

# EXTRA!

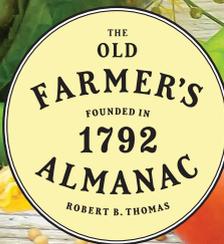
FROM THE OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC

## PICKLING RECIPES

A VACATION STATE  
OF MIND

SECRETS TO SAVING  
CUT FLOWERS

EVERYDAY ADVICE  
FOR ANY DAY



AUGUST 2017

*It wasn't just love **powering** us  
through the outage and the storm,  
it was preparation.*

*Times like this remind you  
how **your life**, and how you  
live, are worth overprotecting.*



Cummins Connect Series  
home standby generators

Safeguard against power line failure with a Cummins standby generator. Call your authorized Cummins dealer today so you are prepared for when the next storm arrives. Learn more at [powertohomes.com](http://powertohomes.com)

*Powering your life.*



## FEATURES

### FOOD

Pickling Recipes

### GARDENING

Secrets to Saving  
Cut Flowers

### LIVING NATURALLY

A Vacation  
State of Mind

### ANNIVERSARY

Everyday Advice  
for Any Day

## DEPARTMENTS

### CALENDAR

Holidays, History,  
and Folklore for  
August



### ASTROLOGY

Best Days to  
Do Things

Gardening by the  
Moon's Sign

### ASTRONOMY

Sky Map for August

### HOT PRODUCTS

Summer Deals!



### WEATHER FORECASTS

How We Make Our  
Predictions

August 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  
September issue!





# THE MONTH OF AUGUST

## HOLIDAYS, HISTORY, AND FOLKLORE

### AUGUST'S BIRTHSTONE: PERIDOT

• August's modern birthstone is the peridot, a gem form of the mineral olivine that appears in various shades of green, sometimes with a brown or yellow tinge. Called "evening emerald," the peridot was often mistaken for that other gem. It symbolizes strength and was said to protect the wearer from nightmares.

• A previous birthstone for this month was sardonyx, which is characterized by alternating bands of sard and onyx, both forms of chalcedony. Although it can appear in several colors, it is usually reddish and white. It is thought to bring courage, happiness, and eloquence.

 TAP FOR MORE ON **SARDONYX**

 TAP TO LEARN MORE ABOUT **AUGUST'S BIRTHSTONE**



### Moon View

August's full Moon, the **Full Sturgeon Moon**, occurs on the 7th, at 2:11 P.M. EDT.

 TAP FOR MORE **MOON PHASES**

 TAP FOR MORE ABOUT THE **FULL STURGEON MOON**

### FOLKLORE FUN

*When it rains in August, It raises honey and wine.*

### ALMANAC 225TH ANNIVERSARY TIME CAPSULE

*The following are excerpts from the August Right-Hand Calendar Page of The 1793 [Old] Farmer's Almanac: Now see majestic columns rise, Dark vapours cloud the gloomy skies See, forked lightning from the cloud, Now, hideous thunder roars aloud.*

• **Aug. 12:** Pr. of Wales b. 1762.

• **Aug. 8:** A storm approaching.

• Seeds nearly ripe must be gathered from the birds; such as cabbage, fennel, lettuce, mustard, etc.

• Cucumbers for pickling should now be gathered.



### **SARDONYX TRIVIA**

Legend says that Queen Elizabeth I once gave the Earl of Essex a ring made of sardonyx, pledging her aid if he was ever in need. Later on, when accused of treason and scheduled for execution, he tried to send the ring to her but an enemy intercepted it. The queen learned of his plea only years later, after he had been beheaded.

# THIS MONTH IN HISTORY



## AUGUST 19: AN IRONCLAD NAME

In August 1812, the United States was in a war with Britain that had started on June 18 of the same year. From the American perspective, the British had gone too far in blocking American trade with Britain's enemy, France, and the Royal Navy had repeatedly impressed American sailors to serve on their ships. Also, the British were inciting Native American hostility as America attempted to expand its western territory.

The war was not going well for the Americans. The Royal Navy was nearly 60 times as large as the U.S. Navy, which was still in its infancy. Even though most British ships

TAP TO LEARN  
MORE ABOUT  
THE **USS  
CONSTITUTION**

### DID YOU KNOW?

- One of six frigates ordered by President George Washington in 1794 to defend the merchant marine, the USS *Constitution* was officially launched on October 21, 1797. The three-masted ship measured 204 feet in length and 44 feet in beam and displaced 2,200 tons of water. It was rated as a 44-gun frigate, although it often carried more armament. The standard crew complement was 450.
- The USS *Constitution* is the world's oldest commissioned warship still afloat. Designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960, it is now located in Boston Harbor, where many can tour its structure and absorb its rich history.



were engaged elsewhere, there were enough off American shores to pose a significant threat.

On August 19, Capt. Isaac Hull of the heavy frigate USS *Constitution* sighted the British frigate HMS *Guerrière*, Capt. James Dacres commanding, off the coast of Halifax, Nova Scotia. The two ships closed, and battle was engaged for about an hour and a half. An American sailor, seeing the *Guerrière's* cannonballs bounce off his ship's oak hull, cheered "Huzzah, her sides are made of iron!" The nickname "Old Ironsides" stuck, although the *Constitution's* hull was sturdier due not to iron, but to the type of oak used and to the fact that the ship's designer, Joshua Humphreys, had spaced the ribs closer than usual.

After trading several broadsides at close range, and suffering from collisions during the battle, *Guerrière* was dismasted; unable to maneuver, she surrendered. The *Constitution* had minimal damage. After the British sailors were transferred to the *Constitution* as prisoners, the unsalvageable *Guerrière* was set on fire and sunk.

When the *Constitution* crew returned to Boston on August 30, they were hailed as heroes for the much-welcomed victory over the mighty British Royal Navy.



## BEST DAYS TO DO THINGS

These August 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: 10, 14  
 Begin diet to gain weight: 22, 27  
 Cut hair to encourage growth: 24, 25  
 Cut hair to discourage growth: 13, 14  
 Have dental care: 22, 23  
 Quit smoking: 10, 14  
 Wean children: 10, 14

### AROUND THE HOUSE

Can, pickle, or make sauerkraut: 9, 10  
 End projects: 20  
 Start projects: 22

### OUTDOORS

Begin logging: 4, 5, 31  
 Go camping: 1–3  
 Go fishing: 1–7, 21–31  
 Set posts or pour concrete: 4, 5, 31

### IN THE GARDEN

Destroy pests and weeds: 11, 12  
 Graft or pollinate: 17–19  
 Prune to encourage growth: 1–3, 29, 30  
 Prune to discourage growth: 11, 12  
 Plant aboveground crops: 26–28  
 Plant belowground crops: 9, 10  
 Harvest aboveground crops: 4, 5, 31  
 Harvest belowground crops: 13, 14

### ON THE FARM

Breed animals: 26–28  
 Castrate animals: 6–8  
 Cut hay: 11, 12  
 Set eggs: 5–7, 15, 16  
 Slaughter livestock: 26–28  
 Wean animals: 10, 14



## GARDENING BY THE MOON'S SIGN

Use the August 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 AUGUST

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



TAP FOR  
MERCURY IN  
RETROGRADE  
DATES



**APP EXTRA!**  
TAP FOR  
AUGUST  
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.

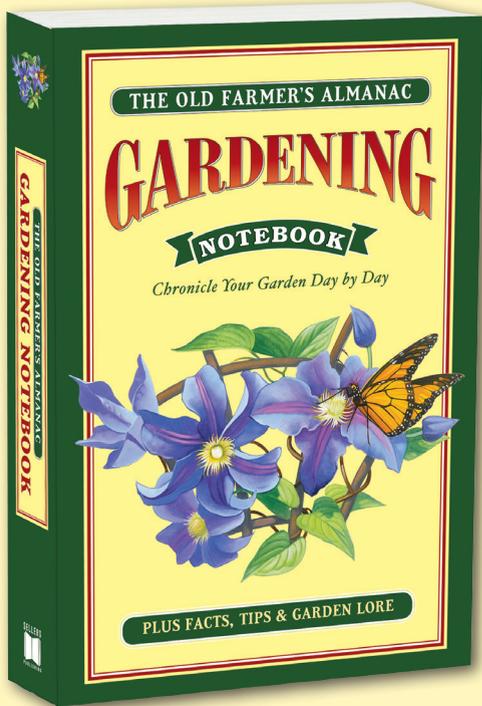
When Mercury is retrograde, remain flexible, allow extra time for travel, and avoid signing contracts. Review projects and plans at these times, but wait until Mercury is direct again to make any final decisions.

**In 2017, Mercury will be retrograde from August 13–September 5 and December 3–23.**

*—Celeste Longacre*

# Chronicle Your Garden Day by Day

Plus facts, tips, and garden lore!



Beautiful, inspiring, and filled with colorful illustrations, gardening tips, and knowledge, **The Old Farmer's Almanac Gardening Notebook** will become a personal gardening bible.

**LEARN MORE!**

**Only \$14.95 U.S. | \$17.95 Can.**

plus S&H

## Solar Eclipse Geometry (not to scale)



August 21, 2017

**Notes:**

1. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD YOU LOOK AT THE SUN WITHOUT PROPER EYE PROTECTION! See the accompanying article for safety tips.
2. The small black dot represents the Moon's shadow. Only that portion of the Earth in the Moon's shadow sees a total eclipse of the Sun.
3. Due to the motions of the Earth and Moon, the Moon's shadow (black dot) moves rapidly across the surface of the Earth at an average speed of more than 1,600 miles per hour. That is why the total eclipse of August 21 lasts less than 3 minutes for any one location.
4. The larger gray area on the Earth's surface represents the region that will see a partial eclipse. All of the "lower 48" states will see at least half of the Sun hidden by the Moon.

## TOTAL ECLIPSE OF THE SUN!

Through the ages, humankind has looked upon solar eclipses with wonder—and a certain amount of fear. A total eclipse of the Sun is perhaps nature's most awesome spectacle. On August 21, people in a large swath of North America will have a rare opportunity to view a total solar eclipse for themselves.

What is an eclipse, anyway? Every eclipse involves the alignment of three celestial objects. One of these is our home, Earth. A solar eclipse occurs when the Moon passes precisely between Earth and the Sun. When the three objects—Earth, Moon, and Sun—are perfectly aligned, the shadow of the Moon falls upon Earth. If you are in the right place, under the Moon's shadow, the Sun will be totally or partially hidden from view. That's a solar eclipse! See this month's special sky map for more details.

A total solar eclipse is visible from somewhere on Earth about every 18 months. However, many of these can be seen only from

**APP EXTRA!**  
TAP TO GET  
A PRINTABLE  
SOLAR ECLIPSE  
GEOMETRY

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



TAP FOR  
SECRETS OF  
THE TOTAL  
SOLAR ECLIPSE

TAP FOR  
NASA'S PATH  
OF TOTALITY  
MAP

TAP FOR MORE  
SAFETY TIPS

TAP FOR  
SLOOH'S  
ASTRONOMY  
AND ECLIPSE-  
VIEWING WEB  
SITE

TAP FOR  
ECLIPSE  
GLASSES

TAP FOR  
AN ECLIPSE  
VIEWER

remote locales to which travel is difficult. A better question is: How often is a total solar eclipse visible from any given location, such as the town where you live? The answer is about once every 375 years, on average. By chance, some locations are treated to total solar eclipses only a few years apart. The city of Los Angeles, on the other hand, is in the midst of a “dry spell” of more than 1,500 years without a total solar eclipse.

On August 21, only viewers fortunate enough to be in the narrow Path of Totality will see a total eclipse. The approximately 100-mile-wide shadow of the Moon will sweep across the continent from Oregon (10:15 A.M.) to South Carolina (2:45 P.M.) and will completely hide the Sun for more than 2 minutes. Outside the Path of Totality, the rest of North America will see a partial eclipse, in which the Moon hides only part of the Sun. NASA has prepared an excellent map displaying the Path of Totality as well as locations that will see partial eclipses.

**WARNING:** *Never look at the Sun with unprotected eyes! Never look at the Sun through an unmodified telescope or binoculars! Either action can result in permanent eye damage and even blindness!*

The only time it is ever safe to look at the Sun with your “naked” eyes is during the brief minutes of totality, when the Moon has completely covered the Sun.

How do you safely view the eclipse, then? Here are three ways, none costing more than a few dollars.

1. **Watch on the Web.** Many Web sites will offer live coverage of the eclipse. If it happens to be cloudy in your area on August 21, a live viewing site such as SLOOH may be your only option.

2. **Use eclipse glasses.** For direct viewing, consider getting a pair of inexpensive eclipse glasses.

3. **Build an eclipse viewer.** It's as simple as two pieces of cardboard and a small square of aluminum foil.

*Do not be tempted* to use sunglasses, photographic filters, or other methods. They will not protect your eyes! *Play it safe* and enjoy the eclipse on August 21! –Jeff DeTray

# SUMMER DEALS!



## MASON JAR DISH TOWEL

Made of cotton and measures 28" square.

SAVE 20% \$7.99

**BUY NOW**



## ALMANAC SONGBIRD WOODEN THERMOMETERS

Choose from 4 different popular songbirds: Cardinal, Blue Jay, Chickadee, or Goldfinch.

SAVE 16% \$26.95

**BUY NOW**

## HANDMADE GLASS SUN CATCHERS

Choose from about 60 different designs!

SAVE 25% when you buy 2 or more sun catchers or glass coins with promo code SUNNY.

\$5.99-\$12.95

**BUY NOW**





# Pickling Recipes

Pickling is a great way to store excess vegetables for the coming winter or just to make a tasty snack for the summer. But pickling isn't just for cucumbers. You can make pickles out of cucumbers, cauliflower, green and red peppers, onions, summer squash, baby ears of corn—lots of different vegetables can be pickled! Give these recipes a try and enjoy the bounty of summer for months to come.

FOOD

 TAP FOR  
RECIPE

# Pickled Green Beans

PHOTO: BJOERN WYLEZICH/SHUTTERSTOCK

## PICKLED GREEN BEANS

**2 pounds fresh green beans, trimmed and cut into 4-inch pieces**

**1 teaspoon cayenne pepper, divided**

**4 stems fresh dill or 4 teaspoons dill seed, divided**

**4 cloves garlic**

**2-1/2 cups white vinegar**

**1/4 cup salt**

Pack beans lengthwise into four sterilized 1-pint jars, leaving a 1/2-inch head space. To each jar, add 1/4 teaspoon cayenne pepper, 1 dill stem (or 1 teaspoon dill seed), and 1 garlic clove.

In a saucepan, bring 2-1/2 cups water plus the vinegar and salt to a boil. Pour boiling liquid over beans, leaving a 1/2-inch head space. Wipe jar rims. Seal and process in a boiling-water bath for 40 minutes; start counting the processing time when the water starts to boil. Remove and cool. Let beans stand at least 2 weeks before tasting to allow the flavor to develop.

**Makes 4 pints.**

SHARE  
THIS  
RECIPE

FOOD

# Pumpkin Pickles

 TAP FOR RECIPE

PHOTO: HANDMADE PICTURES/SHUTTERSTOCK

## PUMPKIN PICKLES

4 cups peeled, bite-size cubes pumpkin

1-1/2 cups sugar

1-1/2 cups apple cider vinegar

10 whole cloves

2 sticks cinnamon

Steam pumpkin until barely tender, about 10 minutes (don't let pumpkin touch boiling water, or it will get mushy). Drain thoroughly and set aside.

In a saucepan, combine sugar, vinegar, cloves, and cinnamon and simmer, covered, for 20 minutes. Add pumpkin, return to a simmer, cover, and cook for 3 minutes. Remove pan from heat and cool. Leave pumpkin in syrup and refrigerate for 24 hours.

Return pot to a boil; simmer for 5 minutes. Remove spices and pack pumpkin into three sterilized 1-pint jars. Fill with the hot liquid, leaving a 1-inch head space. Wipe jar rims. Seal and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes; start counting the processing time when the water starts to boil. Set aside to cool undisturbed for 12 hours.

**Makes 3 pints.**

SHARE  
THIS  
RECIPE

# Bread-and-Butter Pickles

 TAP FOR RECIPE

## BREAD-AND-BUTTER PICKLES

- 4 cups unpeeled, thinly sliced, fresh summer squash or zucchini
- 2 onions, thinly sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1/4 cup salt
- 1-1/4 cups apple cider vinegar
- 1-1/4 cups sugar
- 2 teaspoons mustard seed
- 1 teaspoon celery seed
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric

SHARE  
THIS  
RECIPE

In a bowl, sprinkle squash, onions, and garlic with salt, then cover with cold water. Let stand 2 hours. Drain, rinse in fresh cold water, and drain again.

In a large pot, combine vinegar, sugar, mustard seeds, celery seeds, and turmeric and boil for 5 minutes. Add vegetables, remove from heat, and let stand for 3 hours.

Return pot to a boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Pack vegetables into three sterilized 1-pint jars. Fill with the hot liquid, leaving a 1/2-inch head space. Wipe jar rims. Seal and process in a boiling-water bath for 10 minutes; start counting the processing time when the water starts to boil. Set aside to cool undisturbed for 12 hours.

**Makes 3 pints.**

GARDENING



# Secrets to Saving Cut Flowers

*Here's how to adopt techniques used by florists and professional arrangers.*

PHOTO: PIXABAY



**F**resh cut flowers, whether homegrown or purchased, look fabulous in a vase. Here's how to maintain that beauty and prolong your pleasure.

### **When is the best time of day to cut flowers?**

Try to cut flowers in the early morning; condition them overnight in water that contains preservatives and keep them as cool as you can. Florist's coolers range from 33° to 40°F.

Don't use your own refrigerator; it's probably not cold enough, and the fruit and other produce can contribute to ethylene buildup.

### **Should flower stems be cut at an angle?**

There are varying opinions about whether a stem has more surface or more tube with a slanted cut. It makes little difference to the flower. But a slanted cut does help if you're using floral foam: A stem with a point is easier to insert.

### **Should all of the leaves on a stem be removed before putting cut flowers in water?**

It's not necessary to remove all of a stem's leaves but definitely remove any foliage that sits in water: It will rot quickly and lower the quality of the water. Rotting material will smell terrible and give off ethylene gas, which shortens vase life. Remove any leaves above water that you do not really need.

## GARDENING

### **Is it true that some stems should be cut underwater?**

It's a good idea to cut all flowers underwater. When you cut a flower stem in the air, it tries to draw in air. If it takes in too much air, there will be blockage in the stem, and water won't get to the flower. Roses are more susceptible to air blockage than many other flowers because they have a bent neck.

Cutting stems underwater helps them

to take up more water, which in turn keeps them from wilting. Floral supply companies sell underwater cutters. After cutting a flower in the garden, immediately submerge the stem in warm water and cut it again, keeping it below the water line.

### **Is it necessary to burn the end of some flowers?**

Poppies, milkweed, and other flowers with milky stems should be held

in a flame for about 15 seconds immediately after cutting. This seals the latex in the stem but keeps the water-conducting vessels open. Without searing, the latex substance can leak into the water and cause it to spoil quickly. It can also affect the life of other flowers in the vase.

### **Is it true that some flower stems should be pounded?**

No! For years, florists kept mallets just for the





purpose of pounding woody stems—lilacs, for example—since they were always told that this would help. In fact, pounding the stems makes the stems rot faster in the water.

### **What's the best treatment for woody-stem flowers, like lilacs?**

If possible, cut above the woody stem.

If you can't cut above the woody stem, submerge the entire stem in water for 20 minutes to an hour.

### **Will adding sugar to the water help flowers last longer?**

Floral preservatives do contain a sugar, but do not use just sugar alone. It's better to stop at your local florist and buy a preservative. Or use a simple home remedy: any non-diet carbonated drink that contains lemon and sugar. These have all the same ingredients as a floral preservative: lemon to lower the water's pH, sugar to replace the glucose that the plant has lost and needs, and carbonation to keep

the bacterial growth down. Play around with the different solutions, trying 50–50 or even full strength.

### **Should cold water be used for cut flowers?**

No! Flowers are just like us: They like to be warm and prefer water that is 80° to 110°F. Even spring flowers like warm water. The water in the vase does not need to be maintained at that temperature, but always start cut flowers in warm, not cold, water. And check the water level every day.

# Grow Your Best Garden Ever!

Colorful and comprehensive, our 2017 *Garden Guide* covers it all—from veggies, fruit, and herbs to flowers and unique landscaping.

## On sale now!

### INCREDIBLE EDIBLES

A little know-how goes a long way. Learn to grow . . .

- tasty tiny tomatoes
- a picklers' paradise
- small-space fruit trees
- unusual veggies
- easy herbs

### OFFBEAT ORNAMENTALS

Go out on a limb and try growing something different, such as . . .

- domesticated wildflowers
- bygone-era biennials

### IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

There's a world of wonder right outside your door. With the right plants and tools, you can . . .

- attract pollinating bumblebees
- weave a wattle fence
- build a Hügelkultur bed

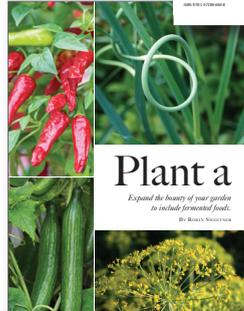
### CALLING ALL COOKS!

Check out our great dishes straight from the garden . . .

- nasturtium salad
- kraut and kimchi
- winning apple recipes

### PLUS:

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



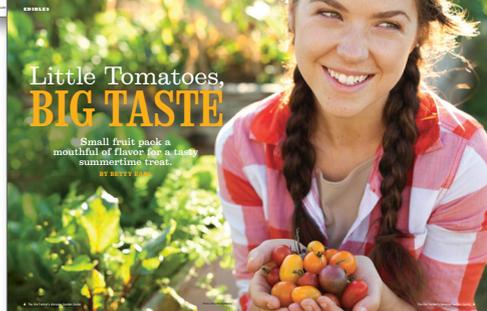
**Plant a**  
*Expand the bounty of your garden to include fermented foods.*  
By Maria Montezuma

**Picklers' Paradise**



*Bring In the Bumblebees!*  
Plant an eye-blooming array of flowers to nurture and nourish valuable pollinators.  
By Ben Lee

**O**VER THE YEARS, I have been an avid gardener, and I have learned a lot about the importance of pollinators. Bumblebees are one of the most important pollinators in our gardens, and they are also one of the most vulnerable. In this article, I will share with you some of the best ways to attract and support bumblebees in your garden. I will also provide you with a list of plants that are particularly attractive to bumblebees. So, if you are looking for ways to support these important pollinators, this article is for you.



**Little Tomatoes, BIG TASTE**  
Small fruit pack a mouthful of flavor for a tasty summer treat.  
By Betty Lane

**LEARN MORE**

## GARDENING

### How do cut flowers react to each other in a vase?

- Chrysanthemums, for example, last for a week or more.
- Daylilies are gone after 1 day.
- Tulips continue to grow after you arrange them.
- Some flowers, such as narcissus, contain a type of sap that will shorten the vase life of other flowers.

• A few flowers play tricks. Snapdragons have negative geotropism—their stems turn away from the light and the flowers can twist and turn. Stock is another flower that reacts to light when it is cut. It's important to keep these flowers straight (upright): Stake them or put them in a tall florist's bucket as soon as they are cut.

If possible, put your

flowers in a spot that doesn't get full sun. However, placement may depend on how long you want your arrangement to last and where you want to see it.

Keep track of your own observations to learn about cut flowers. Think about the flowers that you're using together. If you pay close attention, you'll learn a lot about flowers!

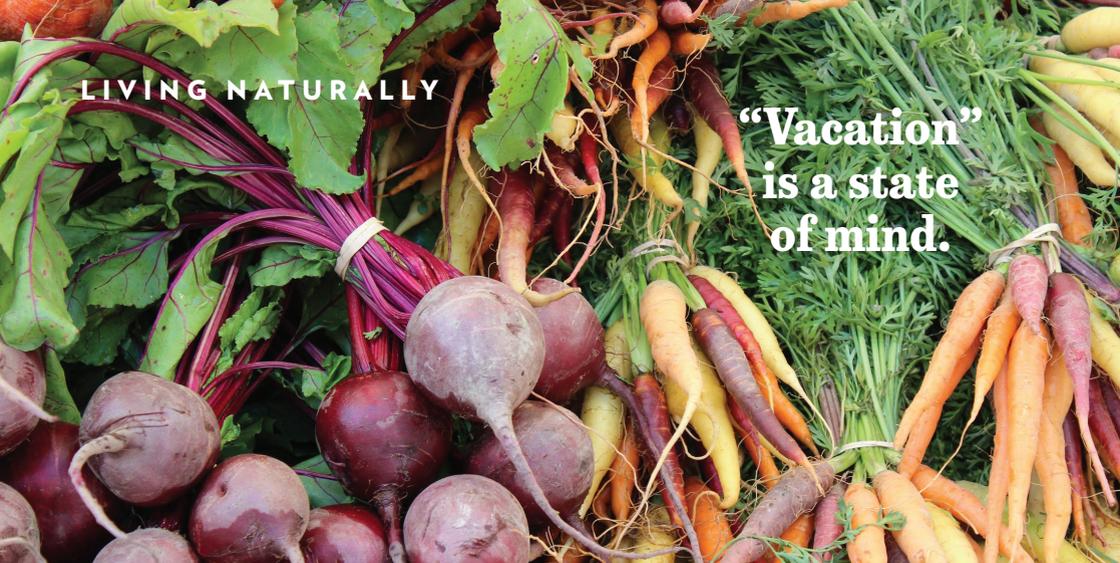


LIVING NATURALLY



# A Vacation State of Mind

If you've ever tended a big food garden in a region that gets frost—the kind of garden that you hope will feed your household all year long—you know the alternate reality that late summer brings.



LIVING NATURALLY

“Vacation”  
is a state  
of mind.

**I**t’s hard to think of anything else, much less do anything but monitor the crops, harvest, process, and store all of those fruit, vegetables, and herbs exploding with abundance.

In one morning of gardening, every stockpot, bowl, and bucket we own overflows with just-harvested crops: a half-dozen cantaloupes; gallons of green beans; broccoli, zucchini, and summer squashes; cucumbers; three kinds of peppers. A bushel of crushed tomatoes bubbles on the stove in our big stainless

stockpot.

Braids of drying onions swing from makeshift drying racks; a 5-gallon bucket contains the last three bunches of garlic, dried and ready to have the tops removed. Winter squashes lounge on shelves in the greenhouse, curing for a few days before they head down to a cooler, drier storage rack in the cellar.

You get the picture.

Nature has many inflexible rules, among them: When a crop is ready to harvest, it won’t wait until you feel like getting to it. When three or four of the garlic blades dry out, when

the onion tops fall over, when the stems on the winter squashes get woody, you have to get them out of the garden and set them to cure.

Even if we don’t have time to do anything about those beans, zucchini, broccoli, and cukes on the vine today, we need to pick them and give them away or toss them into the compost so that the plants will keep on producing.

## **AND THE GARDEN’S NOT ALL**

As the garden labor slows, the woodpiles beckon. I’ve already



Let go of the  
humdrum  
and discover  
something new.

started on the two-cord mound beside the driveway, shuttling wheelbarrow loads to the woodshed and stacking them inside.

Another couple of cords need splitting. Both woodstoves need new gaskets. We need to finish fencing a yard for the hens before cleaning the henhouse. We'll have to drain and store the irrigation hoses and the pump and plant the greenhouse crops that will supply us with fresh greens all winter.

Eventually, we get into the cold-weather work: tending woodfires, hauling ashes, shoveling snow. And in April, the cycle begins again, when I sow seedlings under lights for later transplant.

### **VACATION? WHAT VACATION?**

For me, “vacation” is a state of mind, a psychological place to let go of the humdrum and discover something startlingly new or astonishingly old.

After all, our word “vacation” derives from the Latin *vacare*, meaning empty, free, at leisure. (And “leisure” comes from an ancient root that means opportunity to do something.)

I won't deny that “going somewhere” on vacation educates and broadens or that new environments often chase away the everydayness that can lead to stale, robotic living.

But state-of-mind vacations also deliver new environments that educate,



**I take  
vacation time  
every day.**

broaden, and deepen. And living by nature's cycles never gets stale. I take vacation time every day.

### **AS FOR TODAY'S "VACATION" . . .**

Picking beans early this morning, I watched two ruby-throated hummingbirds work a huge patch of free-ranging pink zinnias in the lettuce patch. I spied a new, beautiful (to my eyes) insect that I later identified as a 5th instar nymph of the green stinkbug. Wonder!

During a lunch break, I did a bit of online research and had a chat

with an entomologist friend and former colleague to learn more about the bug. I've seen hundreds of them this summer, although they don't seem to have damaged any of the crops that my friend tells me they're likely to attack. I'll have to keep an eye out next growing season. Education!

There's a lot more to say about my state-of-mind vacations, but I've gotta go. I've planned a long walk down the dirt road that leads to a nearby swamp and gravel pit. Lots to see and learn there. Exercise!

And when I return, I'll get going on that new recipe I found for black-bean chili. It's chock-a-block full of tomatoes, onions, garlic, and three kinds of peppers. Cooking adventure!

This all brings to mind some words from that great 1968 Moody Blues song, "The Best Way to Travel":

**Speeding through  
the universe,  
Thinking is the best  
way to travel.**

*—Margaret Boyles*

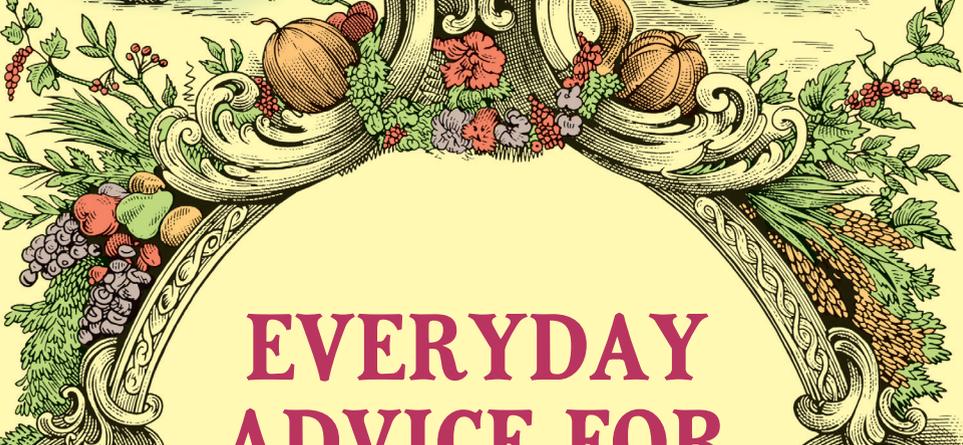


TAP TO READ MORE OF  
MARGARET BOYLES'S  
POSTS IN HER "LIVING  
NATURALLY" BLOG

ANNIVERSARY

# EVERYDAY ADVICE FOR ANY DAY

Robert B. Thomas, founder of this Almanac, recognized that the way to win the favor of readers was to provide them with information that is immediately relevant to their needs and interests. Here are a few of the ways that he did that—and now we do.



## WHEN OUT IN THE GARDEN

The 1794 Almanac included instructions to use “fresh dung water” mixed with garlic, laurel berries, leaves of an elder bush, and a handful of thistle roots on plants infected by insects “which, then, will soon perish or forsake the place.” In more recent years, we reported on a scientific test showing that gardens cultivated on cloudy, moonless nights produce 78 percent fewer weeds. The ensuing editions of the Almanac, as well as the pages at [Almanac.com/gardening](http://Almanac.com/gardening), comprise a veritable storehouse of



advice for gardeners of all skill levels.

## FROM SOUP TO THE KITCHEN SINK

Because the Almanac was initially written for farmers rather than farmers’ wives, our present-day editorial emphasis on quick, easy, and delicious foods and recipes was slow to evolve. In the early days, it was probably assumed that women didn’t need any cooking advice, particularly from men. The only food-related features during the 1790s, for instance, were those such as “The Art of Making Cheese” or “To Refine Sugar.” The first specific recipe didn’t appear until 1800. After describing “how to roast a piece of beef,” it provided instructions for making an onion sauce (“Put them into clean sauce-pan with a good piece of butter, a little

salt, and a gill of sweet cream; stir them over the fire . . .”). From then on, food and recipes became more and more an integral



part of each issue’s fare and, since 1995, that of [Almanac.com/cooking](http://Almanac.com/cooking).

## FOR CAREFREE CHILDHOOD YEARS

In 1867, the Almanac advised that every young boy ought to know how to harness a horse, plow a field, milk a cow, “reckon” money, whitewash a wall, and swing a scythe. In the same edition, a young girl was told that she should be able to sew, sweep carpets, knit, make bread, write letters, nurse the sick (without fainting at the sight of blood), trim lamps, and

entertain visitors. Obviously, “childhood” was not so carefree during the early days of the Almanac. It wasn’t until the 20th century that children were allowed to be children. That’s why we’ve endeavored to perpetuate childhood with *The Old Farmer’s Almanac for Kids*—a book of fun facts, activities, and useful information. Just released this summer and available in stores and on Almanac.com is Volume 7!

### **ABOUT MARRIAGE, FAMILY, AND CAREER**

All of the Almanac’s editors seem to be in agreement that young people facing marriage, family, and career need advice—even though it has always been apparent that this particular age group is least likely to take it! At any rate, in many editions, readers—



especially the young—have been advised to work hard, pay off all debts, plan ahead, avoid procrastination, be cheerful, practice thrift . . . and on and on. But also cited are the propitious days for specific tasks and chores—the Best Days—that harken to tradition . . . with no small measure of success!

### **IN RETIREMENT AND GOLDEN TIMES**

Retirement was not a problem in the early days of the Almanac. You just found yourself sitting on the porch more and more, while

your children and grandchildren did the work on the farm more and more. It was a gradual thing. In recent years, however, retirement for both men and women has become one of life’s major milestones. At this stage of life, the point is to be happy. But remember Montesquieu’s warning from the 1801 edition: “If we were content to be happy, that would not be difficult; but we are ambitious to be more happy than others, and this is difficult because others appear to be happier than they really are.” We feel certain that a dose of amusement now and then will make you happier than most, especially this kind of humor; it has worked for centuries.

—adapted by Janice Stillman from *The Best of The Old Farmer’s Almanac* by Judson D. Hale Sr.



IF THE BIRDS BE SILENT, EXPECT THUNDER.



# 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.

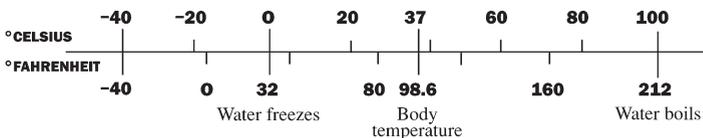


TAP TO FIND OUT THE WEATHER HISTORY OF THE DAY



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

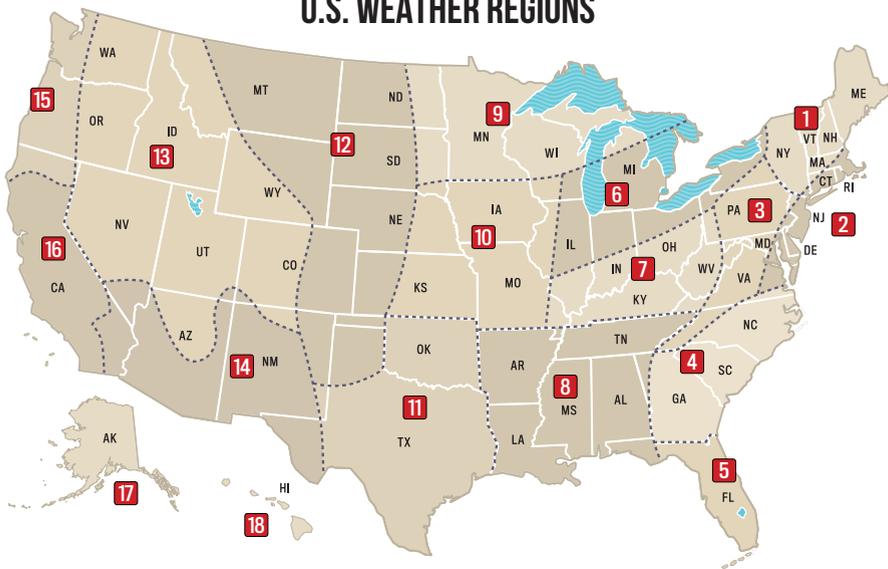
## CELSIUS-FAHRENHEIT TABLE



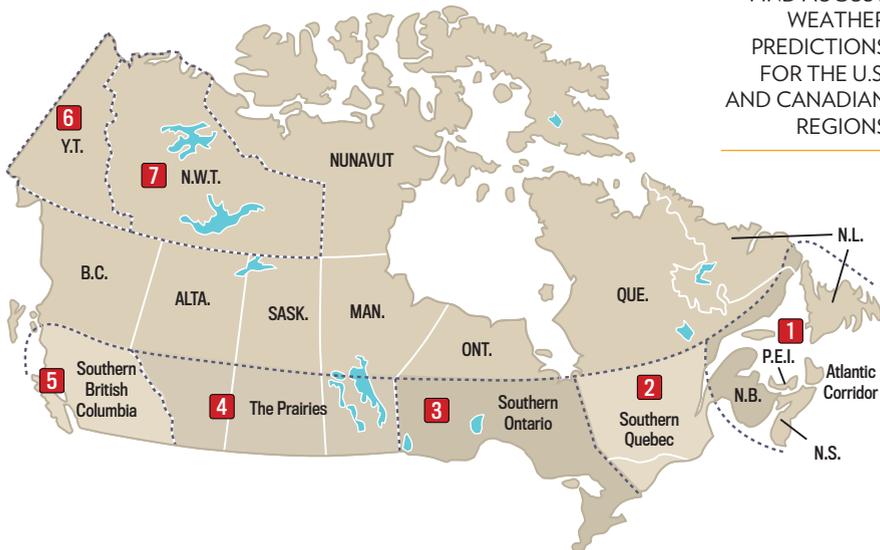


# WEATHER FORECASTS

## U.S. WEATHER REGIONS



## CANADIAN WEATHER REGIONS



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





## RECENT HURRICANE HITS

**N**ow that we are in the hurricane season, I am continuing a look back at some of the most notable hurricanes that have hit the United States. In the past two issues, I looked at storms through the early 1990s. This month, I will conclude with five more recent ones.

**HURRICANE FLOYD** caused the largest peacetime evacuation in U.S. history, with 3 million people evacuated mostly from Florida and South Carolina before Floyd made landfall as a category 2 hurricane over North Carolina on September 16, 1999. Floyd continued north-northeastward into New England, where the

storm became extratropical.

While wind gusts of 120 miles per hour and storm surges of 9 to 10 feet were reported at the North Carolina coast, Floyd was most noteworthy for its rainfall. The combination of Floyd and a frontal system over the eastern United States produced widespread rainfalls in excess of 10 inches from North Carolina northeastward, bringing widespread flooding that led to the majority of the \$5 billion in damage and 56 deaths caused by Floyd.

**HURRICANE CHARLEY** was a category 4 when it hit Florida's west coast, devastating the Port Charlotte area on Friday, August 13, 2004. Charley



moved across Florida, bringing winds as high as 145 mph, killing 35 people, and causing \$14 billion in damage. I was on vacation with my two oldest daughters in Orlando when Charley hit, knocking down one of the walls of my motel and causing moderate damage in the area (see accompanying photo). As the storm approached, I placed my daughters safely in an interior restroom and then went on the terrace outside to call the hurricane desk at my work to let them listen in on the howling wind. The photo that I took shows a tree that fell against the terrace of my hotel.

**HURRICANE KATRINA** was the most costly and most deadly natural disaster in U.S. history, as it led to the col-



lapse of dikes in New Orleans and left much of the city underwater for days. Katrina first made landfall in South Florida as a minimal hurricane with sustained winds of 80 mph and gusts up to 95 mph. After quickly crossing southern Florida, Katrina moved over the warm waters of the Gulf of Mexico, where it strengthened into the fourth most powerful hurricane of all time, with waves in the Gulf as high as 48 feet. Making landfall on August 29,



2005, with 140-mph winds in Louisiana, Katrina created a 27-foot storm surge in Gulfport, Mississippi, and brought 90-mph winds as far east as Mobile, Alabama, which experienced its worst flooding in 90 years.

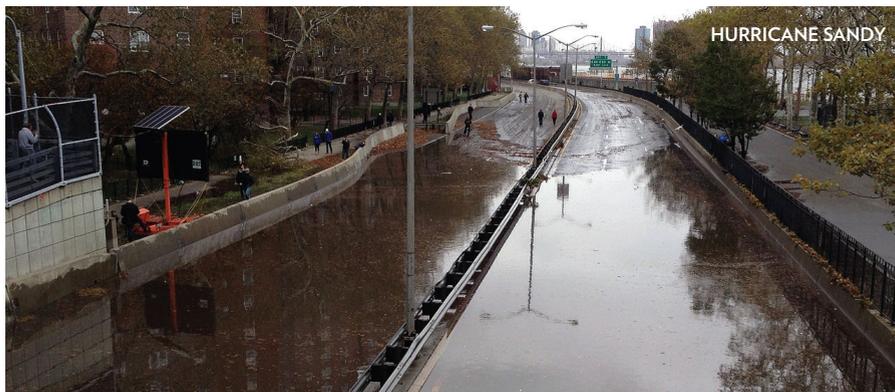
Although New Orleans was spared the worst of the storm itself, Katrina breached dikes on Lake Pontchartrain, leaving 80 percent of the city underwater.

Katrina even ripped off part of the roof of the Louisiana Superdome, which was being used to shelter 10,000 people. Katrina's death toll is estimated at 1,833, with damages as high as \$200 billion.

The two photos from this storm show a satellite image as the storm made landfall (courtesy of NOAA) and the flooded city of New Orleans (courtesy of Reuters).

**HURRICANE IRENE**, in 2011, was the first landfalling hurricane in the United States since 2008, put New York City under a hurricane warning for the first time since 1985, was only the third hurricane to ever make landfall in New Jersey, and was the first to make two landfalls there. Irene was the first hurricane to cross New York City since 1893 and caused the closing of the city's subway system for the first time in its history.

Hurricane Irene had a first landfall in the Outer Banks of North Carolina on August 26, 2011, shutting down 225 roads and 21 bridges and destroying two piers there. Irene would be most noted for the flooding that it brought from New Jersey into New England, affecting 65 million people and killing 21. The photo I took of Irene shows trees



that the storm downed by my house in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, well inland of the storm's path.

**HURRICANE SANDY** moved offshore through the Atlantic Ocean, then made a dramatic left turn into the Jersey shore near Atlantic City with winds of 80 mph on October 12, 2012, as had been forecasted by computer models as much as a week earlier. A full Moon made high tides 20 percent higher than normal and amplified Sandy's storm surge. An estimated 60 million people were affected by the storm, with 33 killed in the United States.

At its peak over the Atlantic, Sandy had tropical storm winds extended some 1,000 miles from its center of circulation, and its entire diameter stretched some 2,000 miles. Minimum central pressure dropped

to 940 millibars, the lowest pressure ever recorded north of Cape Hatteras, North Carolina.

Sandy brought high winds, heavy rains, high waves, storm surges, tornadoes, and even blizzard conditions to portions of the area from New Jersey to New England, even causing waves in Lake Michigan to rise as high as 20.3 feet. The storm brought extensive rain and wind damage to coastal New Jersey, destroying piers and highways. Farther to the north, a record surge of nearly 14 feet occurred in New York Harbor, producing major flooding in northern New Jersey and lower Manhattan (photo courtesy of Wikipedia Commons). Sandy caused power failures in 17 states and left 8.2 million people without power.

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



# HUMOR ME

## GRINS AND GROANS FROM THE ALMANAC

### *A Mother's Letter to Her Son*



Dear Stanley,  
I write to let you know that I am still alive. I am writing as slowly as I can, as I know you don't read fast.

You won't know the house when you come home—we moved. We had trouble moving,

especially the bed—the man wouldn't let us take it in the taxi, and we were afraid that we might wake your father.

Your father has a nice new job, and very responsible. He has about 500 people under him—he

cuts the grass at the cemetery.

Our neighbors, the Browns, started keeping pigs. We got wind of it yesterday.

I got my appendix out and a dishwasher put in. There is a washing machine in the new house here, but it don't work too good. Last week, I put 14 shirts in it and pulled that chain. They whirled around real good, but then disappeared.

Your uncle Pat drowned last week in a whiskey vat at the distillery. Four of his workmates dived in to save him, but he fought them off bravely. We cremated the body the next day and just



got the fire out this morning.

I went to the doctor with your father last week. The doctor put a small glass tube with a red line in it in my mouth and told me not to open it for 10 minutes. Your father wanted to buy it from him.

It rained only twice last week—once for 3 days and once for 4 days. Monday was so windy that our chicken laid the same egg four times.

Your loving mother,  
Stella



### OF GOOD MEASURE

Having been subpoenaed to testify in an assault trial, a humorous fellow was examined by a

counsel notorious for browbeating witnesses.

“How far away were you?” the lawyer asked.

“Just 4 feet, 4 and one-half inches,” replied the fellow.

“How come you can be so very exact?”

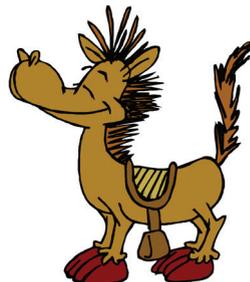
“Well, because I expected some fool or other would ask me, so I measured it.”

### OMYGOSH!

A Chicago woman attending the movies one day had a very bad headache and, groping in her purse, took, over a period of 2 hours, what she assumed to be five aspirin tablets—with no relief.

When she left the theater, she discovered to her horror that she had taken concentrated food tablets for plants. She read the directions in fear and trembling to see if she had been poisoned. All was

reassuring until she came to a footnote that read: “Each tablet is equivalent to 1 shovelful of manure.”

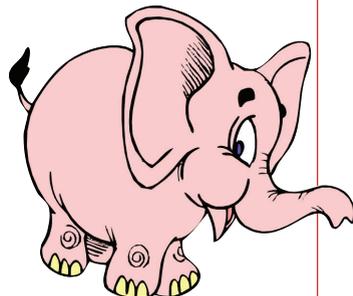


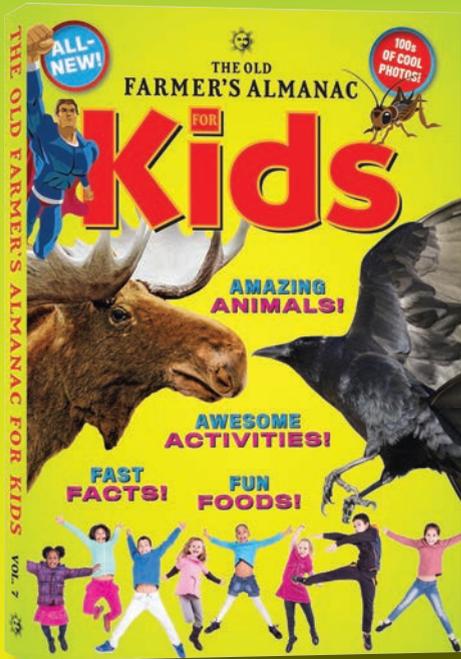
### Baby Talk

“Uncle John,” said little Emily, “did you hear that a baby that was fed on elephant’s milk gained 200 pounds in one week?”

“Nonsense! Impossible! Whose baby was it?”

“The elephant’s.”





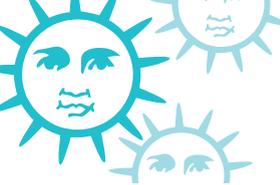
# THE OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC FOR KIDS

**Kids love it! Adults can't put it down!**

Inspired by the wit and wisdom of North America's favorite "Old" friend, the Almanac for Kids features a treasure trove of fun facts, creative activities, and great ideas that will keep kids of all ages loving learning the whole year through.

**LEARN MORE!**

\$9.95 | Printed in the USA



# WHAT'S NEXT



## GARDENING

The glory of geraniums



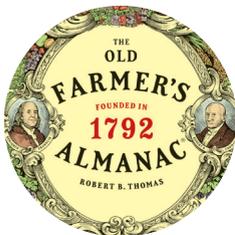
## CALENDAR

Full Corn Moon,  
birthstone sapphire,  
U.S. space/Moon program,  
1793 Almanac tidbits



## LIVING NATURALLY

How to save your harvest safely



## ANNIVERSARY

History of the Almanac's frontispiece



## FOOD

Great recipes for tomatoes



## 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 September *EXTRA!*

**CELEBRATING THE ALMANAC'S 225TH YEAR!**