

# EXTRA!

FROM THE OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC

**WHY NOT  
EAT WEEDS?**

**SECRETS OF  
SMALL-SPACE  
CROP ROTATION**

**SPRINGTIME  
RECIPES  
AT LAST!**

**GO FISH!**

**MARCH 2020**

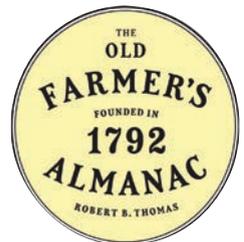


PHOTO: SHUTOVA ELENA/SHUTTERSTOCK

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# MARCH

*Holidays, Fun Facts, and More*

## HOLIDAY TRADITIONS AROUND THE WORLD

*Fasnacht* (Switzerland)

In Switzerland, the carnival season *Fasnacht* usually starts just before the Christian Lenten season begins on Ash Wednesday, but the largest of the Swiss carnivals, with about 20,000 costumed participants, takes place in Basel a week later.

On the Monday after Ash Wednesday (March 2 this year), at 4:00 A.M., the 72-hour event starts off with the *Morgestraich*, when all lights in the city's center are extinguished and a parade of *Clique* carnival bands enter, playing piccolos and drums and brightening the darkness with lanterns, both large



and small. (Some of these hand-decorated lanterns, depicting events of the past year, will later be put on display for celebrants to view up close.)

After the *Morgestraich*, some spectators grab a traditional bite of onion quiche or

flour soup at one of the many restaurants that will remain open for the entire 3 days and nights.

On Monday afternoon, a *Cortège* parade is the highlight, where thousands of *Clique* and *Gugge* music band members,

dressed in themed costumes and masks, march or ride on floats through the streets, throwing confetti, treats, and flowers to spectators while playing their music.

Tuesday is Children and Family *Fasnacht*,

where local youths and their families have their own parade; that evening, the *Gugge* brass bands take over, playing in central squares, alleys, restaurants, and other gathering places.

Wednesday features

another *Cortège* parade, and music and laughter continue to fill the air. The festival ends at 4:00 A.M. on Thursday. Locals call the Basel festival “*die drey scheenschte Dääg*,” or “the three most beautiful days.”



## EYE ON THE SKY

### MOON PHASES

**First Quarter:** Mar. 2, at 2:57 P.M. EST

**Full Worm Moon:** Mar. 9, at 1:48 P.M. EDT

**Last Quarter:** Mar. 16, at 5:34 A.M. EDT

**New Moon:** Mar. 24, at 5:28 A.M. EDT

### SPECIAL EVENT

The March equinox occurs on the 19th at 11:50 P.M. EDT. In the Northern Hemisphere, this is known as the vernal, or spring, equinox and marks the start of the spring season. In the Southern Hemisphere, autumn begins.



TAP FOR MORE ABOUT MOON PHASES



TAP FOR MORE ABOUT MARCH'S FULL MOON

## HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

**Mar. 2:** Clean Monday  
(Great Lent begins)

**Mar. 8:** Daylight Saving Time  
begins at 2:00 A.M.

**Mar. 8:** International  
Women's Day

**Mar. 17:** St. Patrick's Day

**Mar. 31:** César Chávez Day

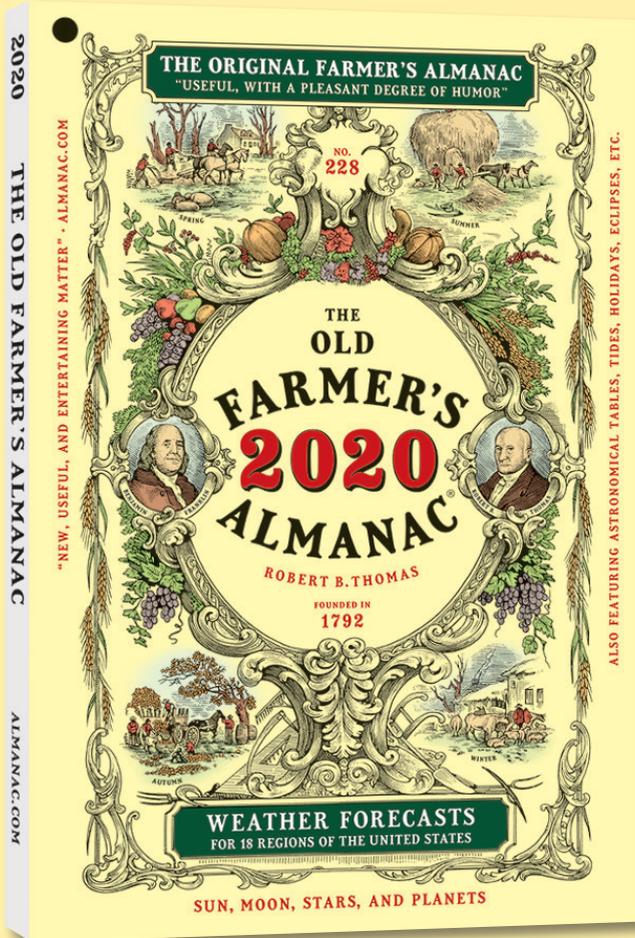


## JOKE OF THE MONTH

- Q:** Why should you never iron a four-leaf clover?
- A:** You don't want to press your luck.

# Order Now!

## THE 2020 OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC



[LEARN MORE](#)



## BEST DAYS TO DO THINGS

These March 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*

### IN THE GARDEN

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Destroy pests and weeds: 24, 25

Graft or pollinate: 4, 5, 31

Harvest aboveground crops: 26–28

Harvest belowground crops: 17, 18

Mow to slow growth: 12, 13

Mow to promote growth: 24, 25

Pick fruit: 8, 9

Plant aboveground crops: 4, 5, 31

Plant belowground crops: 12, 13, 21–23

Prune to discourage growth: 14, 15

Prune to encourage growth: 24, 25

### OUTDOORS

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Begin logging: 16–18

Go camping: 14, 15



Go fishing: 1–9, 24–31

Set posts or pour concrete: 16–18

### ON THE FARM

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Breed animals: 12, 13

Castrate animals: 19, 20

Cut hay: 24, 25

Purchase animals: 4, 5, 31

Set eggs: 10–12

Slaughter livestock: 12, 13

Wean animals: 7, 16

### PERSONAL

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Advertise to sell: 26–28

Ask for a loan: 13, 23

Begin diet to lose weight: 13, 23

Begin diet to gain weight: 1, 28

Buy a home: 1, 28

Color hair: 1, 26–28

Cut hair to discourage growth: 10, 11

Cut hair to encourage growth: 26–28

Get married: 10, 11

Have dental care: 8, 9

Move (house/household): 2, 3, 29, 30

Perm hair: 19, 20

Quit smoking: 7, 16

Straighten hair: 14, 15

Travel for pleasure: 6, 7

Wean children: 7, 16

### AROUND THE HOUSE

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Bake: 4, 5, 31

Brew: 12, 13

Can, pickle, or make sauerkraut: 12, 13

Demolish: 12, 13

Dry fruit/vegetables/meat: 14, 15

End projects: 23

Lay shingles: 6, 7

Make jams/jellies: 21–23

Paint: 10, 11

Start projects: 25

Wash floors: 21–23

Wash windows: 24, 25



## GARDENING BY THE MOON'S SIGN

Use the March 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 MARCH

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

+ TAP FOR  
MERCURY IN  
RETROGRADE  
DATES

▶ TAP FOR  
MARCH  
MOON PHASES

## MERCURY IN RETROGRADE

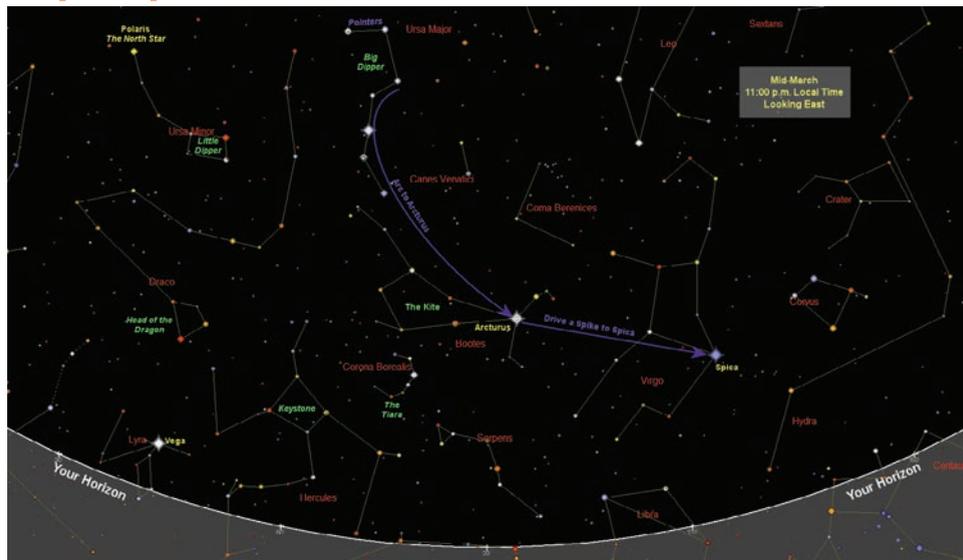
Sometimes the other planets appear to be traveling backward through the zodiac; this is an illusion. We call this illusion *retrograde motion*.

Mercury's retrograde periods can cause our plans to go awry. However, this is an excellent time to reflect on the past. Intuition is high during these periods, and coincidences can be extraordinary.

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

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

–*Celeste Longacre*



## POINTERS IN THE SKY

Getting your bearings under the night sky can be a challenge, even if you have a sky map or star chart to help you. Star gazers of every experience level—from newcomer to expert—typically begin an evening of observing by finding a single familiar star pattern (asterism) and using it to point the way. On March evenings, there is no better place to start than with the Big Dipper.

The Big Dipper asterism is composed of the seven brightest stars in the constellation Ursa Major, the Greater Bear. The shape of the Big Dipper never varies, but its orientation changes constantly. This month's Sky Map shows the Dipper as it appears during March in the late evening, when it seems to be standing upright, precariously balanced on its handle. Come back just a few hours later, and the Dipper will have moved so that it is upside-down as if pouring out its contents. Return at a different time of year, and the Big



TAP TO GET  
A PRINTABLE  
MARCH  
SKY MAP



TAP TO  
FOLLOW  
OHIOAN JEFF  
DETRAY'S SKY  
ADVENTURES



Dipper might be to the left of Polaris instead of on the right as it is in March. Learn to recognize the Big Dipper no matter what its orientation is.

The Dipper's stars always point the way to other celestial sights. The two stars that form the front end of the Dipper's bowl are known as the Pointers. They point directly toward Polaris, the North Star, in Ursa Minor, the Lesser Bear. Because Polaris points the way to true north, it has long been a vital guidepost for navigation on both land and sea. When you use the Pointers to find Polaris, you'll be doing the same thing as countless explorers and sailors have done in the past.

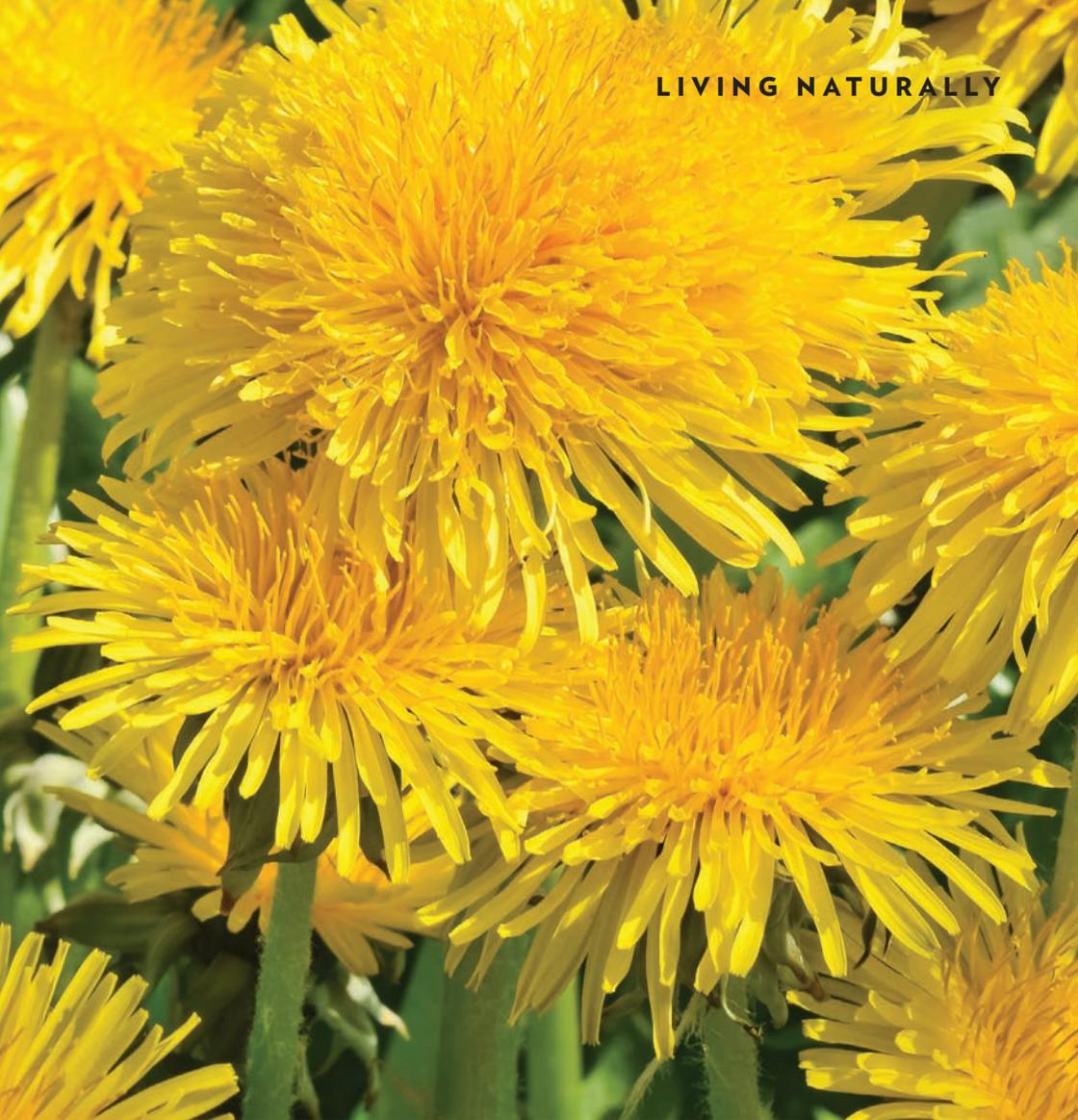
The stars of the Big Dipper's handle form a graceful curve or arc. If you extend this curve past the end of the handle and follow it two more "handle lengths," you'll end up at the bright star Arcturus in Boötes, the Herdsman. The main stars of Boötes form a somewhat lopsided kite shape.

Once you've reached Arcturus, straighten out the curve and make a beeline for Spica, the brightest star in Virgo, the Virgin. The journey from the Big Dipper to Spica has given rise to a popular astronomer's refrain: "Arc to Arcturus, then drive a spike to Spica." Once your gaze has wandered from the Big Dipper to Arcturus to Spica, perhaps you'll remember the refrain the next time you spot the Dipper.

**U**sing the Big Dipper to orient yourself helps to overcome a problem that's common to all star gazers: grasping the scale of the sky. Translating what's shown on a sky map to what you see in the sky can be difficult. Distances in the sky seem greater than what they appear to be on a map. Starting with a bright asterism such as the Big Dipper and then extending your view to encompass Arcturus and Spica can help you to relate your map to the sky that it represents.

Once you understand the scale of the sky, it becomes much easier to find other stars and constellations. On our March map, look for points of interest such as the sinuous body and distinctive head of Draco, the Dragon; the beautiful Tiara shape of Corona Borealis, the Northern Crown; and the Keystone asterism at the heart of Hercules, the Roman Hero.

*—Jeff DeTray*



LIVING NATURALLY

# Why Not Eat Weeds?

PHOTO: PIXABAY

**I**n late March one year, 3 weeks after I had had knee-replacement surgery, northern New England experienced a record-breaking heat wave.

Daytime temperatures soared into the 80s. The buds on the maple trees burst and the sugarers took down their sap lines. The lilacs and forsythia leafed out, and some forsythias bloomed.

The ice on our backyard pond melted, and we had visits from migrating waterfowl: Canada geese, mallards, and wood ducks. A blue heron flew in to fish in the shallows.

Gradually recovering my ability to walk—albeit it slowly and awkwardly and with trekking poles at first—I ventured into the fields and gardens, looking for signs of the first wild foods of spring that typically don't emerge

until mid-April.

Sure enough! Spritely dandelion rosettes poked through the thatch of dead grass in the backyard. The devilish (but delicious—cooked, of course) stinging nettles had emerged from the mulch in the raspberry patch. Wood sorrel appeared along the edges of one vegetable plot, and a few wild violet leaves announced themselves in the lawn beside the pond.

Bowls of wild salad and cooking greens (“weeds”) will span the weeks until the arrival of our cultivated lettuce, lamb’s-quarters, amaranth, purslane, and others—bowls not only of wild leafy greens, but also of roots, flowers, berries, and stems.

### **WHY BOTHER EATING WEEDS?**

We live in a nation of extraordinary food abundance. Foraging

for wild foods requires knowledge, skill, and a lot of work (and time). Plus, it takes most people a while to acquire a taste for the often-stronger flavors of wild foods and to learn to prepare them creatively.

Unlike our cultivated food crops, which we pamper with selective breeding, fertilizers, and chemicals that protect them from disease-causing microbes, wild plants have evolved sophisticated strategies for getting everything they need in an intensely competitive, often-hostile environment. They often contain higher nutrient levels than those found in cultivated food plants, especially trace minerals.

Wild plants also must manufacture all of the compounds that protect them from excess solar radiation and from attack by fungi, viruses, and bacteria, as well as

**Foraging for wild foods requires knowledge, skill, and a lot of work (and time).**



## You'll need to experiment to find tasty ways to serve them.

larger predators. The same compounds that plants manufacture for protection from environmental assaults may serve humans as antioxidants, anti-inflammatories, antibiotics, and pain relievers and in many other ways.

These health-promoting compounds, which generations of selective breeding have all but eliminated from our cultivated crops, are responsible for the stronger flavors of wild foods. You'll need to experiment to find tasty ways to serve them.

Finally, for me, anyway, foraging a little of my food from the

wild satisfies some deep, primal need, connecting me to the natural world around me and to my hunter-gatherer ancestors.

### **BEFORE YOU START FORAGING: IMPORTANT RULES OF THUMB**

- Never use any plant for food, beverage, or medicine unless you can identify it with certainty. How do you learn? Read books on wild-food foraging. Check to see if your local Cooperative Extension office, Master Gardener program, or community education center offers wild-food foraging workshops. Seek old-timers who know

their weeds and ask if you can accompany them on their foraging trips.

- Never forage weeds from lawns or agricultural fields that have been heavily fertilized or sprayed with pesticides. Know the history of the land on which you forage.

- Don't harvest wild greens and roots from lawns or other areas frequented by animals, whose droppings may contaminate your harvest. This is especially important if you plan to eat your wild foods raw.

—Margaret Boyles

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

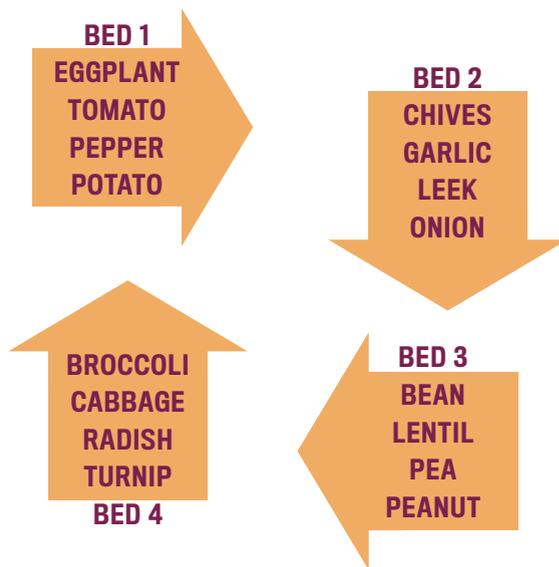


# Secrets of Small-Space Crop Rotation

If you're like many home gardeners, you try to practice crop rotation because you've probably heard that disease and insects are lurking in your soil, that different vegetables extract different nutrients from the soil, and that plant family members tend to have similar requirements. Still, the question of where to plant can be a puzzle.

That's why, for the average gardener, the easiest way to organize a crop rotation is to divide the garden into quarters. Establish a central point and rotate your plants around it each year. Assuming that you grow the same vegetables every season and that all members of a family fit into one quarter, this system is perfect. (One caveat: Try to arrange your plants within each quarter to avoid places where you had family members the year before.)

Here is a sample four-bed crop-rotation chart:



However, most of us have more of some plant families than others or we have other reasons for wanting to plant things in specific places. If this is true for your garden, consider these strategies:

- Have a tall-crop garden rotation and a short one. Plant tall varieties of peas and beans on trellises and try growing cukes on fences.
- A way to avoid depleting the soil of important nutrients is the time-honored tradition of letting the

land lie fallow. If you have the space (and energy!), develop a “spare” garden. Cover last year’s garden with a layer of compost and then mulch it heavily. For example, four sheets of newspaper covered with a layer of straw or leaves will keep most weeds from growing.

- To keep weeds from moving into last year’s garden, grow a cover crop such as buckwheat. Be sure to cut down the buckwheat or till it in before it forms seeds.

## GARDENING

Once you have established two garden spaces, the extra work is minimal, and it is easier to avoid having family members follow each other.

- If you've created a special area for a specific vegetable—for example, garlic—keep it there until you have a reason to relocate it. Just add compost every year as well as some bagged organic fertilizer to help replenish minerals.

- No one can convince me that rotating potatoes will eliminate the problem of the Colorado potato beetle. If you grow potatoes, these visitors will come, even if they have to walk from Denver. Predatory insects (e.g., ladybugs) are the gardener's friend and better in the long run for helping to control many insect pests than changing a crop's location. One avoidance tactic is to grow potato varieties that mature in fewer than 80 days.

- Keep plant appetites in mind: Corn is a heavy

<b>MEMBERS OF COMMON VEGETABLE FAMILIES</b>		
<i>Alliaceae</i>	Cauliflower	Spinach
Chive	Kale	Swiss chard
Garlic	Kohlrabi	<i>Solanaceae</i>
Leek	Radish	Eggplant
Onion	Rutabaga	Pepper
<i>Cucurbitaceae</i>	Turnip	Potato
Cucumber	<i>Fabaceae</i>	Tomato
Melon	( <i>Leguminosae</i> )	<i>Apiaceae</i>
Pumpkin	Beans	( <i>Umbelliferae</i> )
Squash	Peas	Carrot
<i>Cruciferae</i>	<i>Poaceae</i>	Celery
Broccoli	( <i>Gramineae</i> )	Dill
Brussels sprouts	Corn	Fennel
Cabbage	<i>Chenopodiaceae</i>	Parsley
	Beet	Parsnip

feeder and does best growing where nitrogen-fixing peas or beans have grown. Light feeders include carrots, lettuce, onion- and squash-family plants, and legumes such as peas and beans.

A combination of good soil and a healthy environment is the key to a good garden. If you nurture your soil and the microorganisms in it, your plants will be healthy and productive.

Adding lots of organic matter rather than applying chemical fertilizers will create a soil that's able to nourish your tomatoes, even if they grow in last year's pepper patch. Plants need 13 minerals from the soil, and a bag of 10-10-10 provides only three of them. Do your best, add lots of compost (we can not say this too often), and you will be rewarded.

—Henry Homeyer

FOOD



# Springtime Recipes at Last!

The first day of spring arrives on Thursday, the 19th of March! Celebrate with seasonal ingredients showing up in your local market or garden—such as asparagus, peas, and even dandelion blossoms. Make these recipes to greet spring in a delightful and delicious way.

PHOTO: SAM JONES/QUINN BREIN

FOOD

# Asparagus Tart

 TAP FOR  
RECIPE

## ASPARAGUS TART

2 tablespoons unsalted butter, divided

2 onions, thinly sliced

your favorite pie dough

1-1/2 bunches asparagus, sliced in half lengthwise if spears are thick

kosher or sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

4 to 5 ounces Parmigiano-Reggiano, feta, or ricotta salata (optional)

In a pan over medium heat, melt 1 tablespoon butter. Add onions and cook until translucent, stirring often, about 15 minutes. Do not brown. Remove from heat and cool to room temperature.

Preheat oven to 400°F. Roll out pie dough and line bottom and sides of a 9-inch tart pan (with removable bottom).

Layer onions over dough. On top of onions, place asparagus in two rows, tips pointing in, nestling as many as will fit neatly. Season with salt and pepper. Cut remaining 1 tablespoon butter into small pieces and scatter on top of asparagus. Bake for 30 minutes. Remove from pan and slide onto a small cutting board. If using, sprinkle Parmigiano-Reggiano over tart. Serve warm.

**Makes 6 to 8 servings.**



SHARE  
THIS  
RECIPE

FOOD

 TAP FOR RECIPE

# Gingered Beef, Snow Peas, and Carrots

PHOTO: ENNAR/SHUTTERSTOCK

## GINGERED BEEF, SNOW PEAS, AND CARROTS

3 cloves garlic, minced	1 teaspoon sesame oil
1/4 cup soy sauce	1 to 1-1/4 pounds flank steak
1/4 cup hoisin sauce	3 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided
3 tablespoons rice vinegar	2 cups snow peas
2 tablespoons brown sugar	1-1/2 cups matchstick-cut carrots
2 tablespoons minced fresh ginger	2 teaspoons cornstarch
1 tablespoon lime juice	

SHARE  
THIS  
RECIPE

In a bowl, combine first eight ingredients and blend well. Remove half of the marinade and reserve in a separate bowl.

Blot flank steak with paper towels, put on a baking sheet, and place in the freezer to chill for 30 to 45 minutes, or until hard but still sliceable. (Chilling allows for very thin slicing.)

Cut steak in half with the grain, then slice across the grain into 1/8-inch-thick pieces. Transfer each slice to the bowl of marinade (not the reserved marinade).

Toss meat and marinade to mix well. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 to 2 hours.

Heat 2 tablespoons of vegetable oil in a skillet or wok over high heat, add snow peas and carrots, and cook for 2 minutes, or until tender but still crunchy, stirring often. Transfer to a bowl.

Add remaining 1 tablespoon of oil to skillet, heat briefly, then add half of the meat and cook for 1 minute, without stirring, to sear. Cook for 2 minutes more, or until all signs of pink are gone, stirring often. Transfer meat to bowl with snow peas and carrots. Repeat, cooking remaining meat without any additional oil. Add the first batch of meat and vegetables to skillet.

In a bowl, combine cornstarch and reserved marinade and whisk to blend. Pour into skillet and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, or until hot and thick, stirring constantly.

**Makes 4 to 6 servings.**

FOOD

# Dandelion Pesto

 TAP FOR RECIPE

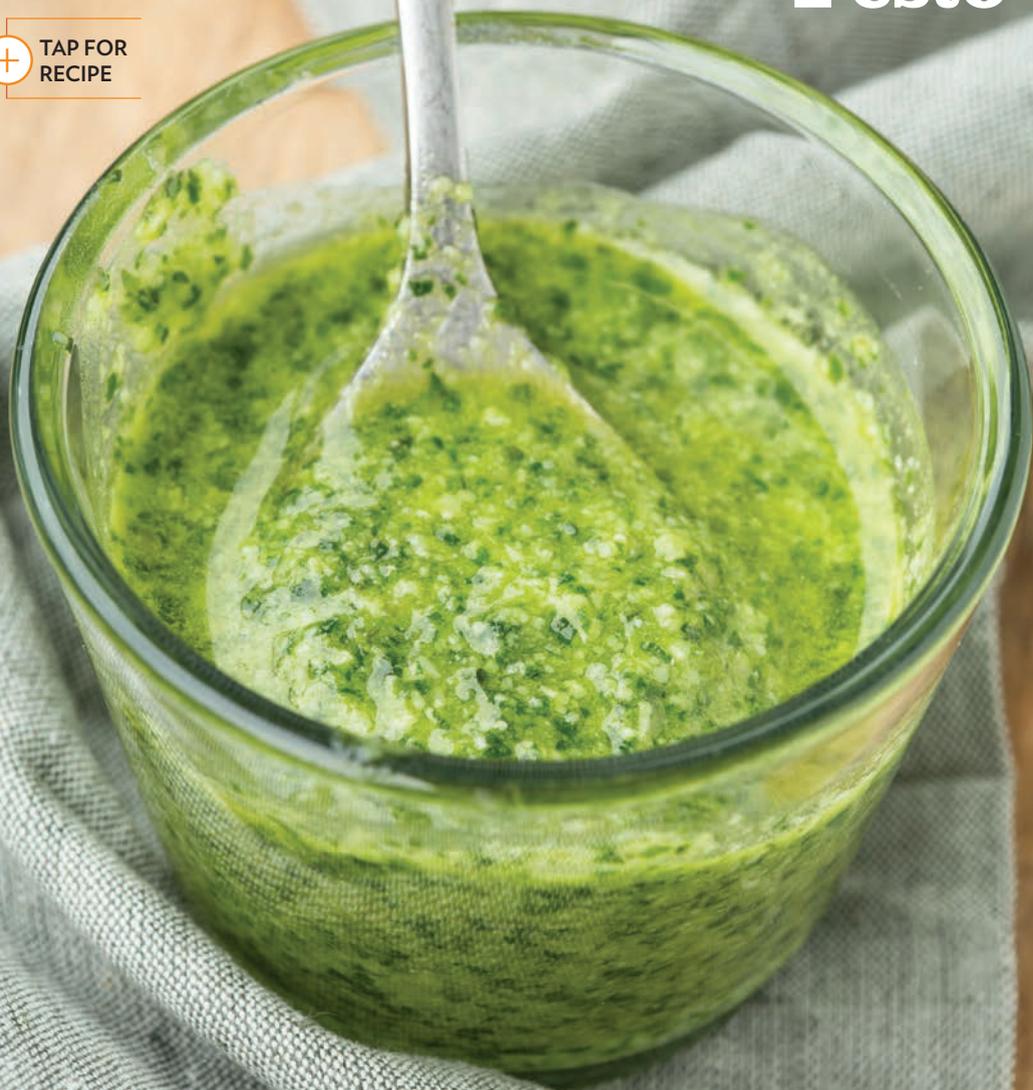


PHOTO: ANNA Q/SHUTTERSTOCK



SHARE  
THIS  
RECIPE

## DANDELION PESTO

**2 cups tightly packed dandelion leaves, well-rinsed and dried**

**1 cup lightly toasted hazelnuts (skins removed), or toasted almonds, pine nuts, or walnuts**

**1 dozen large basil leaves**

**2 cloves garlic**

**1/2 cup olive oil**

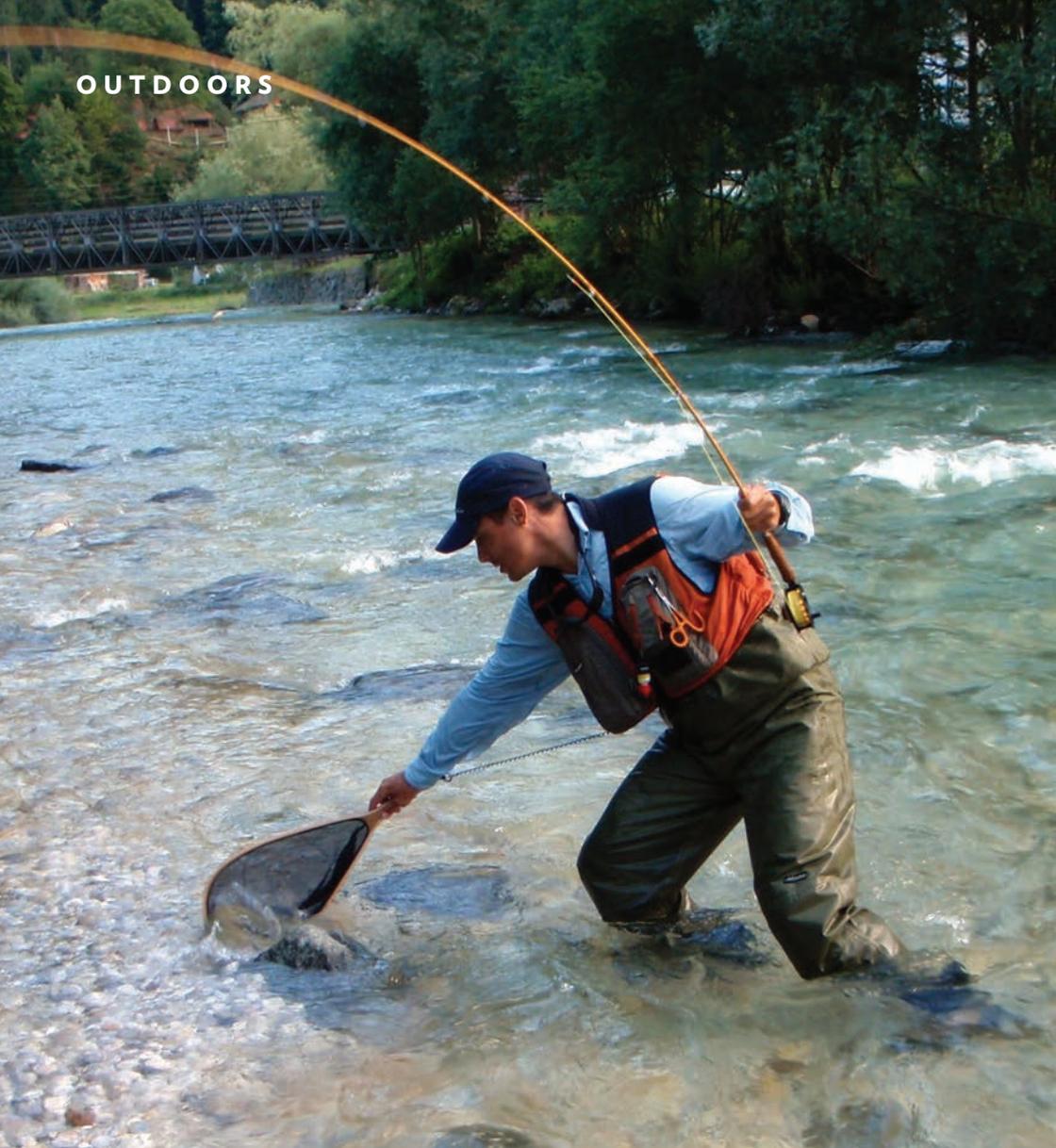
**1/2 cup grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese (optional)**

**kosher or sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste**

In the bowl of a food processor or blender, pulse together dandelion leaves, hazelnuts, basil, and garlic. Scrape down the sides of the bowl. With the motor running, add olive oil and process until a smooth paste forms. Pulse in cheese, if using. Season with salt and pepper.

**Makes 3-1/2 cups.**

OUTDOORS



# Go Fish!

*It's an activity that you could get hooked on!*

PHOTO: PIXABAY

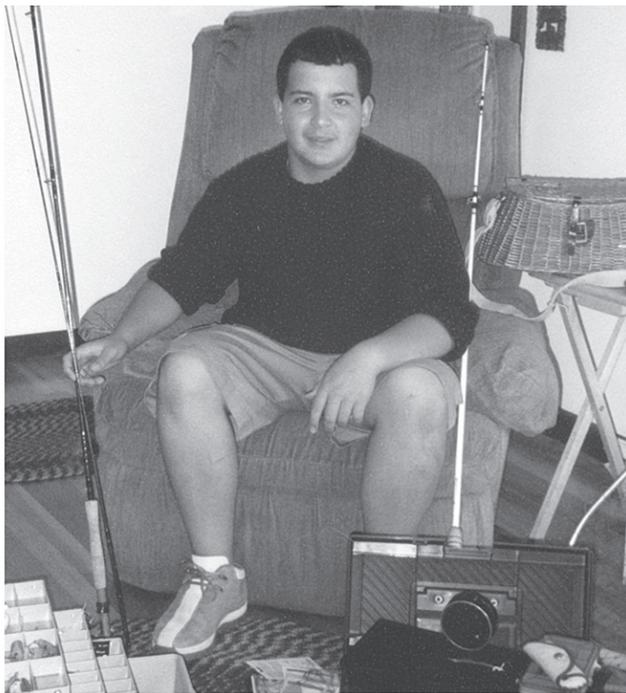
## OUTDOORS

**W**e heard about Bobby Malouin, a 15-year-old from Rhode Island, back in 2003, soon after he entered a competition sponsored by United Fly Tyers Inc. When we learned that he had won the contest's top prize, a \$1,000 scholarship for college, we featured him and his fishing tips in *The 2005 Old Farmer's Almanac*.

Last summer, we reached out to Bob to see if he was still casting about. "I'm still fly-fishing a lot and I'm actually going for stripers, bluefish, bonito, and false albacore tomorrow," he was happy to respond.

Here's how he got started and some of his (youthful) advice for aspiring anglers.

**B**obby was a spinning-rod angler at age 9. One day, after fishing for hours and catching only one fish, he noticed that



a man using a fly rod had caught three fish in no time.

Bobby decided to try a fly rod. The first time out, he caught only the attention of a couple of fellow fishermen. One man gave Bobby 20 flies and told him how and when to use them. Another fisherman gave him a fly vest and a reel, but on one condition—that he not give up the sport.

Not only did Bobby

not give up, but he dove right in, getting his own vise for fly-tying and spending much of his free time with his rod, fly-fishing in season at least three times a week. He spent hours mastering more than 200 recipes, or fly patterns. He watched fishing shows on television and attended fly-tying courses. He daydreamed about teaching the sport

## OUTDOORS

and the art of fly-tying. Here are some of his recommendations:

- Ask local fishermen about which flies are best to use. Or find out for yourself with a dip net, which is usually dragged across the lake-, river-, or streambed to catch nymphs, emerging insects, and other aquatic life. It works especially well after you've turned over stones, wood, and other matter on the bottom.
- When learning to tie, start with big and easy ones so that you become confident with the basic technique. Try Woolly Buggers, Woolly Worms, and Montanas.
- When fish aren't biting any of your flies, try the Pheasant Tail. Add a copper thorax to it so that it sinks faster, head down, into the water.
- Don't worry about losing your flies—you can just tie more.
- The color of a fly has a lot to do with catching fish. If the fly doesn't look like what the fish are feeding on, they won't go for it. Woolly Buggers work very well. Put flash—a shiny, sparkly material—on the sides.
- Time of year and weather conditions determine which flies work best. When the trout are hitting wet flies or nymphs, try heavily weighted flies colored olive and black.
- Practice your technique. Use a crude fly (to help straighten the line out) with the hook clipped off (to help avoid injuries).
- Mash down the barbs on your hooks. This makes a smaller hole in the fish's mouth, and you won't lose the fish as long as you keep pressure on the line when you're

bringing it in.

- Fish in places where fish hide or stay to save their energy: undercut banks, obstructions, on the side of the current, in front of and behind rocks. Never fish from upstream to downstream; stirred-up debris will scare the fish.
- Wear polarized sunglasses; they'll help you to see the fish.
- Have patience. You'll get better as you go.

**T**he first fish that Bobby Malouin caught using a self-tied homemade fly was a big rainbow trout on a Pheasant Tail. His first successful use of a store-bought fly was with a Muddler Minnow.

Good luck, and remember that you can't catch anything without a line in the water!

—*Almanac staff*

**The color of a fly has a lot to do with catching fish.  
Woolly Buggers work very well.**



DUST IN MARCH BRINGS GRASS AND FOLIAGE.

## HOW WE MAKE OUR PREDICTIONS

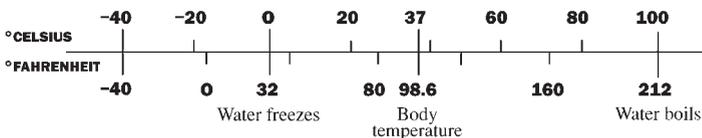
We derive our weather forecasts from a secret formula that was devised by the founder of this Almanac, Robert B. Thomas, in 1792. Thomas believed that weather on Earth was influenced by sunspots, which are magnetic storms on the surface of the Sun.

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



TAP TO FIND OUT THE WEATHER HISTORY OF THE DAY

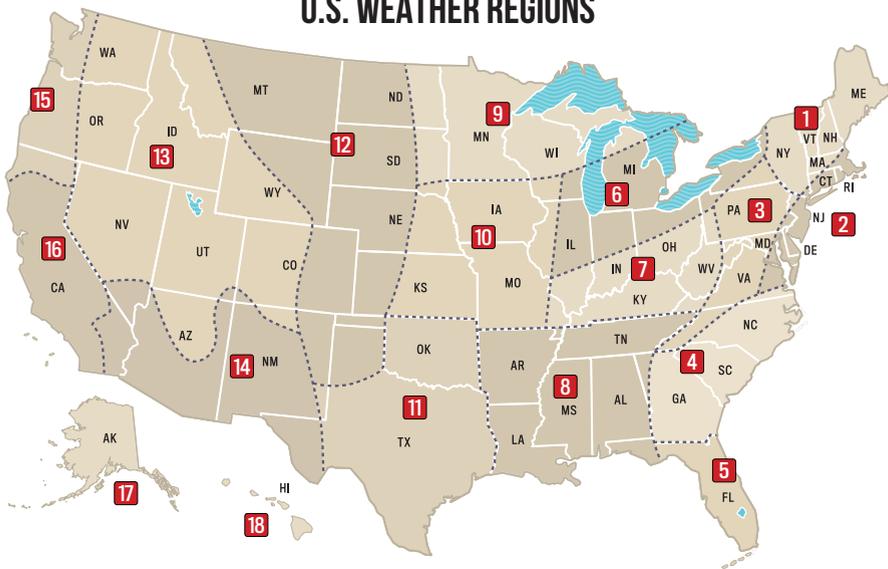


LOVE ALL THINGS WEATHER? TAP FOR THE WEATHER FOLKLORE OF THE DAY

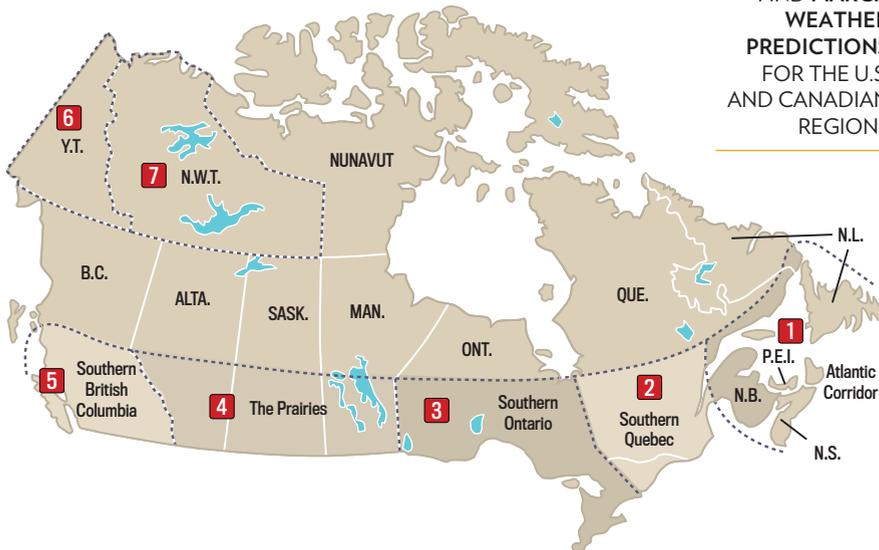


# WEATHER FORECASTS

## U.S. WEATHER REGIONS



## CANADIAN WEATHER REGIONS



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





## “MARCHING” INTO SPRING

**B**ecause March is designated as “Optimism Month,” I’d like to be able to tell you that all of my forecasts will turn out perfectly—but it is also “Ethics Month,” so I guess I can’t do that.

Still, while we can optimistically see good things coming up on St. Patrick’s Day and the first day of spring (vernal equinox), which March ushers in on the 17th and 19th (for most of North America), respectively, for me a real red-letter day arrives well beforehand on the 2nd—Dr. Seuss’s birthday—so please forgive me if I wax a little poetic:

*I do not like to see March snow,  
I do not like the wind to blow,  
I like it when the cold does go,  
I tell you this so you will know.*



*Sometimes the cold will leave you freezin',  
And sometimes it will leave you sneezin'.  
Sometimes the weather has no reason,  
Unless, of course, we change the season.*

*I hope I don't give you the blues,  
I think you will see all the clues,  
And know that this is not a ruse,  
But simply a tribute to Dr. Seuss.*

Now, back to business! Since we celebrate the most important holiday of all on March 23—World Meteorological Day, of course!—let me now turn to the weather forecasts for this month and spring in general.

Although March will be cooler than normal across most of the United States and Canada, it will still be warmer than February, and the rising temperatures are a sure sign that we are moving toward summer.

Before we get there, winter still has some punch left, with mid-March snowstorms forecast for the Northeast, upper Midwest, High Plains, and Alaska, making St. Patrick's Day more white than green. In late March, watch for snowstorms in Quebec and in the Lower Lakes, Heartland, and Intermountain regions of the States.

Looking ahead to spring, we can expect above-normal temperatures in the eastern two-thirds of the contiguous United States, near-normal ones in the Pacific Northwest, and conditions cooler than normal elsewhere from the High Plains westward. Alaska will have above-normal temperatures, with below-normal readings in Hawaii.

Precipitation will be below normal in the Northeast, the mid-Atlantic region, southern Florida, the eastern Great Lakes, the Heartland, the Pacific Northwest, and Hawaii, and near or above normal elsewhere. Expect lingering cold from Atlantic Canada westward into Quebec and also in the Prairies, with a quick transition to spring elsewhere across Canada.

Unfortunately, we're anticipating near- to above-normal severe weather activity early in the severe weather season, with the greatest activity in the Southeast and Ohio Valley in March and from Colorado to North Dakota in April. Stay safe out there!

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



# HUMOR ME

GRINS AND GROANS FROM THE ALMANAC



## MEDICINE TIME

Chatting in leisurely fashion with Prince Bismarck in Berlin, Lord Russell asked the chancellor how he managed to rid himself of importunate visitors whom he could not

refuse to see but who stuck like burrs when once admitted.

“Oh,” replied Bismarck, “I have my easy escape. My wife can spot people like this very well, and when she is sure that

there is a bore here and sees them staying too long, she manages to call me away on some plausible pretext.”

Scarcely had he finished speaking when the Princess Bismarck appeared at the door.



“My dear,” she said to her husband, “you must come at once and take your medicine—you should have taken it an hour ago.”

## MISS-KISSED

*It was a pitiful mistake, an error sad and grim.*

*I waited for a railway train; the light was low and dim.*

*It came at last, and from a car there stepped a dainty dame,*

*And looking up and down the place, she straight unto me came.*

*“Oh, Jack!” she cried. “Oh, dear old Jack!”—and kissed me as she spake.*

*Then looked again and, frightened, cried, “Oh, what a bad mistake!”*

*I said, “Forgive me, maiden fair, for I am not your Jack,*

*And as regards the kiss you gave, I’ll straightaway give it back.”*

*Since that night, I’ve often stood upon that platform dim,*

*But only once in a man’s whole life do such things come to him.*

## CAR TALK

Government functionary Wilbur J. Carr had occasion to call at the house of a neighbor late at night. He rang the doorbell. After a long wait, a head was poked out of a second-floor window.

“Who’s there?” asked a voice.

“Mr. Carr,” was the reply.

“Well,” said the voice, as the window banged shut, “what do I care if you missed a car? Why don’t you walk and not wake up people to tell them about it?”

## FIT TO BE TRIED

A judge had just finished dinner at the home of some newlyweds, where the bride was still in the process of learning how to cook.

“Were you able to try any of my biscuits?” she asked.

“I did not,” the jurist replied, “but based on my tasting of your other unique cuisine, I daresay they probably deserve to be tried.”

## CHOICE ANSWER

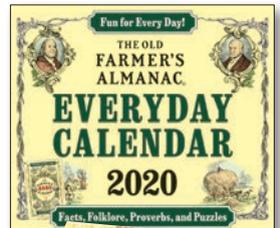
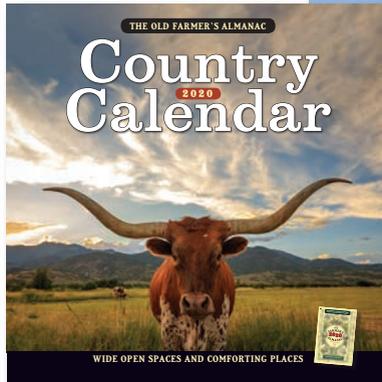
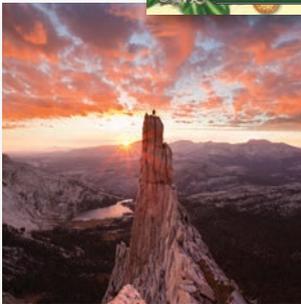
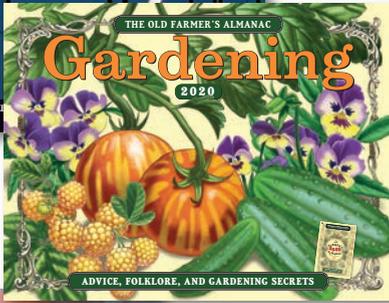
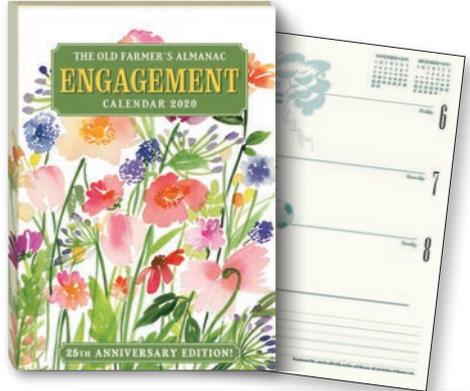
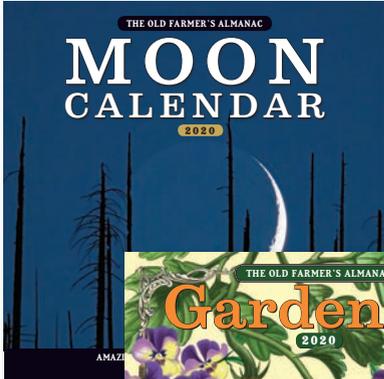
As the railroad train was stopping, an old lady not accustomed to traveling hailed the conductor and asked, “Conductor, what door shall I go out by?”

“Either door, ma’am,” came the gracious reply. “The car stops at both ends.”

# 2020 Old Farmer's Almanac Calendars

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# WHAT'S NEXT



## LIVING NATURALLY

Rethink Your Drink



## CALENDAR

Moon phases, April holidays, all about Bermuda's Good Friday kite tradition, Joke of the Month



## ASTRONOMY

Explore with our Sky Map



## GARDENING

Horseradish, the root with a wallop



## AMUSEMENT

24 and counting—it's census time again!



## FOOD

Rhubarb recipes to relish

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