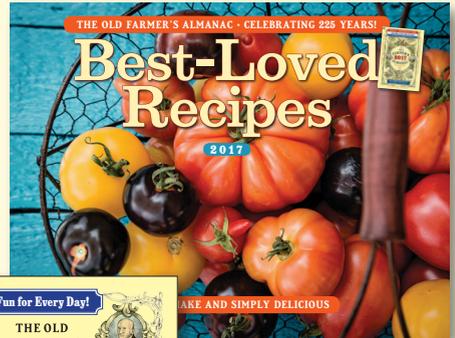
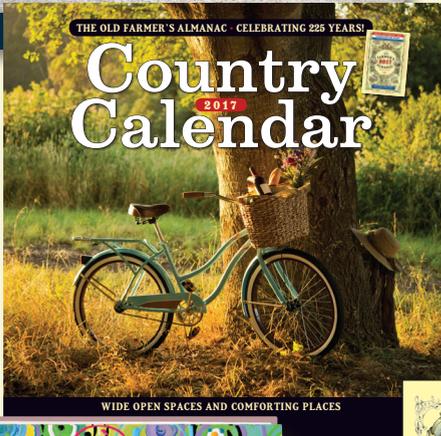
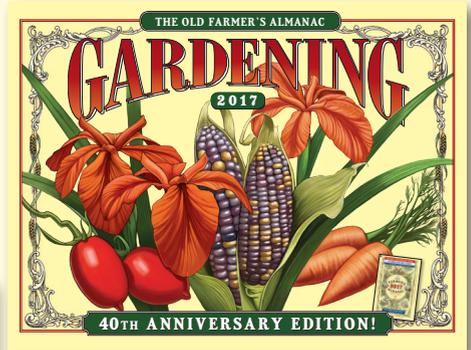
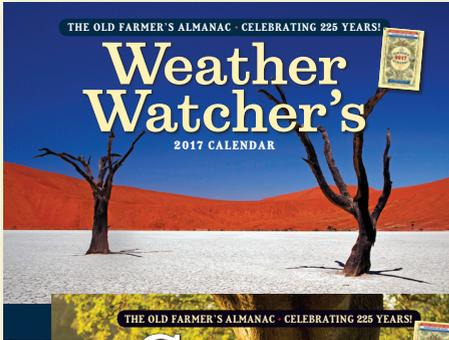
- Don't fill pets' water bowls from a hose or use it to water the chickens.
- Look for safer hose couplings. Ecology Center's tests showed that 29 percent of brass hose connectors contained unsafe levels of lead. Researchers suggest nonbrass couplings of stainless steel, aluminum, or nickel.

—Margaret Boyles



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

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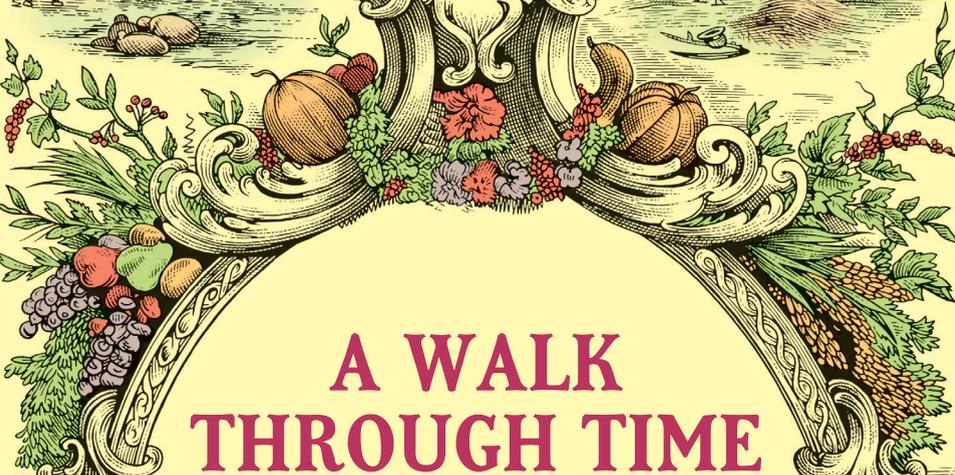
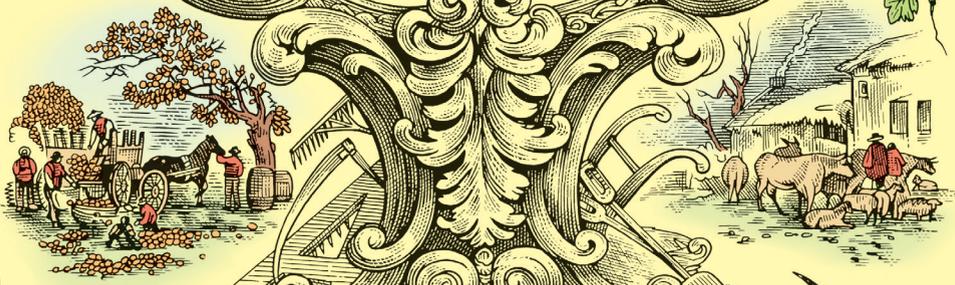
ANNIVERSARY

A WALK THROUGH TIME

*Tales from early editions of
this Almanac in celebration of its
225th anniversary*

The dissemination of news often required weeks in the early 1800s, but if you were to rely on the Almanac to know what was going on, the time delay could be as much as 2 years. It isn't until the 1814 edition, for instance, that you can find any indication that we were having some sort of trouble with Great Britain.

continued





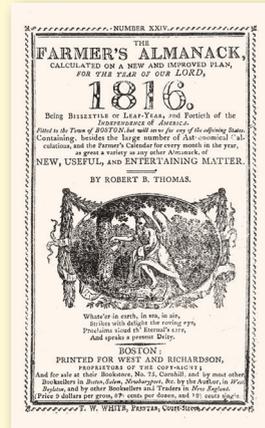
That trouble was the War of 1812. This mention consists of a list of American ships, with those in italics being “vessels which have been captured from the British since the commencement of the present war.” (These number two.)

In 1815, Yale is finally included in the college vacation schedules. But it is plain in this edition—and others—that the Almanac did

not recommend a college education. “What better estate can you give your offspring than a good education?” writes “B.B.” in one of his columns that year. “However, I would not urge you to send them to college—nor to an academy; but see that you have the best of teachers in your town schools.”

When I occasionally find a copy of the 1816 edition, I immediately turn to the July and August Calendar Pages to see whether they contain the famous “snow” forecasts that founder Robert B. Thomas supposedly made for both July and August. I remain hopeful

that a few copies still exist that do indeed predict “the cold summer of 1816,” as that summer is known in history books. There is no question that it did snow in New England and Canada during July and August of 1816. An 1815 eruption of Mount Tambora in the East Indies had left volcanic dust circling the globe, lowering temperatures as much



IT IS PLAIN IN THE 1815 EDITION—AND OTHERS—
THAT THE ALMANAC DID NOT
RECOMMEND A COLLEGE EDUCATION.

as several degrees.

But did the Almanac predict the snow that summer? Certainly the story that it did is an integral part of Almanac lore.

Some accounts say the printer inserted the snow prediction as a joke while Robert B. Thomas was sick in bed with the flu. The story goes that when Thomas discovered the “error,” he destroyed all—or most of—the “snow” copies and reprinted

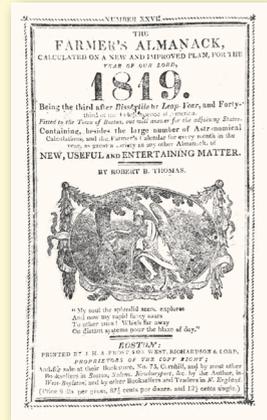
TAP FOR ROBERT B. THOMAS'S OBSERVATIONS OF THE PREVIOUS SUMMER IN THE 1817 EDITION.

the 1816 edition with the more conventional summer forecasts. It's said that the word got out anyway and that during the winter

and spring of that year, Thomas was repeatedly called upon to deny making such a ridiculous forecast for the following summer. Then, when it really did snow in July, he changed his tune and took full credit. “Told you so!” he allegedly said. If the story is true, it is one of the earliest and best examples of a subtle skill referred to as “almanacmanship.”

The 1819 edition marks the first time that Thomas uses the famous works that would become the traditional sign-off at the end of every year's preface or “To Patrons” page: “It is by our works and not our words that we would

be judged. These, we hope, will maintain us [later changed to “sustain us”] in the humble though proud



station we have so long held.” In 1870, Almanac editor John B. Tileston added a facsimile of the signature of Robert B. Thomas. Since that time, none of us has signed off with his or her own name.

Why are these words so important?

SOME ACCOUNTS SAY THAT THE PRINTER INSERTED THE SNOW PREDICTION AS A JOKE WHILE ROBERT B. THOMAS WAS SICK IN BED WITH THE FLU.

In his 1817 Almanac, Thomas reports the following about June 1816: “June: 4th and 5th warmer with showers—6th extreme cold with high winds, freezes the ground at night—9th continues cold with a sharp frost at night, which cuts beans and other tender plants to the ground—10th some frosts—21st rather warmer; vegetation never known to be so backward—Indian corn scarcely fit to weed—28th cool.”

Well, when it comes to the Almanac, you just don't mess with tradition. Or try to copy it, which is what Thomas contended with in the 1820 edition. Indeed, Robert B. Thomas turns downright grumpy. But then there's nothing that irritates us Almanac editors more than seeing a bunch of cheap, fly-by-night imitators coming along attempting to fool the American public into believing that their almanac is *the* Almanac. Like what's happening on newsstands today. Like, gulp, Thomas himself *sort of* did in 1792. And, judging from the following

quote from his preface, like what was happening in 1820:

GOOD ADVICE FOR 1820

To shew [sic] how well our little work has been appreciated by the public, we need no



other evidence than to witness the many new publications of the kind annually springing up, whose

Authors appear ambitious of a similarity to ours, by copying our plan and form, and some have even assumed our title, which will make it necessary for our friends and patrons to inquire for the “Farmer’s Almanack by R. B. Thomas” to prevent any mistakes.

I could not have said it better myself.

—From *The Best of The Old Farmer’s Almanac* (1991) by Judson Hale, the Almanac’s editor in chief from 1971 to 2001, and a contributing editor for many years before and after that period.

To be continued . . .



TAP TO BUY
THE 2017 OLD
FARMER'S ALMANAC
ANNIVERSARY EDITION

BUT THEN, THERE'S NOTHING THAT IRRITATES US ALMANAC EDITORS MORE THAN SEEING A BUNCH OF IMITATORS COMING ALONG ATTEMPTING TO FOOL THE AMERICAN PUBLIC INTO BELIEVING THE THEIR ALMANAC IS *THE* ALMANAC.



WEATHER FORECASTS

APRIL WEATHER, RAIN AND SUNSHINE, BOTH TOGETHER.



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

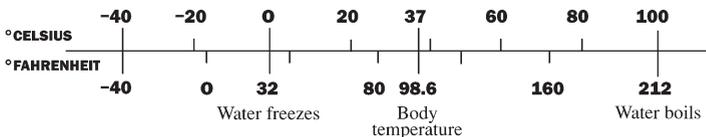
We derive our weather forecasts from a secret formula that was devised by the founder of this Almanac, Robert B. Thomas, in 1792. Thomas believed that weather on Earth was influenced by sunspots, which are magnetic storms on the surface of the Sun.

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. 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.

CELSIUS-FAHRENHEIT TABLE

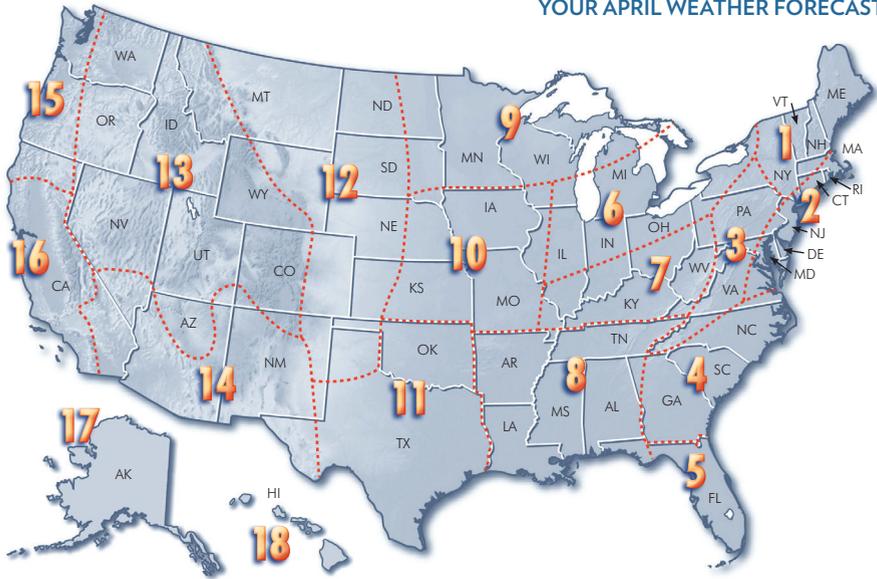




WEATHER FORECASTS

MAP OF U.S. WEATHER REGIONS

CHECK YOUR REGION TO SEE YOUR APRIL WEATHER FORECAST.



MAP OF CANADIAN WEATHER REGIONS





WEATHER FORECASTS

BLOSSOM OF THE ALMOND TREES, APRIL'S GIFT TO APRIL'S BEES.

—Sir Edwin Arnold, English writer (1832–1904)

U.S. FORECASTS APRIL 2017

REGION 1: NORTHEAST

Temp. 43° (3° below avg.); precip. 4" (avg. north, 2" above south). 1–5 Sunny, cool. 6–10 Rain and snow, then showers, mild. 11–17 Rainy periods, cool. 18–22 Sunny, cool. 23–26 Sunny, warm. 27–30 Showers, cool.

REGION 2: ATLANTIC CORRIDOR

Temp. 52.5° (1° below avg. north, 2° above south); precip. 4.5" (1" above avg.). 1–8 A few showers; cool north, turning warm south. 9–12 Showers, warm. 13–17 Rainy, cool. 18–23 Sunny, turning warm. 24–26 Heavy rain. 27–30 Sunny, turning warm.

REGION 3: APPALACHIANS

Temp. 50° (1° below avg. north, 1° above south); precip. 3.5" (1" above avg.). 1–4 Sunny, cool. 5–9 Showers; cool north, warm south. 10–17 Showers; warm, then cool. 18–22 Sunny, cool. 23–30 Showers, mild.

REGION 4: SOUTHEAST

Temp. 64° (1° above avg.); precip. 2" (1" below avg.). 1–3 Showers, then sunny, cool. 4–13 Showers, then sunny, warm. 14–18 Rainy periods, cool. 19–24 Sunny, turning warm. 25–30 T-storms, then sunny, cool.

REGION 5: FLORIDA

Temp. 73° (2° above avg.); precip. 2" (0.5" below avg.). 1–10 Sunny; cool, then warm. 11–22 Scattered t-storms; warm, then cool. 23–30 A few t-storms; warm north, cool south.



WEATHER FORECASTS

REGION 6: LOWER LAKES

Temp. 48° (avg.); precip. 4" (0.5" above avg.). 1–3 Sunny, cool. 4–12 Rainy periods, mild. 13–20 Rain, then sunny, cool. 21–24 Showers, mild. 25–30 T-storms, then showers, cool.

REGION 7: OHIO VALLEY

Temp. 57° (2° above avg.); precip. 3.5" (avg.). 1–3 Sunny, cool. 4–12 A few t-storms, warm. 13–21 Rain, then sunny, cool. 22–30 A few showers, warm.

REGION 8: DEEP SOUTH

Temp. 65° (2° above avg.); precip. 2.5" (2" below avg.). 1–2 Sunny, cool. 3–9 Scattered t-storms, turning warm. 10–12 Sunny, nice. 13–20 T-storms, then sunny, cool. 21–30 Scattered t-storms, warm.

REGION 9: UPPER MIDWEST

Temp. 40° (2° below avg.); precip. 2" (avg.). 1–3 Snow showers, cold. 4–12 Showers, cool. 13–16 Periods of rain and snow. 17–22 Sunny, turning warm. 23–30 A few showers, cool.

REGION 10: HEARTLAND

Temp. 56° (2° above avg.); precip. 4.5" (1" above avg.). 1–2 Showers, cool. 3–6 Scattered t-storms, warm. 7–14 Rainy periods; cool, then warm. 15–19 Sunny, cool. 20–30 A few t-storms, seasonable.

REGION 11: TEXAS-OKLAHOMA

Temp. 70° (4° above avg.); precip. 5" (2" above avg.). 1–7 Sunny, turning hot. 8–12 Scattered t-storms, warm. 13–21 A few t-storms, turning cool. 22–30 Scattered t-storms; warm, then cool.

REGION 12: HIGH PLAINS

Temp. 47° (1° below avg.); precip. 2.5" (0.5" above avg.). 1–3 Sunny; cool north, hot south. 4–9 Showers, cool. 10–18 Snow north, showers south, then sunny, cool. 19–30 Rainy periods, cool.



WEATHER FORECASTS

REGION 13: INTERMOUNTAIN

Temp. 47° (2° below avg.); precip. 0.5" (0.5" below avg.). 1–7 Rain and snow showers, chilly. 8–15 Sunny, cool. 16–20 Showers, mild north; sunny, cool south. 21–27 Sunny; cool, then warm. 28–30 Showers.

REGION 14: DESERT SOUTHWEST

Temp. 64° (1° below avg.); precip. 0.5" (avg.). 1–3 Sunny, warm. 4–9 Isolated t-storms, then sunny, cool. 10–15 Isolated t-storms, then sunny, cool. 16–26 Sunny, turning warm. 27–30 Scattered showers.

REGION 15: PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Temp. 48° (2° below avg.); precip. 2.5" (0.5" below avg.). 1–5 Rainy, cool. 6–7 Sprinkles. 8–10 Rain and wet snow. 11–21 Rainy periods, cool. 22–30 Sunny, turning warm.

REGION 16: PACIFIC SOUTHWEST

Temp. 60° (avg.); precip. 1" (avg.). 1–3 Sunny, seasonable. 4–14 Showers, then sunny, cool. 15–20 Showers, then sunny, warm. 21–27 Sunny; warm inland, cool coast. 28–30 Sprinkles, cool.

REGION 17: ALASKA

Temp. 0° N, 39° S (2° below avg.); precip. 0.7" N, 3" S (avg.). 1–7 Snow showers; mild N, cold S. 8–17 Flurries, mild N; snow showers, cold C; rain to snow, then sunny, cold S. 18–25 Snow showers, then sunny, turning mild. 26–30 Flurries N, showers S; mild.

KEY: , Aleutians (A), central (C), elsewhere (EW), north (N), Panhandle (P), south (S), south-central (SC), west-central (WC),

REGION 18: HAWAII

Temp. 76° (0.5° above avg.); precip. 3.7" (avg. E, 6" above W). 1–10 Showers and heavier t-storms, warm. 11–21 Showers and t-storms E, a few showers C+W; turning cool. 22–30 Showers E, isolated showers C+W; cool E, warm W.

KEY: east (E), central (C), west (W)



APRIL WEATHER, RAIN AND SUNSHINE, BOTH TOGETHER.

CANADIAN FORECASTS APRIL 2017

REGION 1: ATLANTIC CANADA

Temp. 2°C (2°C below avg.); precip. 100mm (avg.). 1–5 Rain to snow, then sunny, cool. 6–11 Snowstorm, then sunny north; snow showers south. 12–17 Snow showers, cool. 18–26 Rain and snow showers, cool. 27–30 Rainy, mild.

REGION 2: SOUTHERN QUEBEC

Temp. 3.5°C (1°C below avg.); precip. 40mm (50mm below avg. east, avg. west). 1–6 Sunny, cool. 7–17 A few showers, cool. 18–24 Sunny, turning warm. 25–30 Rainy periods, cool.

RÉGION 2: QUÉBEC DU SUD

Temp. 3,5°C (1°C en-dessous de la moy.); précip. 40mm (50mm en-dessous de la moy. à l'est, moy. à l'ouest). 1–6 Ensoleillé, frais. 7–17 Quelques averses, frais. 18–24 Ensoleillé, devenant chaud. 25–30 Périodes pluvieuses, frais.

REGION 3: SOUTHERN ONTARIO

Temp. 4°C (1°C below avg.); precip. 60mm (10mm above avg.). 1–3 Sunny, cold. 4–13 Rainy periods east, snow west; seasonable. 14–17 Rain east, snow west; cool. 18–24 Sunny, turning warm. 25–30 Showers, cool.

REGION 4: THE PRAIRIES

Temp. 5°C (1°C below avg.); precip. 30mm (avg.). 1–8 Snow showers, cold. 9–14 Sunny, turning mild east; snow, then flurries west. 15–17 Rain and snow showers east, snowstorm west. 18–22 Sunny, turning warm. 23–30 Snow, then showers, cool.



CANADIAN WEATHER FORECASTS

REGION 5: SOUTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Temp. 7°C (1°C below avg.); precip. 85mm (10mm above avg.). 1–11 Flurries north, showers south; cool. 12–26 A few showers, seasonable. 27–30 Sunny, nice.

REGION 6: YUKON

Temp. -3°C (2°C below avg.); precip. 15mm (avg. north, 10mm above south). 1–6 Sunny, cool. 7–17 Snow showers, cool. 18–21 Rain and snow showers, cool. 22–23 Flurries north, snowstorm south; cool. 24–30 Sunny, turning warm.

REGION 7: NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Temp. -16°C (2°C below avg.); precip. 9mm (3mm below avg.). 1–4 Snow, then sunny, cold. 5–7 Flurries, cold. 8–12 Snow, then sunny, cold. 13–21 Snow, then sunny, cold. 22–30 A few flurries, turning mild.



RANDOM MUSINGS DURING RECORD WARMTH

I woke up early this morning, although I didn't need to. I didn't sleep well last night, as it was too warm in my bedroom, even though I had my heat off. It is still February as I write this—and the low temperature this morning is above our normal high temperature for this date. Yesterday and/or today are the warmest winter days ever recorded in some places in the northeast quarter of the United States.

I thought that my forecast for this winter—that much of the country will be colder than last winter, but still above normal—would almost certainly be correct, but now I am wondering. Last winter was so much warmer than normal that I thought we could not possibly surpass that record warmth. But, depending upon how March winds up, this winter may indeed be even warmer than last winter overall.

Since I woke up early, I had extra time to write this for you, so first I read the latest issue of *Science News* magazine and checked my feed on Facebook. I espied a few items that you might find of interest.



First, a *Science News* article titled “2016 Shattered Earth’s Heat Record” noted that 2016 was the third year in a row that was the warmest year since record-keeping began in 1880. I already knew that, but what I did not realize was something noted later in the article: that this had also happened back in the years 1939 through ’41, which were the three warmest years ever, as of that time. Like 2014–16, those were also years when solar activity was decreasing from its peak in the 11-year cycle.

Another *Science News* article, this one titled “Sunspot Cycle May Be Ancient Routine,” discussed new research at NASA’s Goddard Space Flight Center that suggests that the approximately 11-year solar cycles have been occurring for at least 290 million years. So, these cycles have definitely been around longer than I have.

The third item in *Science News* was an article in the “NEWS IN BRIEF” section titled “Earth’s Last Major Warm Period Was as Hot as Today.” This article discusses recent research findings that “average global sea surface temperatures around 125,000 years ago were indistinguishable from the 1995 to 2014 average.” Climate scientists are especially interested in this historical warm period because sea levels were about 20 feet higher than current levels, meaning that the areas that are now New Orleans, Florida, and New York City were mostly under water the last time global temperatures were this warm.

One of my Facebook friends posted something this morning linking to an article explaining that “The U.S. Is Poised to Set a Record-Setting Record,” as, thus far this month, there have been 3,146 record-high temperatures in the United States and only 27 record lows, which means that this will likely be the most lopsided month on record. Wow!!

Finally, another of my Facebook friends posted last night that “This week’s warm weather may bring about an early amphibian migration beginning this weekend . . . to get a jump start on the breeding season.” She is planning a field trip to watch on Saturday night and invited her friends to join her.

I did not respond, as I am hopeful that I will have something better to do this Saturday night than watch amphibians breed. Then again, based on my track record, maybe I’d better reserve a spot before the amphibian watch fills up.

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



HUMOR ME

GRINS AND GROANS FROM THE ALMANAC

What Do You Think About Taxes?

- “One difference between death and taxes is that death doesn’t get worse every time Congress meets.”

–*Anonymous*

- “The income tax has made more liars out of the American people than golf has.”

–*Will Rogers*

- “It is more deductible to give than to receive.”

–*Henry Leabo*

- “Some taxpayers close their eyes, some stop their ears, some shut their mouths, but all pay through the nose.”

–*Evan Esar*

- “An income tax form is like a laundry list—either way, you lose your shirt.”

–*Fred Allen*

- “Tax reform is when you take the taxes off



things that have been taxed in the past and put taxes on things that haven’t been taxed before.”

–*Art Buchwald*

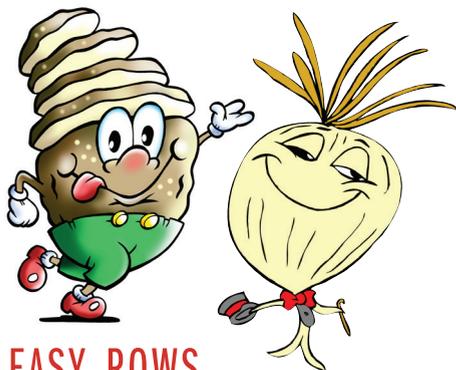
- “I figured out why Uncle Sam wears such a tall hat. It comes in handy when he passes it

around.”

–*Soupy Sales*

- “There is one difference between a tax collector and a taxidermist—the taxidermist leaves the hide.”

–*Mortimer Caplan, former IRS director*



EASY ROWS

A certain farmer was locally famous for the fine crops he raised of potatoes and onions, especially in very dry seasons.

Asked how he did it, he replied that it was really very easy: He simply planted the two crops in alternate rows.

Then, he said, the onions caused the potatoes' eyes to water, and the consequent moisture kept both crops plentifully irrigated.

A SHEEPISH TALE

It seems that a Maine farmer's trepidation over once again shearing his big, boisterous, and butt-y ram proved unnecessary, as the old sheep passed away on the night before the deed was to be done.

Might's well shear him anyway before he buried him, thought the farmer. Why waste the wool?

So he dug a 5-foot trench and was commencing the shearing when an out-of-state car pulled into the driveway. The driver was just looking for directions, but, seeing the performance in progress, lingered to watch.

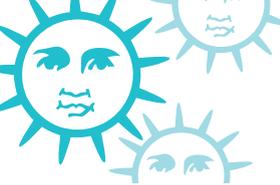
The shearing being completed, the farmer was proceeding with the burial when the onlooker voiced his curiosity. "Makes you appreciate the wool more," he said.

The farmer nodded his assent while widening the bottom of the hole to accommodate the ram's stiffening legs.

"I've never seen that done before," the observer continued, as the farmer finally dumped the ram into the pit. "I didn't realize they had to be dead first."

The farmer paused at this, considered the ram a bit, and then replied: "I don't know about the others, but I'd have never been able to get him in the hole if he wasn't, let alone keep him there while I covered him up."





WHAT'S NEXT



GARDENING

The ups and ups of vertical gardening



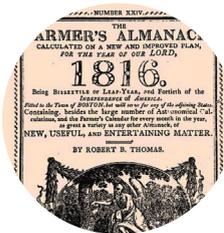
CALENDAR

Full Flower Moon, botanical naming system, birthstone emerald, terrifying twisters, 1793 Almanac tidbits



LIVING NATURALLY

Lighten your hair with rhubarb



ANNIVERSARY

The Almanac's early history



FOOD

Kid-friendly recipes with "hidden veggies"



ASTROLOGY

Gardening by the Moon's Sign

Plus: Weather Update • U.S. and Canadian Weather Forecasts • Explore with our Sky Map • Best Days to Do Things • Humor • and much more in the May *EXTRA!*

CELEBRATING THE ALMANAC'S 225TH YEAR!