

EXTRA!

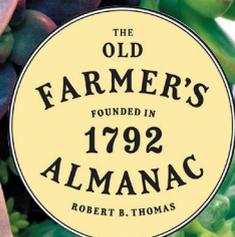
FROM THE OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC

SURRENDER TO
SUCCULENTS

PICNIC-PERFECT
PASTA SALADS

MEET MOTHER JONES

STINGING NETTLES:
MULTIPURPOSE
SUPERPLANT



MAY 2020

PHOTO: HUDIEMM/GETTY IMAGES



THE OLD
FARMER'S ALMANAC

FOUNDED IN 1792

For 228 years, people have turned to *The Old Farmer's Almanac* for advice and wisdom in times of uncertainty. This remains true now more than ever before.

As happens every spring, our staff is hard at work on the upcoming 2021 edition of *The Old Farmer's Almanac*. While this hasn't changed, a lot has. We have temporarily closed our offices in Dublin, New Hampshire, and are now working from our homes—just like millions of you across the continent. Routines and priorities have shifted.

We're all weathering this storm the best we can. This is as true for us as it is for you. Things are shifting quickly, and we're all adapting. What is unwavering is our dedication to being “useful, with a pleasant degree of humor” today, tomorrow, and well into the future. As you can imagine, we've been through a lot in 228 years and still managed to come out on the other side. We will this time, too, and so will you.

While we encourage you to stay on top of current events, it's just as important to take a break. Begin a new hobby. Improve your skills in an old one. Learn something new. Get outside. Find a reason to laugh. It is our goal during these challenging times to help you with all of this while also providing time-tested and true advice to manage your home, health, and happiness.

On our Web site, Almanac.com, we're working to curate content that's useful and



timely, including [tips for spring-cleaning and sanitizing](#), [how to socially distance](#), and [spring allergy relief](#). We will also continue to provide the best advice on [gardening](#), [astronomy](#), [food & cooking](#), [home & health](#), [seasonal events](#), and, of course, the [weather](#). Plus, with our library of [Growing Guides](#), you can learn how to grow your favorite vegetables, herbs, and flowers right at home.

For kids at home, we've launched our [Old Farmer's Almanac for Kids Web site](#) with free stories and fun projects like Plant a Grocery Garden, The Reasons for the Seasons, Make Every Day Special, and Springtime Fun Around the World. Straight from the pages of the Almanac for Kids, these articles and activities—and many more like them!—keep spirits high and young minds engaged, entertained, and learning.

If you're not doing so already, consider following us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Pinterest](#) and/or signing up for our free [newsletters](#). These daily doses of the Almanac can continue to provide a respite from the events of the day by looking to the sky and exploring the world with a turn toward the fundamentals of gardening, food, natural remedies, and do-it-yourself projects.

Things may feel a little unsteady right now, but the simple pleasures in life remain: gardening, making a meal, staring up at the stars, enjoying the outdoors, working with our hands, and treasuring our loved ones. (Speaking of hands: [Be sure to wash yours!](#)) We believe that *The Old Farmer's Almanac* can help you to find joy and peace in many different ways.

Take care of yourself, and remember—as has been true since 1792—we're always here for you!

Your Friends in *The Old Farmer's Almanac* Family

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See what we have in store for our June issue!



FOLLOW US:



MAY

Holidays, Fun Facts, and More

HOLIDAY TRADITIONS AROUND THE WORLD

Children's Day (South Korea)



On May 5 each year in South Korea, children are the focus. Children's Day concentrates on the needs and happiness of kids while also honoring adults who have contributed toward their welfare. On this day, youngsters traditionally receive gifts from their parents and look forward to

a family outing at a museum, amusement park, or zoo or to having fun in other ways, such as going on a family picnic or watching a movie together.

Senior Citizens' Day (Palau)

In Palau, Senior Citizens' Day celebrates the contributions

of the country's seniors, who are considered to be those people age 55 and older. The chosen date for this observance is May 5 (fifth day of the fifth month, for "55"). On this public holiday, festivities may include parades, workshops, and activities where both young and "old" take part.



EYE ON THE SKY

MOON PHASES

Full Flower Moon: May 7, at 6:45 A.M. EDT

Last Quarter: May 14, at 10:03 A.M. EDT

New Moon: May 22, at 1:39 P.M. EDT

First Quarter: May 29, at 11:30 P.M. EDT

 TAP FOR MORE ABOUT MOON PHASES

 TAP FOR MORE ABOUT MAY'S FULL MOON

HOLIDAY HAPPENINGS

May 5: Cinco de Mayo

May 10: Mother's Day

May 16: Armed Forces Day

May 18: Victoria Day (Canada)

May 22: National Maritime Day

May 25: Memorial Day,
observed



JOKE OF THE MONTH

Q: If April showers
bring May flowers, what do
May flowers bring?

A: June bugs

Just Released!



Grow your best garden ever
with tried-and-true advice from
The Old Farmer's Almanac!

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BEST DAYS TO DO THINGS

These May dates, deemed to be propitious in astrology, are based on the astrological passage of the Moon. However, consider all indicators before making any major decisions. —Celeste Longacre

PERSONAL

Advertise to sell: 6, 28

Ask for a loan: 16, 21

Begin diet to lose weight: 16, 21

Begin diet to gain weight: 3, 31

Buy a home: 3, 31

Color hair: 20, 21

Cut hair to discourage growth: 20, 21

Cut hair to encourage growth: 4, 5

Get married: 4, 5, 31

Have dental care: 2, 3, 29, 30

Move (house/household): 22–24

Perm hair: 12–14



Quit smoking: 1, 10
Straighten hair: 8, 9
Travel for pleasure: 1, 27, 28
Wean children: 1, 10

AROUND THE HOUSE

Bake: 25, 26
Brew: 6, 7
Can, pickle, or make sauerkraut:
15, 16
Demolish: 6, 7
Dry fruit/vegetables/meat: 8, 9
End projects: 21
Lay shingles: 1, 27, 28
Make jams/jellies: 15, 16
Paint: 4, 5, 31
Start projects: 23
Wash floors: 15, 16
Wash windows: 17–19

OUTDOORS

Begin logging: 10, 11
Go camping: 8, 9
Go fishing: 1–7, 22–31
Set posts or pour concrete: 10, 11

IN THE GARDEN

Destroy pests and weeds: 17–19
Graft or pollinate: 25, 26
Harvest aboveground crops: 2, 3,
29, 30
Harvest belowground crops: 20, 21
Mow to slow growth: 18, 19
Mow to promote growth: 6, 28
Pick fruit: 2, 3, 29, 30
Plant aboveground crops: 25, 26
Plant belowground crops: 15, 16
Prune to discourage growth: 8, 9
Prune to encourage growth: 1,
27, 28

ON THE FARM

Breed animals: 6, 7
Castrate animals: 12–14
Cut hay: 17–19
Purchase animals: 25, 26
Set eggs: 4, 5, 12–14, 31
Slaughter livestock: 6, 7
Wean animals: 1, 10



GARDENING BY THE MOON'S SIGN

Use the May 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 MAY

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

+ TAP FOR
MERCURY IN
RETROGRADE
DATES

▶ TAP FOR
MAY MOON
PHASES

MERCURY IN RETROGRADE

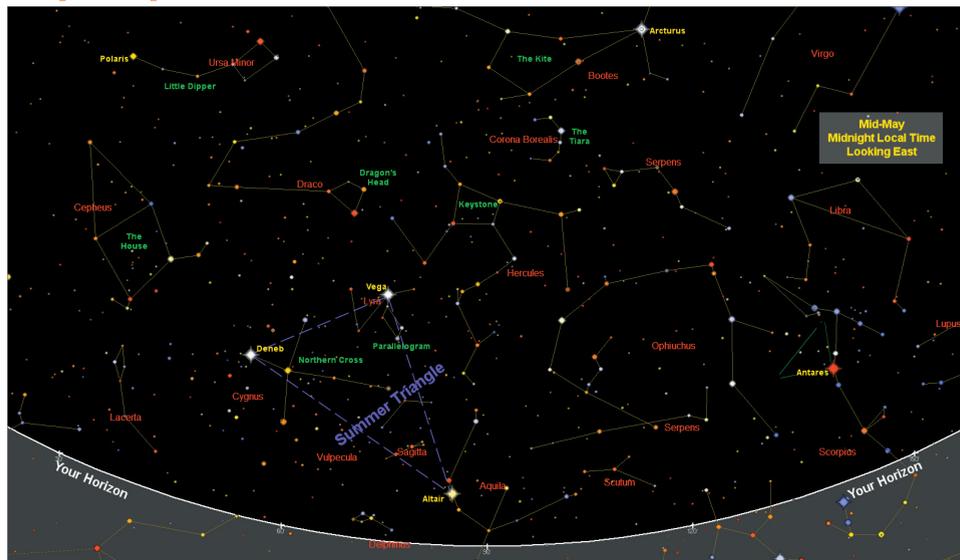
Sometimes the other planets appear to be traveling backward through the zodiac; this is an illusion. We call this illusion *retrograde motion*.

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 remaining 2020 retrograde periods: **June 18–July 12** and **October 14–November 3**.

–*Celeste Longacre*



Mid-May
Midnight Local Time
Looking East

ALL ABOUT ASTERISMS

An asterism is an easily recognized star pattern that lies within a constellation. Unlike constellations, asterisms are entirely “unofficial.” There is no international organization or governing body that assigns names to asterisms. Their names have come into popular usage because they are a convenience—an easy way to navigate the sky. If you wish, feel free to identify and name your own asterisms. Who knows? Your names might catch on!

For a fine example of an asterism, look near the center of this month’s star map for the Keystone, a compact pattern of four stars that lies within the constellation Hercules, the Hero. Hercules is a sprawling constellation, the fifth largest in the sky, but the distinctive shape of the Keystone really stands out.

Above and to the right of the Keystone is the constellation Corona Borealis, the Northern Crown. To me, this semicircle

▶ TAP TO GET
A PRINTABLE
MAY SKY MAP

▶ TAP TO
FOLLOW
OHIOAN JEFF
DETRAY’S SKY
ADVENTURES



of stars looks far more like a tiara than a crown, so The Tiara it is, at least for me.

Higher in the sky lies Boötes, the Herdsman, whose main stars form an asterism known as The Kite. It's a sloppy-looking kite, to be sure, but the shape is certainly suggestive of one—enough so that it can help you to get your bearings and find Boötes. The bright star Arcturus anchors the tail of The Kite.

Off to the left, look for the Little Dipper asterism, part of the constellation Ursa Minor, the Lesser Bear. At the end of the dipper's handle is Polaris, the North Star. From brightly lit suburbs, you'll see only Polaris and the brighter stars of the dipper's bowl. Leave town to see the whole dipper.

Between the Little Dipper and The Kite slithers the body of Draco, the Dragon, which culminates in the Dragon's Head, a four-sided asterism that shows up well when viewed from a dark location.

Below the Dragon's Head, look for two very bright stars that point the way to a great pair of asterisms, one small and the other quite large.

The star Vega in the small constellation Lyra, the Lyre, achieved notoriety as home to the fictional aliens who sent a message to Earth in the 1997 Jodie Foster film *Contact*. Beneath Vega is a small but beautifully symmetrical asterism, the Parallelogram. Its exquisite and geometrically perfect shape is a wonder.

To the lower left is the bright star Deneb, marking the tip of the Northern Cross, which lies on its side at this time of year. Deneb and the Northern Cross are part of the large constellation Cygnus, the Swan. The name "Deneb" is derived from the Arabic word for "tail," and indeed Deneb sits at the tail of the Swan.

The left side of our sky map features The House, an asterism within the constellation Cepheus, the King. Yes, it's a lopsided house, but no more lopsided than the ones we all drew as children.

We've already mentioned that Vega and Deneb can help you to find two lovely asterisms. These two stars, plus brilliant Altair, comprise the three corners of the large asterism known as the Summer Triangle, marked in purple on our Sky Map. The Summer Triangle will be prominent in the sky from now well into autumn.

—Jeff DeTray



Surrender to Succulents

... for high drama and low maintenance outdoors

From stately blue agaves to vivid orange ‘Sticks on Fire’ (*Euphorbia tirucalli*) or cold-hardy magenta blankets of ice plant (*Delosperma cooperi*), succulents thrive in every North American temperature zone. They have become *the* decorator plant used to punch up borders, cover problem spots, and add drama to outdoor entertaining areas. Architectural in stature, succulents deliver drama and definition to every bed, border, or container garden.

Succulents’ moisture storage capacity makes them perfect for Xeriscapes (water-conserving plots) and drought-proof, low-maintenance gardens. Their wide variety of shapes, colors, and textures also makes them valuable landscaping plants.

IDEAS FOR IMPACT

Succulents come in all colors, from yellow-leaf *Crassula ovata*

‘Hummel’s Sunset’ to magenta-black *Aeonium* ‘Zwartkop’. Debra Lee Baldwin, author of *Designing With Succulents* (Timber Press, 2007), says that some of her color favorites are red and teal *Kalanchoe luciae* and rose, blue, and yellow *C. perforata*, which “looks like dime-size stacked boxes.”

No matter what color combinations you use, Baldwin advises repetition: “As tempting as it is to have one of everything, repetition creates a better-looking, more cohesive landscape.” Use equal amounts of two or three colors when combining them for balance.

For maximum impact, try complementary color combinations or those across from each other on the color wheel, such as red and lime green or purple and orange.

Consider scale when planting succulents in borders, on slopes, and in rock gardens. Their height should relate to

the near structures and to one another. Use small succulents in tiny and enclosed areas.

Reserve larger specimens—yucca, agave, and aloes—for the backs of beds or borders or along tall fences. Ground covers show their beauty best where they can be seen easily on slopes, among rocks, and between stepping-stones.

Repeat shapes, too. You don’t have to use the same plant over and over. Instead, group those with similar silhouettes. Yuccas and agaves have the same spiky shape, for instance. So do rosette-forming succulents such as *Echeveria*, *Sempervivum*, and *Graptoveria*.

GROUND RULES

- If you live in USDA Zone 8 or above, you can grow all succulents outdoors.
- Plant succulents in full sun. Most require at least 6 hours of direct sunlight daily. In hot climates,



partial afternoon shade is ideal for retaining color and vigor.

- Provide well-draining soil. Incorporate sand, gravel, and organic matter if your soil is heavy.

- Forget the fertilizer.

Succulents thrive in low-fertility ground.

- Keep away from

chemicals: lawn fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides.

- Protect from snails and slugs. If you spot damage, use slug control products such as iron phosphate granules or try barriers such as crushed eggshells, diatomaceous earth, or copper tape (this shocks the pests). Or, try traps such as shallow bowls of

beer or overturned pots: Slugs imbibe the beer, fall into it, and drown or crawl underneath overturned pots and can't escape. Either way, though, you have to dispose of them.

CHOICES FOR CHILLY PLACES

Most succulents thrive in narrow temperature ranges occurring between 40° and 90°F, but there are plenty that tolerate freezes and temperatures down into the high 20s—and below. Some thrive in frigid climates where winters dip into the –20s. Normally, freezing temperatures cause plant cells to burst as the water

within them expands.

Those that are frost tolerant have salts in their cells that lower the freezing point at which damage or death occurs.

The most cold-hardy succulents lose all of their aboveground vegetation and regenerate from roots the following season.

In areas where winter temperatures dip to below 40°F, bring succulents indoors for the winter. Pot plants in a soil-free mixture and keep them in an area that receives at least 4 hours of direct sunlight daily. Water and feed them sparingly and maintain good air circulation.

—Doreen G. Howard



Picnic-Perfect Pasta Salads

With the arrival of Memorial Day (May 25 this year) comes the return of outdoor festivities. Pasta salad is popular at any star-spangled meal, but we know that the standard mayo and macaroni combo can get boring after a while. That's why we've gathered these unique pasta salad recipes for you to share and enjoy.

FOOD

Italian-Style Pasta Salad



TAP FOR
RECIPE

ITALIAN-STYLE PASTA SALAD

- 4 ounces vermicelli or spaghetti
- 1 jar (6 ounces) marinated artichoke hearts
- 1 very small zucchini, halved and thinly sliced
- 1 carrot, shredded
- 1/4 pound chopped cooked ham
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 2 tablespoons grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 tablespoons vegetable or canola oil
- 2 tablespoons white wine vinegar
- 3/4 teaspoon ground mustard
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 garlic clove, minced

SHARE
THIS
RECIPE

Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain and rinse in cold water.

Drain artichokes, reserving the marinade. Coarsely chop artichokes.

In a bowl, combine pasta, vegetables, ham, and cheeses.

In a small bowl or jar, thoroughly combine reserved marinade with oil, vinegar, mustard, and herbs.

Pour dressing over pasta and toss to mix. Refrigerate for several hours or overnight before serving.

Makes 4 to 6 servings.

Bacon Horseradish Pasta Salad



TAP FOR
RECIPE

BACON HORSE RADISH PASTA SALAD

- 1/2 pound penne pasta
- 6 slices bacon, diced and cooked crisp
- 1 cup chopped broccoli, steamed
- 3/4 cup halved cherry tomatoes
- 1/2 cup sliced kalamata olives
- 1/4 cup chopped red onion
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1/3 cup sour cream
- 1-1/2 teaspoons horseradish sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon brown mustard
- salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain and rinse in cold water.

In a bowl, combine pasta, bacon, broccoli, tomatoes, olives, and onions.

In a separate bowl, thoroughly combine mayonnaise, sour cream, horseradish sauce, mustard, and salt and pepper.

Pour dressing over pasta and toss to mix. Refrigerate salad for at least 1 hour before serving.

Makes 6 servings.

SHARE
THIS
RECIPE

FOOD

 TAP FOR
RECIPE

Pasta Salad With Spinach and Artichokes

PHOTO: SAM JONES/QUINN BREIN

PASTA SALAD WITH SPINACH AND ARTICHOKES

- 8 ounces corkscrew pasta
- 1 can (8-1/2 ounces) artichoke hearts, drained and sliced
- 1-1/2 cups fresh spinach
- 3/4 cup pitted black olives
- 1/2 cup chopped pimiento
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 1 ounce provolone cheese, diced
- 1 ounce cheddar cheese, diced
- 1/3 cup white wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup olive or avocado oil
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 3/4 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/2 teaspoon dried dill
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain and rinse in cold water.

In a bowl, combine pasta, artichokes, spinach, olives, pimientos, onions, and cheeses.

In a small bowl or jar, thoroughly combine vinegar, oil, honey, basil, dill, garlic powder, pepper, and salt.

Pour dressing over pasta and toss to mix. Refrigerate for several hours or overnight before serving.

Makes 8 to 10 servings.

 SHARE
THIS
RECIPE

ANNIVERSARY



Meet Mother Jones

When Mary Harris was born on May 1, 1830, in a one-room thatched cottage in County Cork, Ireland, the impoverished “cotters” (cottage tenants) were being evicted by the wealthy absentee landowners, who had decided that it was more profitable to raise sheep and cows than to collect rents from cantankerous peasants. Blood flowed over the rolling green hills of County Cork. Hundreds of cotters were hanged, including Mary’s grandfather. Her father, Richard, escaped the noose by fleeing to North America in a fishing boat, vowing to send for his family as soon as he had earned the money. Although it took 11 years, he was true to his word.

By then, Richard had found work on a Toronto railroad, and there the family found a sliver

of paradise. Best of all, Toronto had a free public school system, including a “normal school” for training teachers. But when she applied for a teaching certificate, she was turned down. Roman Catholics were not allowed to teach in public schools.

Hand-to-mouth years followed. Learning that the Memphis, Tennessee, school system was in need of teachers, Mary took the first train south. She arrived in July 1860, was hired in August, fell in love in September, married in October, and was fired in November.

But she was happy in her marriage to an iron molder named George Jones, who, on his Sundays off, was an organizer for the outlawed Knights of Labor. After the birth of their fourth child, Mary began to accompany him on his secret organizing trips, with the four tots

tagging along.

It was all too good to last, and it did not. In the summer of 1867, a yellow fever epidemic swept Memphis. In one terrible week, Mary lost her husband and four children. “I sat alone through nights of grief,” she wrote in her autobiography. “No one came. No one could. Other homes were stricken, just as mine.”

Mary Jones emerged from the experience forever scornful of death and burning with a fierce determination to spend the remainder of her life working for the exploited class. This was a formidable challenge. Labor had no rights, and owners dictated the wages, hours of work, and working conditions. Child labor was a mainstay of industry. Little girls, some as young as 7, made up a large percentage of the textile workforce. In the

Labor had no rights, and owners dictated the wages, hours of work, and working conditions.

ANNIVERSARY

anthracite coalfields of eastern Pennsylvania, breaker boys (“sad, gray, old men,” Mother Jones wrote) spent their childhood hunched over coal chutes, picking slate from the cascading coal.

Thus now-childless Mary Harris Jones began a 60-year career as mother to labor. She became an organizer for the Knights of Labor and then for the United Mine Workers of America. She organized miners’ unions in many states, but her longest struggles took place in West Virginia, where conditions were most deplorable. She participated in the great strikes of the 19th and early 20th centuries, and there were many. She led the strikes against the railroad barons, the meatpackers, the steel magnates, the textile oligarchs, and—most of all—the barons of coal.

Notably, in 1903, Mother Jones led a small army of children, many mutilated from mill accidents, to New York City. Her plan was to bring the parade to the summer home of President Theodore Roosevelt on Oyster Bay, Long Island. The president refused to receive them, but her well-publicized march helped to develop popular support for national child labor laws.

Industry attacked her with every weapon it possessed. She was denounced as “a vulgar, heartless creature who inflames the ignorant workers to bite the hand that feeds them.” She was spat at, kicked, and clubbed. She was 86 when she was jailed for the last time—yet she did not quit her efforts until late in her 90s.

As the years rolled on,

many thought that she would not make it to her 100th birthday in 1930, but when the great day dawned, she was having the time of her life. On May 1—coincidentally International Workers’ Day, the holiday that honors workers everywhere—she basked happily amid people, gifts, flowers, and telegrams. They honored the woman whom a governor of Arizona had praised as “unquestionably the greatest woman America has ever produced.”

Mother Jones died 6 months later and was buried in a union-owned cemetery in an Illinois coal-mining town. She had fought countless battles and lost most, but still left a legacy that became the foundation of the American labor movement.

—Almanac editors

They honored the woman whom a governor of Arizona had praised as “unquestionably the greatest woman America has ever produced.”

AGE-OLD WISDOM

Encourage pollinators with companion planting

Reduce pests and diseases with crop rotation

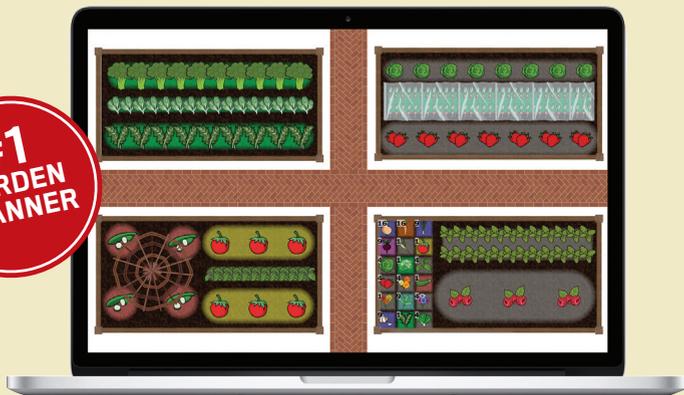
Maximize harvests with succession planting

Learn more from your garden with detailed records



MODERN TOOLS

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LIVING NATURALLY



Stinging Nettles: Multipurpose Superplant

PHOTO: MADELEINE STEINBACH/GETTYIMAGES

You'll know if you accidentally run into a patch of stinging nettles.

When you brush against them with bare skin, the delicate, needle-like hairs that cover their stems and leaves break off and inject you with irritating chemicals that feel like a host of wasp stings.

But if you do suffer such an encounter, count your lucky stars. Guard the spot carefully.

Stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*) is a plant of a thousand uses—nutritious food, medicine, tea herb, cheese-flavoring agent, beer, herbal fiber for weaving, fertilizer, dyestuff, ladybug attractant, important food source for butterfly larvae—and more.

Although alarmed when I first found nettles running amok in my raspberry patch, I've

discovered that the job of preventing them from taking over furnishes me with good foraging every spring.

I've since found a much larger wild patch a few miles down the road. I keep that spot a secret.

EATING NETTLES

Young nettles rank among the yummiest, most nutritious of green vegetables. Light cooking eliminates the sting. A rich source of calcium, iron, magnesium, and other minerals and of vitamins C, A, and B complex, they also contain more protein than other green vegetables (dried leaves are 25 percent protein).

Cook them like spinach as a side dish; turn them into delicious pesto; or add them to soups and quiches. You can freeze or dry them in the same way that you would spinach or

parsley.

For the best eating, pick the top three or four sets of leaves while the plants are just a few inches tall.

To harvest stinging nettles without getting stung, wear long sleeves and rubber or leather gloves. Rinse the plants well in a colander, remove any debris, and wear kitchen gloves if you plan to chop them.

NATURAL REMEDIES AND OTHER USES

- For centuries, nettles have served traditional cultures as **medicine to treat a variety of ills**. Dried nettle leaves and roots make both a delicious tea and a nourishing hair rinse. An infusion of stinging nettles is also known to help treat sunburns.
- Gardeners have long used fermentations of nettle leaves to **fertilize**

Young nettles rank among the yummiest, most nutritious of green vegetables.



Cook nettles like spinach as a side dish; turn them into delicious pesto; or add them to soups and quiches.

and protect crops.

- Dairy farmers use nettles as a **flavoring ingredient** (or wrapper) for **gourmet cheeses**.
- Some hearty souls enjoy tipping a pint of **nettle beer**, perhaps along with a savory dish of **nettle pasta**.
- Another innovation that you may find soon

at your local trendy clothing boutique: **clothing made from nettle fibers**.

- At one time, there was even a Be Nice to Nettles Week coordinated by a group in the UK, but you don't need an official event to recognize this multipurpose superplant. If you have

a bit of moist, rich soil lying fallow and find a patch of nettles going to seed, perhaps you'd like to create your own little backyard nettle patch.

—Margaret Boyles



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



MANY THUNDERSTORMS IN MAY,
AND THE FARMER SINGS "HEY! HEY!"

HOW WE MAKE OUR PREDICTIONS

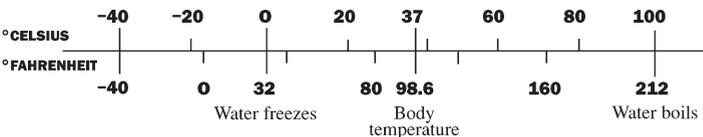
We derive our weather forecasts from a secret formula that was devised by the founder of this Almanac, Robert B. Thomas, in 1792. Thomas believed that weather on Earth was influenced by sunspots, which are magnetic storms on the surface of the Sun.

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

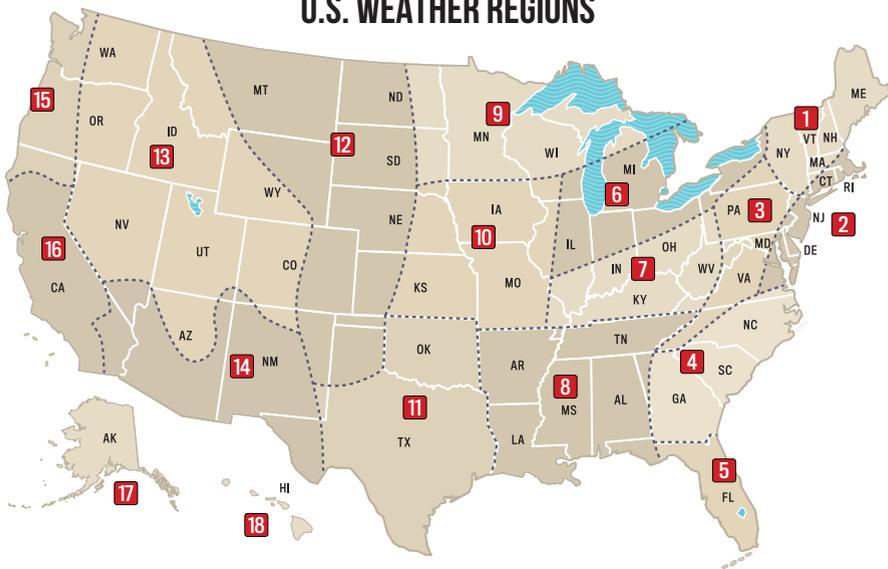


LOVE ALL THINGS WEATHER? TAP FOR THE WEATHER FOLKLORE OF THE DAY

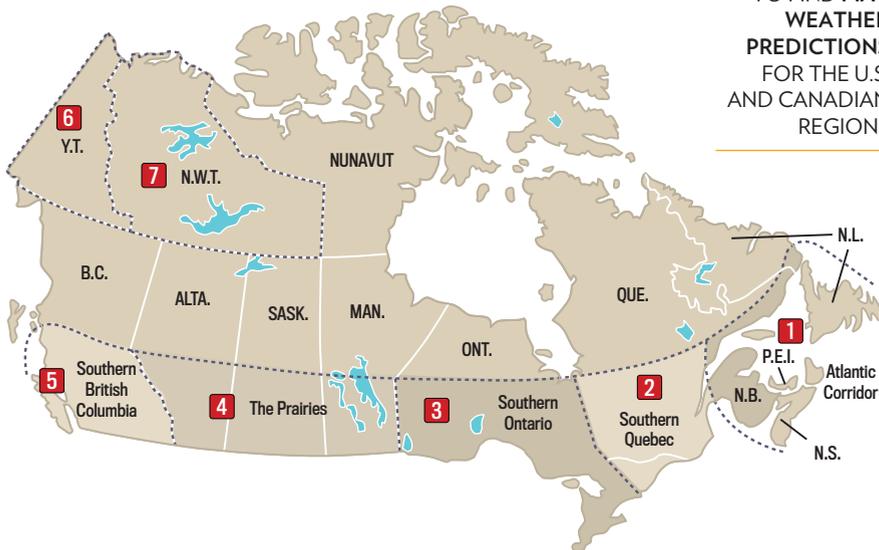


WEATHER FORECASTS

U.S. WEATHER REGIONS



CANADIAN WEATHER REGIONS



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





WEATHER UPDATE



MAY DAYS!

The big U.S. holiday in May, Memorial Day on the 25th, marks the start of what I hope will be a great summer season for you. The holiday weekend will be memorialized with celestial salutes: thunderstorms (a sign of warm temperatures, fog, energy consumption) scattered across nearly all of the nation—although it will not rain enough to deter folks from enjoying the outdoors.

Those of you who are celebrating May Day on the 1st should expect warm temperatures in most areas, although the maypole may be dampened by



showers in Florida, from the Ohio River westward to the Rockies, and in the Prairies and Atlantic regions of Canada.

If, like me, you view Star Wars Day as the most important holiday of the year, May the Fourth be with you. Along with the Fourth, you will have showers and thunderstorms scattered across much of the United States and Canada.

For you Cinco de Mayo fans, moist air from the Gulf of Mexico will be scattering showers throughout the eastern United States, while drier air from Mexico brings mainly sunny skies to the west. Farther away from Mexican weather influence, folks in Canada will be dampened by showers in the east and west, with mainly dry weather in the Prairies.

My mom would be upset with me if I didn't give her sunny, warm weather for Mother's Day. Hopefully she will still love me despite showers in many areas and cool temperatures in most of the western United States and in western and northern Canada.

Overall, the month of May will mark the transition from the last vestiges of coolness in April to what promises to be a hot summer in most places.

Expect the month to bring early heat in the eastern United States, with well above-normal temperatures. From Texas westward to the California desert and northward to the Canadian border, temperatures will be a bit below normal for May, although much warmer than they were in April. And while Newfoundland will be on the cool side, expect above-normal temperatures, on average, across the rest of Canada.

Looking ahead to Atlantic hurricane season, which officially runs from June 1 to November 30, storm activity will be near average, with the best chance for a major hurricane strike in mid-September from Florida to North Carolina. Other threats of hurricanes or tropical storms will occur in the same area in mid- to late June, in Florida in mid- to late July and mid- to late October, and in early to mid-October from the Deep South and Southeast northeastward to New England.

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



HUMOR ME

GRINS AND GROANS FROM THE ALMANAC



THE EDGE OF PERSUASION

An elderly lady entered a shop and asked to be shown

some tablecloths. The salesman brought a pile and showed them to her, but she said that she had seen those elsewhere—nothing

suited her.

“Haven’t you something new?” she asked.

The man then brought another pile



and showed them to her.

“These are the newest pattern,” he said. “You will notice that the edge runs right around the border and the center is in the middle.”

“Dear me, yes. I’ll take a half-dozen of those,” said the lady.

GROG LOG

James Brown, mate of the sailing ship *Penelope*, was a good seaman but too fond of whisky. Captain Doliver, having overlooked several lapses, warned him that the next offense would be entered in the log. The mate did the best he could but inevitably fell off the wagon, prompting the captain to write in the log:

“May 13, 1876.
Course S. W. by S.
Lat. 42°31'28". Long.

151°43'18" W. Steady S. W. wind. Mr. Brown drunk today.”

Brown read this entry with dismay and sought out the captain to implore him to alter what he had written, pointing out that the log would be read by the owners and that he would lose all chance of getting his own ship.

“Well, isn’t it true?” asked the captain.

“It is true, but—”

“Then the record stands,” broke in the captain.

Some days later, the mate entered in the log:

“May 17, 1876.
Course S. S. W. Lat.
45°32'51". Long.
158°47'13" W. Wind
light and variable W. to
S. W. Captain Doliver
sober today.”

When the captain read this, his rage was unbounded. He

summoned the mate and demanded how he dared to make such an entry.

“Well, Captain, isn’t it true? Were you not sober last night?”

“Of course, I was sober!” roared the captain.

“Then the record stands,” said the mate.

A MOTHER’S DAY TOAST

*Here’s to the happiest
hours of my life,
Spent in the arms of
another man’s wife—
My mother!*

ROLLING DEVELOPMENT

“Going to send your boy on an ocean trip?” asked a friend.

“Yes,” replied the father. “You see, if there is anything in him, I’m sure that a long sea voyage will bring it out.”

NEW!

GROW BETTER WITH A HAND FROM US!

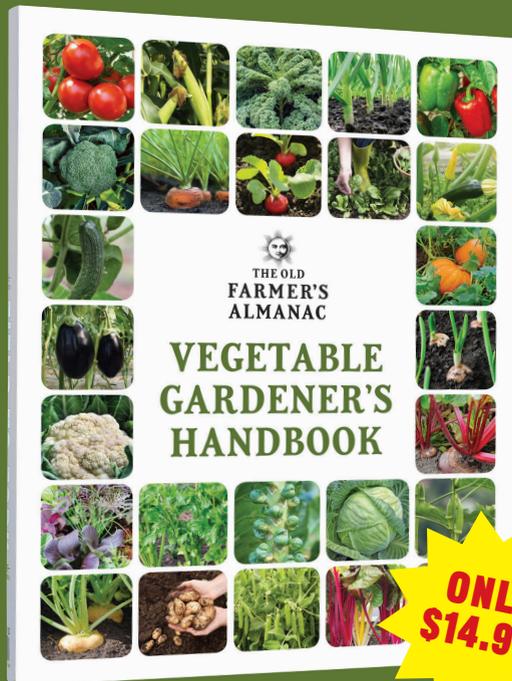
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WHAT'S NEXT



ASTRONOMY

Explore with our Sky Map



CALENDAR

Moon phases, June holidays, summer solstice, Germany's Wäldchestag ("Forest Day") festival, Joke of the Month



LIVING NATURALLY

Maximize Your Veggies Menu



GARDENING

Rock Your Gardening World!



ANNIVERSARY

The First See-Through Stomach



FOOD

Berry Good Recipes

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 June *EXTRA!*

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