

EXTRA!

FROM THE OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC

FOR THE GLORY OF
GERANIUMS

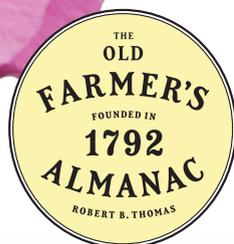
TOMATO RECIPES

SAVE YOUR
HARVEST SAFELY

THE BEST DAYS TO
DO THINGS



SEPTEMBER 2017



FEATURES

GARDENING

For the Glory of Geraniums

FOOD

Tomato Recipes

LIVING NATURALLY

Save Your Harvest Safely

ANNIVERSARY

The Picture on Page 1

DEPARTMENTS

CALENDAR

Holidays, History, and Folklore for September



ASTROLOGY

Best Days to Do Things

Gardening by the Moon's Sign

ASTRONOMY

Sky Map for September

HOT PRODUCTS

Fall Deals!

WEATHER FORECASTS

How We Make Our Predictions

September 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 October issue!



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

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how **your life**, and how you
live, are worth **overprotecting**.*



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THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER

HOLIDAYS, HISTORY, AND FOLKLORE



SEPTEMBER'S BIRTHSTONE: SAPPHIRE

• September's birthstone is the sapphire, a form of corundum that is typically blue, a color caused by tiny bits of iron and titanium; the vivid, medium blues are more valuable than lighter or darker forms. Due to various trace elements, sapphires also appear in other colors. Those with red colors are rubies.

• Sapphires were thought to encourage divine wisdom and protection. They symbolized purity, truth, trust, and loyalty. Some believed that if they were placed in a jar with a snake, the snake would die.

 TAP FOR MORE ON **SAPPHIRES**

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



Moon View

September's full Moon, the **Full Corn Moon**, occurs on the 6th, at 3:03 A.M. EDT.

 TAP FOR MORE **MOON PHASES**

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

FOLKLORE FUN

September dries up ditches or breaks down bridges.

ALMANAC 225TH ANNIVERSARY TIME CAPSULE

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

*The various colour'd apples glow,
Upon the drowsy, bending bough,
The farmer now, at his leisure,
Mounts his horse, and rides for pleasure.*

• Sept. 2: Lond. burn. 1666.

• Sept. 5: ☉ [Solar] ecl. visible.

• Now pick apples, and make cider before cold weather comes on.

• Turn pigs into the woods to gather acorns.



SAPPHIRE TRIVIA

- The sapphire, along with the related ruby, are the second-hardest natural gemstones, with only the diamond being harder.

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY



SEPTEMBER 12: CHOICES

On this day in 1962, President John F. Kennedy went to Rice University in Houston, Texas, to make a speech justifying his proposed \$5.4 billion space program. He had called on Congress in the previous year to fund a massive project to put a man on the Moon and bring him home safely before the end of the decade. Toward that end, he asked his vice president, Lyndon Johnson, to make it happen. Johnson, a Texan, was happy to oblige.

The plan was to establish a Manned Spacecraft Center in Houston, upon land that had been made available by Rice University (which had received it from Humble Oil and Refining Company). If that happened, federal money would flow to that city and to Rice, a university distinguished for its scholarship, if not for its football. In football, the University of Texas was



king, although Rice gamely played Texas every year.

Kennedy challenged 35,000 listeners, sweltering in the Rice football stadium, to think big: “But why, some say, the Moon? Why choose this as our goal? And they may well ask, Why climb the highest mountain? Why, 35 years ago, fly the Atlantic?” he asked. Then he added another impossible goal, one he had jotted in the margin only minutes earlier: “Why does Rice play Texas?”

The line drew a huge laugh and added a touch of humor and humility to the soaring rhetoric. His speech continued, soon issuing the now famous lines, “We choose to go to the Moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard”

Kennedy eventually got his moonshot, although he did not live to see Neil Armstrong’s 1969 moonwalk. And, three years after the speech, in 1965, Rice beat Texas. It would be 28 years before that happened again.



BEST DAYS TO DO THINGS

These September 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, 19
 Begin diet to gain weight: 5, 23
 Cut hair to encourage growth: 3, 21, 22
 Cut hair to discourage growth: 16, 17
 Have dental care: 18, 19
 Quit smoking: 10, 14, 19
 Wean children: 10, 14, 19

AROUND THE HOUSE

Can, pickle, or make sauerkraut: 14, 15
 End projects: 19
 Start projects: 21

OUTDOORS

Begin logging: 1, 2, 27–29
 Go camping: 25, 26
 Go fishing: 1–6, 20–30
 Set posts or pour concrete: 1, 2, 27–29

IN THE GARDEN

Destroy pests and weeds: 7, 8
 Graft or pollinate: 14, 15
 Prune to encourage growth: 25, 26
 Prune to discourage growth: 16, 17
 Plant aboveground crops: 5, 23, 24
 Plant belowground crops: 14, 15
 Harvest aboveground crops: 1, 28, 29
 Harvest belowground crops: 18, 19

ON THE FARM

Breed animals: 23, 24
 Castrate animals: 3, 4, 30
 Cut hay: 7, 8
 Set eggs: 2, 3, 11–13, 29, 30
 Slaughter livestock: 23, 24
 Wean animals: 10, 14, 19



GARDENING BY THE MOON'S SIGN

Use the September 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 SEPTEMBER

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

TAP FOR
 **MERCURY IN RETROGRADE DATES**

APP EXTRA!
 **TAP FOR SEPTEMBER 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.

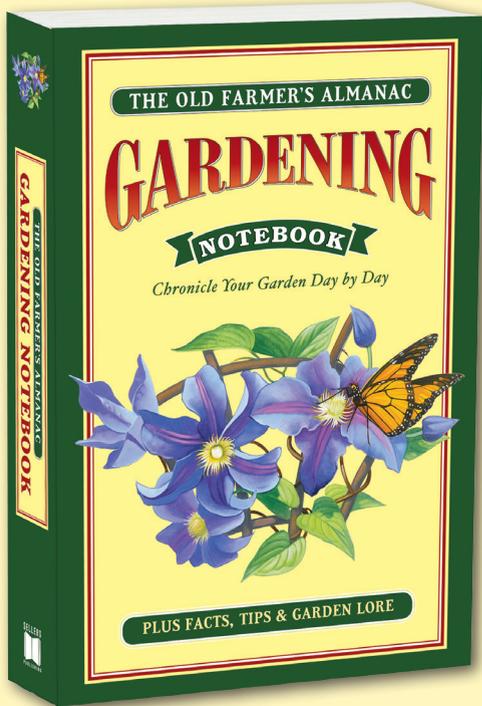
When Mercury is retrograde, remain flexible, allow extra time for travel, and avoid signing contracts. Review projects and plans at these times, but wait until Mercury is direct again to make any final decisions.

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

–Celeste Longacre

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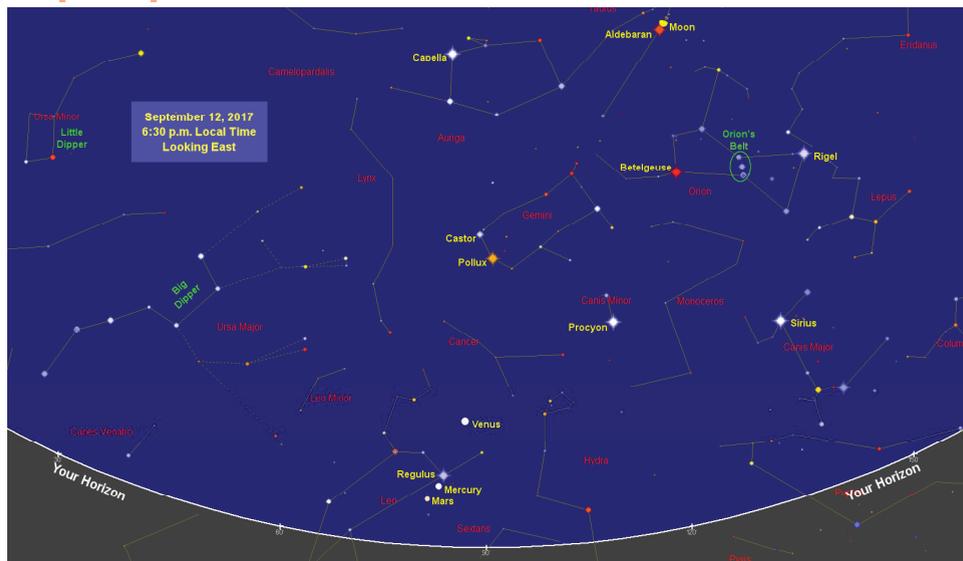


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MERCURY IN THE MORNING

- 

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A PRINTABLE
SEPTEMBER
SKY MAP
- 

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

We usually think of stargazing as an evening activity. The Sun sets, the sky slowly darkens, and, one by one, the stars and planets are revealed. Of course, celestial objects don't know or care what time of day it is. For example, there are always stars in the sky—even in the daytime—but the bright Sun prevents us from seeing them.

Sometimes, the best sights in the sky make their appearance in the early morning, before the Sun has risen. That's the case in September with the planet Mercury, an orb most people have never seen.

Ancient astronomers noted that Mercury appears to move across the sky faster than any other planet. That's why the Romans named it after their fleet-footed messenger of the gods. Indeed, Mercury zips around the Sun once every 88 days, compared to the leisurely 365-day pace of Earth.



Mercury is the closest planet to the Sun, and it is hidden in the Sun's glare much of the time. Only a few times a year does Mercury venture far enough from the Sun to become easy for us to see; the predawn sky of mid-September is one of those infrequent occasions.

In mid-September, Mercury will be visible low in the east before sunrise, starting shortly after 6:00 A.M. It is best viewed from a location where the eastern horizon is not obscured by trees and buildings. The sky will be brightening quickly at this time of day, so your window of opportunity for observing Mercury is fairly brief—about 90 minutes.

Mercury is not impressively bright, but fortunately we have the blazing planet Venus to guide us. Venus is by far the brightest object in the area and impossible to miss. Below it is the much dimmer star, Regulus, and just a little lower is Mercury, brighter than Regulus but nowhere near as bright as Venus. (Look just below Mercury for a bonus glimpse of the planet Mars.)

The map shows the arrangement of these four objects on the morning of September 12. Over the following days, Mercury will move closer to Mars until September 16, when the two planets will appear to be nearly touching. Mercury will continue to move downward. By the third week of September, it will become difficult to see as it nears the horizon.

When you have spotted elusive Mercury, you will join a select group of individuals who have knowingly done so. Quite a few people have viewed Mercury by accident, without know what they were seeing. However, the real joy of sky gazing is not just in appreciating a beautiful view, but in knowing something about the things you are observing.

Mercury is not the only object in the early morning sky in September. There's an array of of extremely bright stars. In this one view, you can see 5 of the top 10 brightest stars and 9 of the top 25, including Sirius, the brightest star of all. So, take a look at Mercury, enjoy some of the sky's brightest stars, and watch the Sun come up!

—Jeff DeTray

FALL DEALS!



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GARDENING



For the Glory of Geraniums

Save them soon so they'll bloom next season!

PHOTO: PIXABAY



Geraniums that have spent the summer outdoors can be kept as houseplants.

It's almost time: In a few weeks, the first frost will be upon us. Okay, it will be upon some of us that soon. Suffice to say that it behooves anyone who lives in one of winter's cold zones and grows geraniums (aka pelargonium; more on this in a minute) to plan now to lift and protect these beauties.

Geraniums that have spent the summer outdoors can be kept as houseplants, provided they get lots of sun. (In

northern climes, the sun may not be strong enough in late winter to stimulate buds on some varieties.) Here's what to do:

- Before the first frost (find your first frost date), lift the plants and, using a sharp clean knife, cut the stems back in a shapely fashion to about 6 to 8 inches. They should not have to support great masses of leaves in the low sunlight environment they are about to enter. Save a few stems as cuttings to root,

an easy way to multiply your plants. Also cut back the roots.

- Transplant the “mother plant” to the smallest pot possible—enough to just fit the roots—using regular potting soil to fill.
- Keep the plants in shade for a week, then place them in a sunny spot (they need all the sun they can get) and keep them cool. Geraniums grow best with night temperatures of 50° to 60°F but will survive if they drop to

GARDENING

32° and/or rise above 80°F, as long as they are kept relatively dry.

- When new growth appears, cut off all the old leaves.

The only thing more difficult than getting the new growth to appear is keeping it. And here's some help with that:

- Water only when the leaves show signs of drooping and allow only small amounts. Do not fertilize or feed the plants. It is critical that these plants get rest.

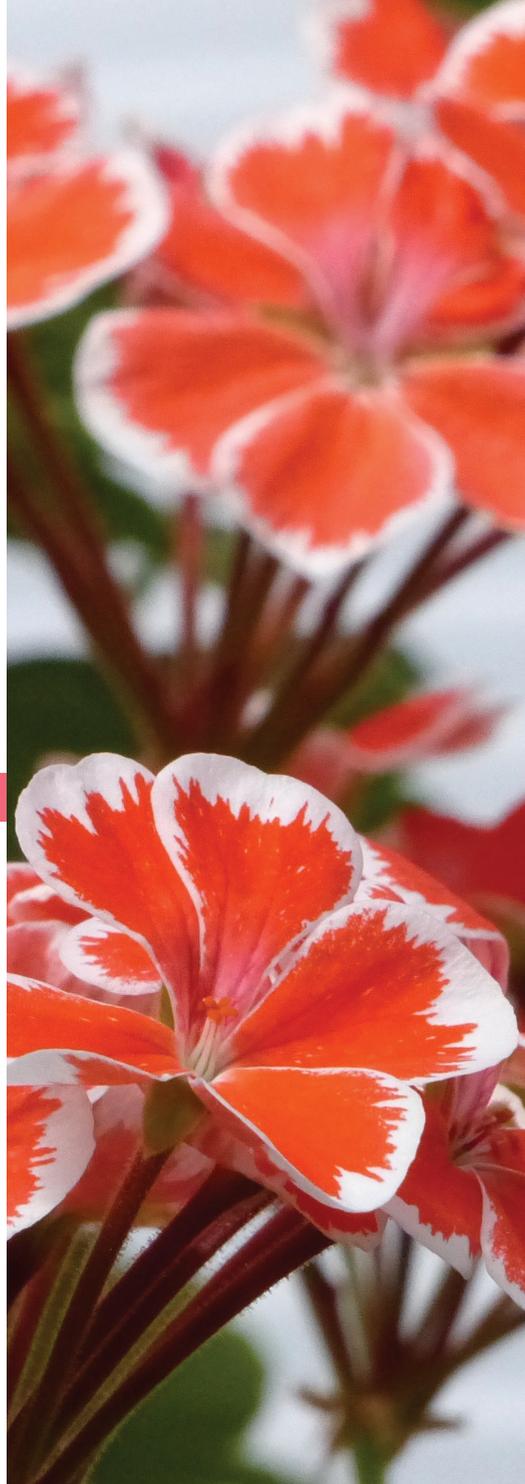
If you want your overwintered geraniums to bloom for Memorial Day, pinch them back in February. Once warm weather returns and all danger of frost has passed (find your last frost date), take the plants outdoors and transplant them to beds or pots, as you wish.

It is critical that these plants get rest.

ROOT STEM CUTTINGS

Most geraniums root easily from stem cuttings in soil, coarse sand, water, perlite, or other rooting material—but nothing with fertilizer.

- Using a sharp, clean knife, make a slanted cut 4 inches below a stem tip, above a node where leaves emerge. Trim cutting to just below a node. Remove any buds, all but two or three leaves, and the leaflike stipules at the base of leaf stalks.
- Roll the stem cutting in newspaper or put it in the shade for 24 hours, so that the end will seal and not rot.
- Push the stem into a pot of moistened rooting medium and store it in a warm,





To this day, we still say “geranium” when we actually mean “pelargonium.”

shady place for 2 days. After that, give the cutting indirect sun. Moisten the medium only as needed.

WHAT TO CALL THEM: GERANIUMS OR PELARGONIUMS?

The plants that we commonly call geraniums (the plants pictured here) were introduced in Europe by Dutch traders who brought them from South Africa in the early 18th century. Because these new plants resembled the hardy

wild geraniums already growing in Europe, botanists mistakenly grouped them together.

FROM EUROPE TO AMERICA

In 1760, seeds of pelargoniums were sent to botanist John Bartram of Philadelphia, marking their arrival in America. Later, in the 1770s and '80s, Thomas Jefferson brought plants back with him from France.

In 1753, Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus classified them under the genus *Geranium*. When it was later discovered that these new “geraniums” differed from European geraniums in the shape of their petals, the number of stamens, and other factors, they were renamed *Pelargonium*, meaning “stork’s bill” —a reference to the long, sharply pointed shape of their seedpod. But to this day, we still say “geranium” when we actually mean “pelargonium.”

FOOD



Tomato Recipes

As the crazy, hazy days of summer near an end, you'll want to make plans for your garden's bountiful harvest. We've got a few delicious ideas for your tomatoes right here.

PHOTO: MEDIA BAKERY

Slow Cooker Tomato Sauce



TAP FOR
RECIPE

SLOW COOKER TOMATO SAUCE

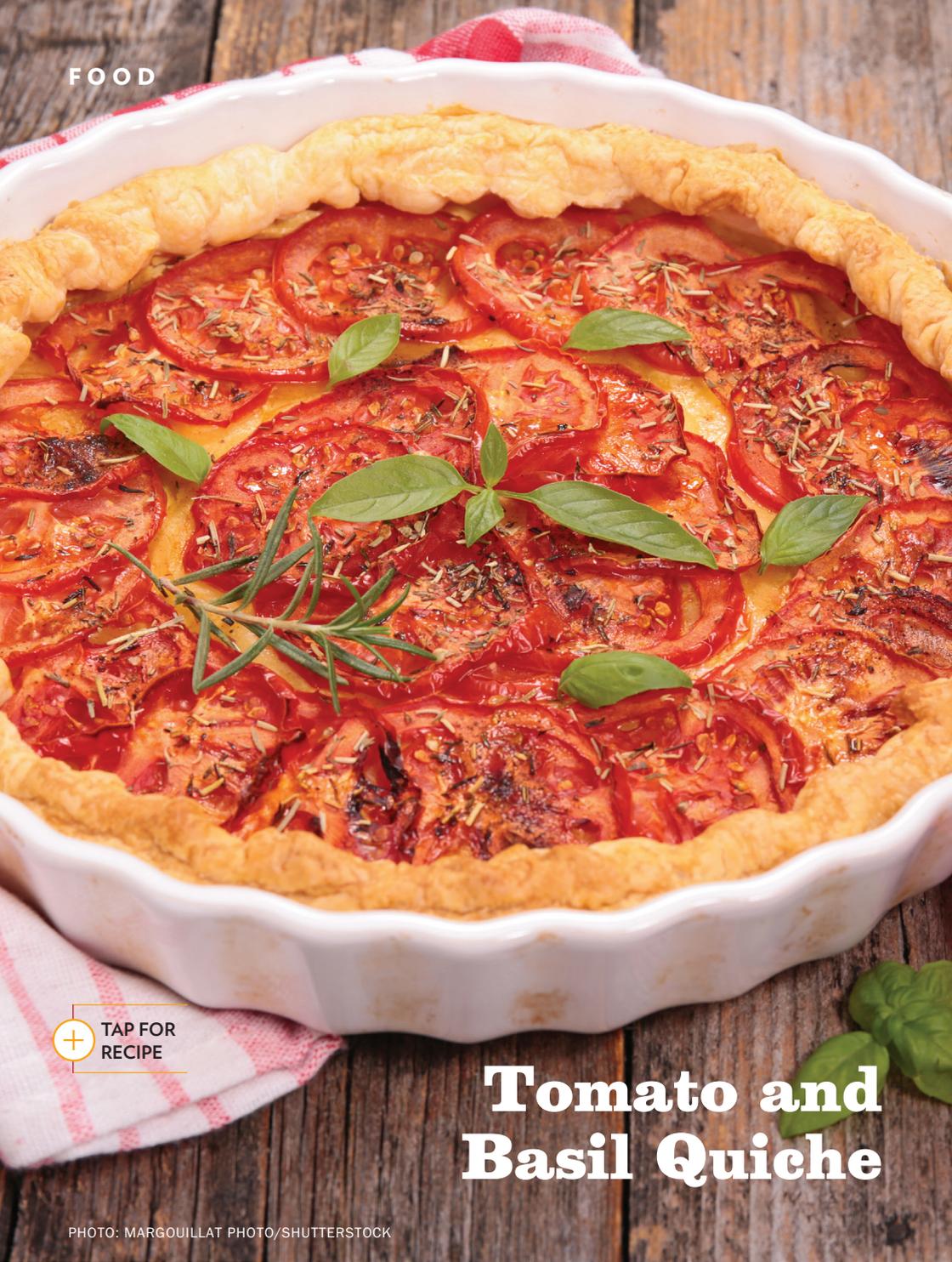
- 4 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 small yellow onion, finely diced
- 3 pounds fresh plum tomatoes, cored, peeled, seeded, and puréed (enough to yield 4 cups)
- 1/4 cup minced fresh parsley or 1 tablespoon dried parsley
- 3 tablespoons minced fresh basil or 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh oregano or 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

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RECIPE

Turn slow cooker on high, let it heat for 5 minutes, then add olive oil, garlic, and onions. Stir and cover. Cook for 1 hour, or until onions are soft and wilted. Uncover and add tomatoes, parsley, basil, oregano, and salt and pepper. Reduce heat to low and stir. Using a wooden spoon, prop open the slow cooker lid and cook for 4 hours. The sauce is done when it is thick and not watery.

Makes about 4 cups.

FOOD



 TAP FOR RECIPE

Tomato and Basil Quiche

TOMATO AND BASIL QUICHE

- 1 unbaked 10-inch piecrust
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- 1 cup diced onions
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 3/4 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
- 1 cup evaporated skim milk
- 1-1/2 teaspoons cornstarch
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 2 eggs
- 1 egg white
- 1 cup sliced tomatoes
- basil leaves, for garnish

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line a 10-inch quiche pan or pie plate with piecrust.

In a skillet over medium heat, warm olive oil. Add onions and garlic and cook for 5 minutes, or until golden. Spread onion mixture on crust and sprinkle cheese on top. Sprinkle basil over cheese.

In a blender or food processor, combine milk, cornstarch, pepper, eggs, and egg white. Process until smooth. Gently pour into crust. Arrange tomatoes on top. Bake for 45 minutes, or until a knife inserted near the center comes out clean. Let stand at least 10 minutes before serving. Garnish with basil leaves.

Makes 6 servings.



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RECIPE

Tomato and Zucchini au Gratin

FOOD



[+](#) TAP FOR
RECIPE

TOMATO AND ZUCCHINI AU GRATIN

- 4 medium tomatoes, cored and cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices
- 1/4 teaspoon salt, plus more, to taste
- 3 zucchini, cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices
- 1/3 cup heavy cream (optional)
- 1 large slice dense white or whole wheat bread, cut into cubes
- 1/2 cup finely grated Parmesan cheese
- small handful fresh Italian parsley
- 2 teaspoons dried basil
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons olive oil

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THIS
RECIPE

Place tomatoes in a colander over a large bowl. Salt to taste and toss to coat. Set aside to drain for 30 minutes.

Put zucchini slices into a bowl, salt to taste, and toss lightly. Set aside for 15 to 20 minutes.

Preheat oven to 400°F. Butter a shallow, 13x9-inch baking dish or large gratin dish. (For a slightly richer version, if using the heavy cream, pour it into the dish and tilt to coat.)

Combine bread, Parmesan, and parsley in a food processor. Pulse to reduce bread to fine crumbs. Transfer to a bowl and add basil, 1/4 teaspoon salt, and pepper. Mix to blend.

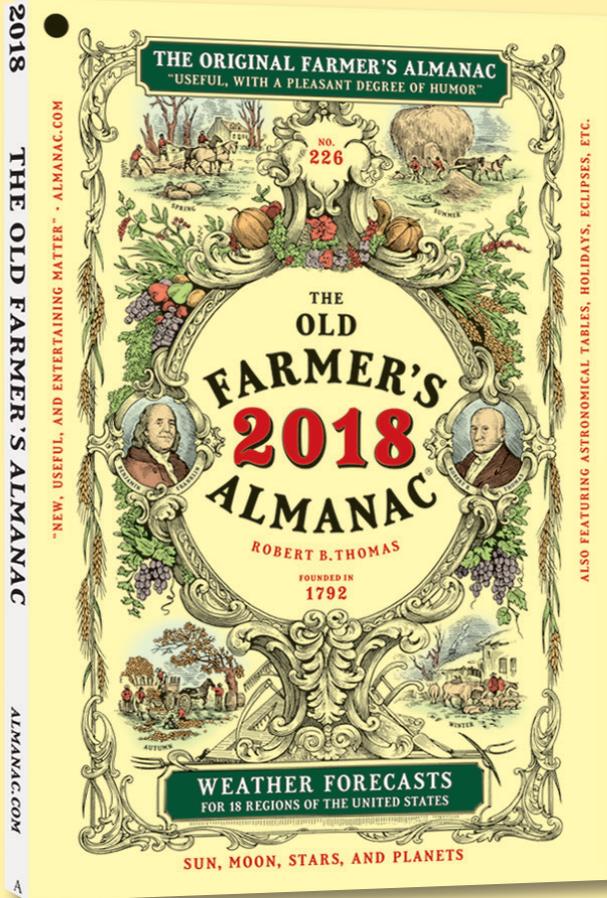
Lay zucchini slices on paper towels and pat dry.

Lay tomato slices in bottom of the prepared baking dish. Place zucchini slices on top of tomatoes. Spread bread crumbs over zucchini and evenly drizzle olive oil on top. Bake for 30 minutes, or until bubbly.

Makes 6 servings.

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THE 2018 OLD FARMER'S ALMANAC



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LIVING NATURALLY



Save Your Harvest Safely

Millions of Americans—including me—are hard at work canning, freezing, drying, pickling, and fermenting the abundance of late summer fruit and vegetables from our home gardens and local farms.



Surveys show a huge resurgence of interest in home gardening and buying direct from growers at farmers' markets, pick-your-own operations, community-supported agriculture enterprises, and farmstands.

Besides a belief that homegrown and locally grown food has more flavor and nutrition, saves

money, and supports their local economy, people cite as one big reason for buying local the alarming reports of massive food recalls due to bacterial contamination. They believe that knowing where their food comes from helps to ensure its safety.

FOODBORNE ILLNESS: SCARY STATISTICS

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that each year roughly 1 in 6 Americans (or 48 million people)

gets sick from something they ate, 128,000 of them end up in the hospital, and 3,000 die.

But please don't assume that growing and preserving your own fruit and vegetables or knowing the farmer who produced your food offers a guarantee that it is safe.

The only way to ensure safe food is to follow to the letter the most up-to-date, tested, science-based methods for safe food handling, processing, and preparation, such as those provided by the National Center

▶ TAP FOR CDC INFO ON
FOOD SAFETY

▶ TAP FOR MORE FROM
THE NATIONAL CENTER
FOR HOME FOOD
PRESERVATION



for Home Food Preservation, based at the University of Georgia.

The Center reports that recent national surveys revealed that a high percentage of home food processors use practices that put them at high risk for foodborne illness and economic losses due to food spoilage.

STICK TO CURRENT METHODS AND RECIPES

Let go of that cherished family recipe for water-bath canned mincemeat. Don't use the books and recipes on which you've

relied since the 1970s. Even books from a few years ago may contain information that won't pass muster by today's food-safety standards.

For example, tomatoes were always considered acidic enough (pH below 4.6) to process safely in a boiling-water bath. But a few years ago, researchers found that many of the varieties they tested, including some old favorites, weren't acidic enough for safe water-bath canning and began recommending that home processors either can tomatoes in a pressure canner or add bottled

lemon juice, powdered citric acid, or vinegar to each jar of tomato product before processing.

Whether you're taking to the canning kettle, the food dehydrator, or the big freezer for the first time or consider yourself a seasoned vet, make your big effort pay off as you package up the flavors of summer. Keep it from spoiling and keep it safe.

—Margaret Boyles



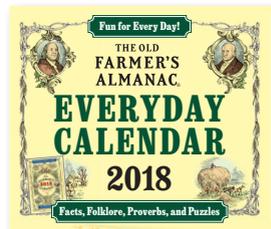
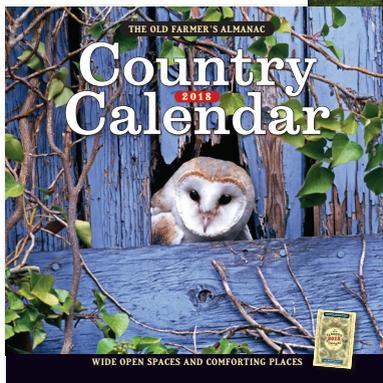
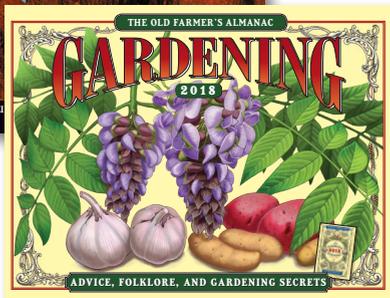
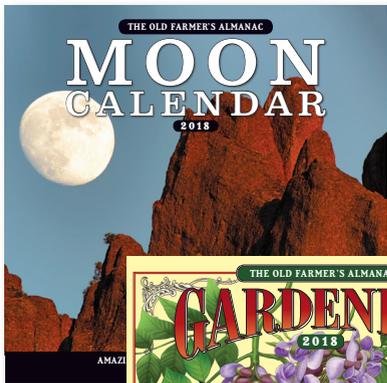
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**PRESERVING YOUR
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MARGARET BOYLES'S
POSTS IN HER "LIVING
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2018 Old Farmer's Almanac Calendars



JANUARY 2018

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

Quick Notes **Birthdays** **In The** **Not To Be**

This is the preeminent source of information for the month of January. It includes the names of the saints, the names of the zodiac signs, the names of the planets, and the names of the constellations. It also includes the names of the months, the names of the days, and the names of the years.

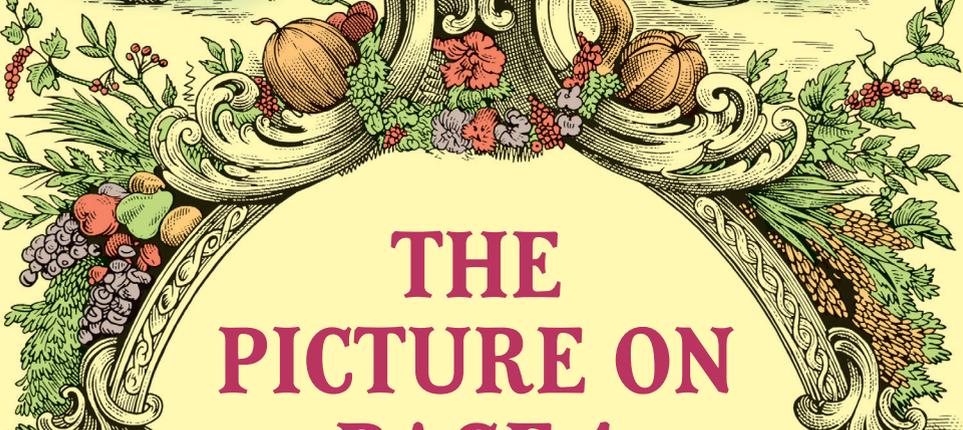
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THE PICTURE ON PAGE 1

With the exception of the first edition in 1793, *The Old Farmer's Almanac* has had a frontispiece illustration on the title page every year. In 1794, the Plowman appeared, trailing his yoked oxen—the perfect image to attract the eye of the New England farmer. A circular emblem at the top of the design (a pumpkin?) is flanked by overflowing horns of plenty and assorted farm tools. It's a hopeful scene,



anticipating the harvest. This verse, from the 1802 Almanac, typifies the advice of the period:

He who ploughs his land well,

Will have withal to eat and sell.

The Plowman was the first of three distinct frontispieces in the Almanac. The sparse plowing scene suggests a

Wood engravings are more complex than woodcuts: They require precise execution of fine lines incised into a highly polished block of wood.

A handful of American artists were beginning to experiment with the medium in the 1790s. Many wished to emulate the style of English book illustrator



simple type-metal engraving, at the time a common medium for illustration. The Plowman appears in three editions and is followed by a more richly designed scene that clearly has the look of a wood engraving.

Thomas Bewick (1753–1828), who revived the art of wood engraving by transferring the techniques of metal engraving to the end-grain surface of boxwood. Its tight grain was ideal for engraving fine

lines, and its density withstood the great pressure required in the printing process.

The second Almanac frontispiece—a lovely pastoral wood engraving—first appears in the 1797 edition and graces 12 editions. Ceres, the Roman goddess of agriculture, is depicted in a flowing gown. With gardening implements at her feet and surrounded by lush foliage, she extends her arm toward the Plowman, who struggles with furrows.

Ceres' Greek counterpart is Demeter, the “bringer of seasons.” According to the Greco-Roman myth, after her daughter Persephone was kidnapped into the underworld, Demeter/Ceres was so upset that she neglected Earth, causing famine. Later, when she found her



daughter, she struck a bargain with Hades to have Persephone returned for half of the year. Demeter's joy is represented by the fruitfulness of Earth. When her daughter returns to the underworld, the goddess neglects Earth and winter arrives.

Ceres was re-engraved for the 1805 Almanac and, for the first time, the engraver's identity is revealed within it: HARRIS is carved along the right edge of the oval. Boston engraver Samuel Harris (1783–1810) was about 21 years old when he did this

work. It appears in four editions (through 1808). Harris followed the first goddess design closely but not completely: He depicts fewer gardening tools; turns the hill into sky; and knowingly adds a bundle of wheat under the tree—Ceres is the grain goddess.

The Plowman and Ceres frontispieces reflect a spirit of independent yeomanry, celebrate the farming way of life, and emphasize the hopefulness of an abundant harvest—themes embraced by both the new republic and the Almanac.

A new frontispiece alights on the front page of the Almanac in 1809. Father Time was intended to convey a harsh warning to readers: God's wrath is pouring out onto the land; reform your wicked ways, for He is not pleased and the time of judgment is at hand! The depiction of this angel, emptying an urn, with a scythe or sickle at his feet, has its origin in the Bible—the one other publication that most Almanac readers owned. This depiction came at a time when church ministers were condemning what they perceived as the excesses of post-revolutionary America: the abuse of alcohol and a general laxity in morals and industriousness.

Self-taught engraver Alexander Anderson (1775–1870), who

would ultimately be dubbed the “Father of American Wood Engraving,” cut his initial “A” into the 1809 frontispiece.

Father Time appears in the Almanac for 190 years (concluding with the 1999 issue), although the image was re-engraved several times by different wood engravers. Abel Bowen (1790–1850) cut a version in 1819 that closely followed Anderson’s design; he initialed it (“AB”). Bowen’s rendering of the dark angel, if not as skillful as Anderson’s, achieves an overall pleasing contrast in black and white. Bowen engraved another Father Time for the 1823 Almanac, one more stylized and with even sharper contrast.

In 1852, 6 years after the death of founding editor Robert B. Thomas, the Almanac announces

that a change is coming. True enough, in 1853 yet another angel appears. This engraving was designed by Bostonian Hammatt Billings (1818–74) and engraved by Henry Nichols of Cambridge. Billings’s noble Father Time conveys a more mellow message than the stern angel of old. He shoulders the scythe, and at his side is a small hourglass (with miniature wings!) to show that time is ever fleeting.

In choosing Billings, the Almanac recognized a major midcentury American

talent. His image adorns the Almanac through the 1978 edition, after which it was replaced by the earlier Abel Bowen engraving.

The Almanac’s commission of a new frontispiece for its 2000 edition closed the circle: Artist Randy Miller based his design on the Almanac’s 1797 portrait of Ceres and crafted it using the same wood engraving technique that had been employed more than 200 years earlier.
—adapted from a report by wood engraver Randy Miller





A RING AROUND THE MOON? RAIN REAL SOON.



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.

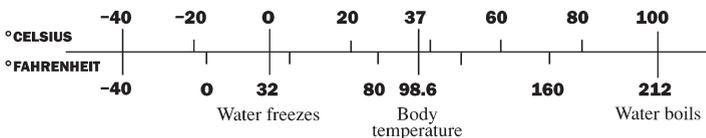


TAP TO FIND OUT THE WEATHER HISTORY OF THE DAY



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

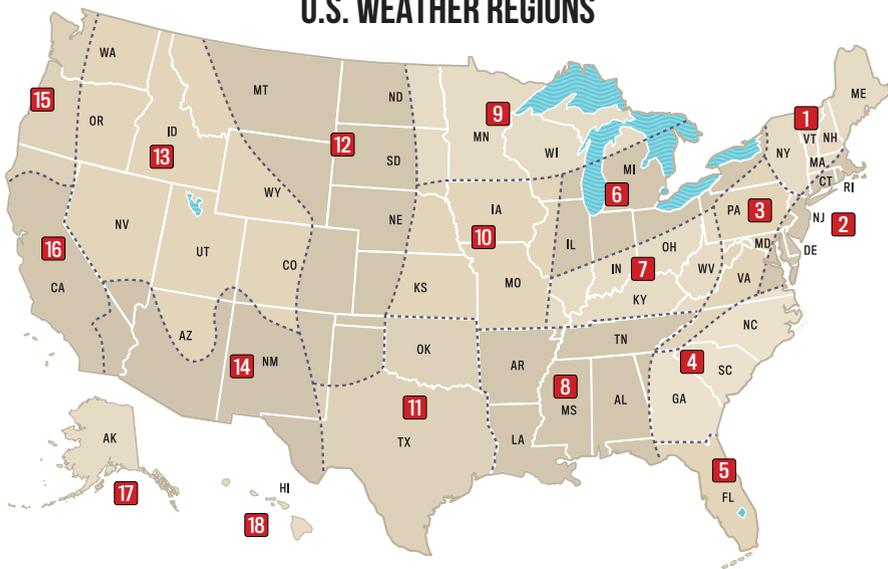
CELSIUS-FAHRENHEIT TABLE



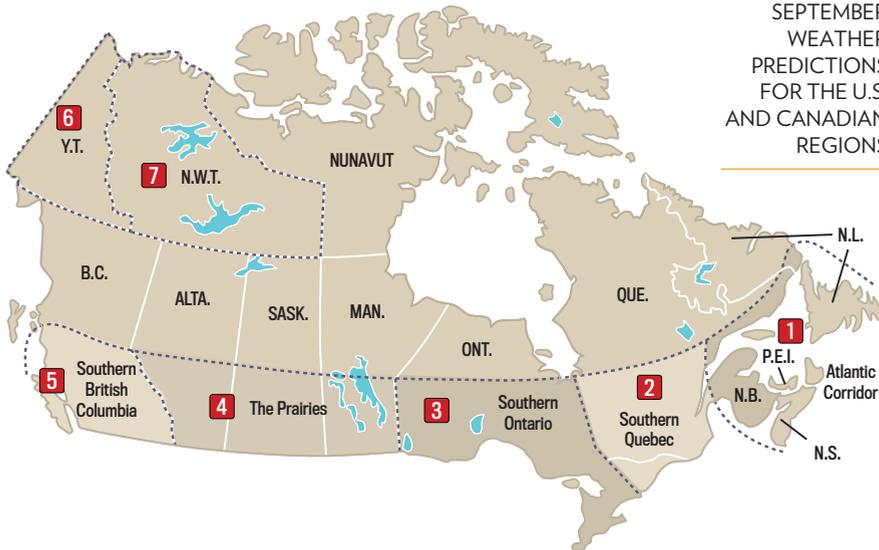


WEATHER FORECASTS

U.S. WEATHER REGIONS



CANADIAN WEATHER REGIONS



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





COLD WEATHER IS COMING

... but how cold and for how long?

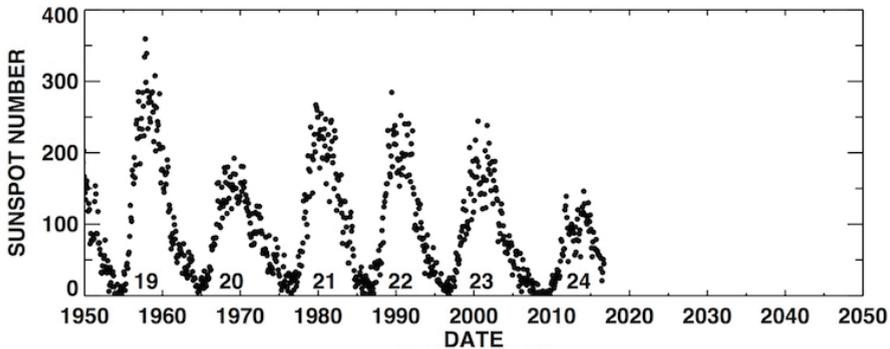
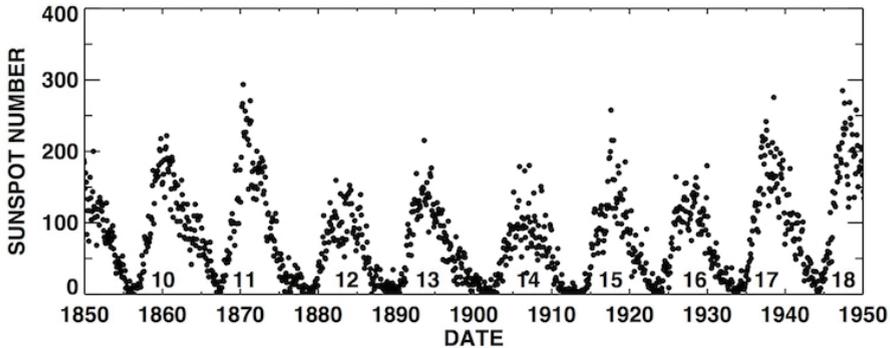
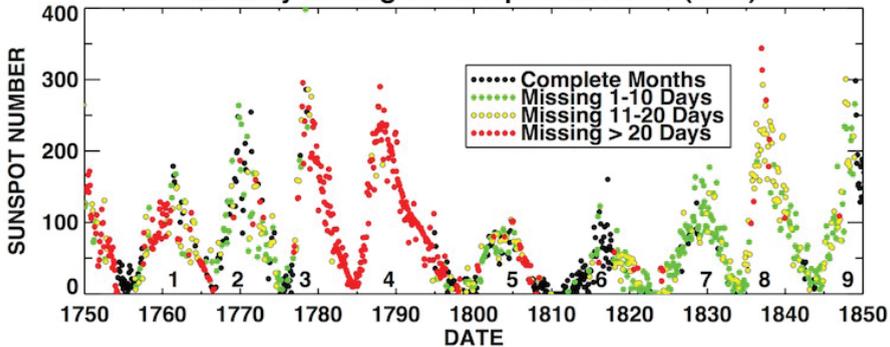
As I write these words, there are no sunspots on the visible portion of the Sun, and solar activity is very quiet. As you may know, we at *The Old Farmer's Almanac* use solar activity as the driver of our long-range weather forecasts. We believe that changes in the Sun's output, although relatively small, are sufficiently amplified in Earth's upper atmosphere to strongly influence Earth's weather patterns.

One of the most significant relationships we have found is that periods of low solar activity are associated with colder temperatures, averaged across Earth. Our viewpoint is a controversial one, as most

scientists believe that the magnitude of changes in solar activity is insufficient to have a significant effect on Earth's weather, and they view as coincidence that past periods of exceptionally low solar activity have historically corresponded with cold periods. However, there has been some research and modeling that gives credence to our theory: Although the changes in magnitude of solar activity are small, there is a mechanism in the upper atmosphere that can amplify these changes, causing larger ripples in the lower portion of Earth's atmosphere, where weather occurs.

The graph (from the NASA

Monthly Averaged Sunspot Numbers (V2.0)





Marshall Spaceflight Center) shows the data for the officially numbered sunspot cycles, from Cycle 1 in the mid-1700s to our current Cycle 24. As you can see, the current cycle is comparable to the very low levels of solar activity that occurred in the early 1800s (the period referred to as the “Dalton Minimum,” which coincided with the “Little Ice Age”) and early 1900s, which was also a cool period. These three periods have brought the lowest solar activity levels since the Maunder Minimum, the period from about 1645 to 1715, when solar cycles apparently stopped and sunspots were exceedingly rare.

Historically, all of the periods in the known sunspot record that have had low activity have also had relatively cool temperatures, averaged across the globe. The Maunder Minimum coincided with an exceptionally cold period in many parts of the globe. We believe that with low solar activity continuing for at least the next 10 to 30 years, global temperatures will be cooler than they would otherwise be.

Despite the recent low solar activity, the winter of 2015–16 was historically warm across much of the United States and Canada. And while the 2016–17 winter was much colder than

the previous winter in most locations, temperatures were still above normal in nearly all regions.

So why, you might ask, was this past winter still relatively mild in most of the country even though solar activity is low? The answer is that solar activity is not the only factor in Earth’s weather.

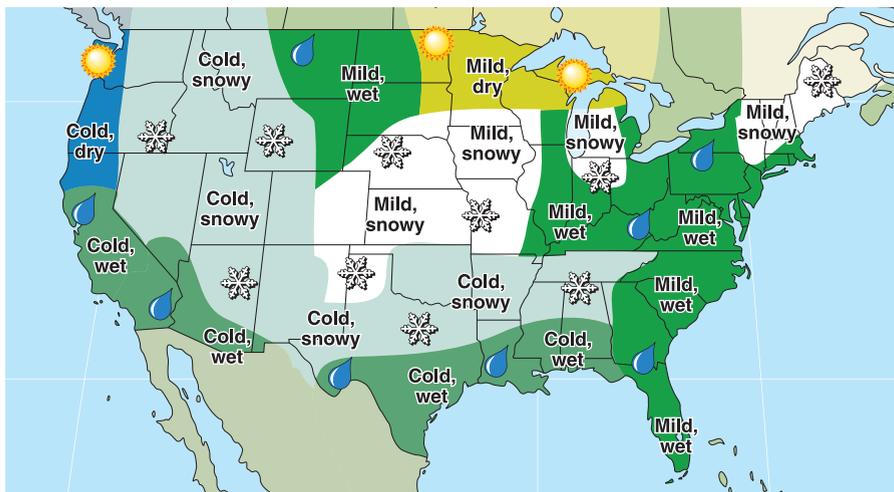
For example, one factor that all atmospheric scientists believe can make Earth colder for as much as a few years is a volcanic eruption that spews ash into the middle and upper portions of the atmosphere. While this has not been a major factor in recent years, it could be in the future.

The most significant factor (in addition to solar activity) that has been affecting our weather in recent years has been the increase in greenhouse gases—most notably carbon dioxide and methane—which most (but not all) atmospheric scientists believe has been making Earth progressively warmer. We have been incorporating the influence of these increases into our forecasts as a factor that will offset much of the cooling from our current period of low solar activity.

In fact, despite the low solar activity, the first half of 2017 was 3.4 degrees F above average across the United States, the second warmest January



WEATHER UPDATE



to June period on record, behind only 2016. Amazingly, the last month in which the global average temperature was below its average for the 20th century was in February 1985, more than 30 years ago, according to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the parent agency of the U.S. National Weather Service.

It is important to note that although Earth, on average, has been warming for decades, not every place is or will be warmer than normal each season. Remember: Other factors are at play, including the normal variation in weather that occurs from day to day and year to year.

Here's our broad view of the coming winter: With last winter's weak La Niña most likely to be replaced by a weak El Niño this winter, cold air masses will be able to slide into the Intermountain region and western states but will have difficulty making any prolonged inroads in the central and eastern states.

The result is that while 2017–18 winter temperatures will be colder than last winter, they will likely still be above normal in the eastern and north-central states, with below-normal temperatures the rule from the Gulf States westward to California and from the Intermountain region westward to the Pacific Northwest.

—Michael Steinberg, Old Farmer's Almanac meteorologist



HUMOR ME

GRINS AND GROANS FROM THE ALMANAC

The All-Occasion Invocation (with Rhyming Option)



On this, our day of
(sorrow, celebration,
mourning, *glee*),
Let me express my
deepest (joy, regret,
apology)
To all of those who
(suffered, triumphed,
sacrificed, repented,
died)
And also those who
(waited, watched,

supported, *bravely
tried*).
It is not easy to
(express, condone,
relate, *explain*)
The feelings in my
(bosom, heart, seat
of affections, *brain*)
In such a time of
(pleasure, anguish,
trepidation, *grief*).
Still, I will try to

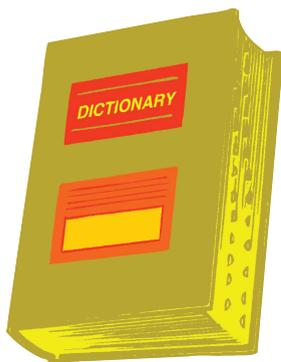
make them (clear,
apparent, pithy,
brief).
You know the reason
for our (meeting,
conclave, pow-wow,
bash).
We owe a debt of
(gratitude, revenge,
forbearance, *cash*)
To one whose (crime,
achievement, lack of
credit, value, *face*)
Is known in every (bar,
post office, hall of
learning, *place*);
And thus I think it fair
to say our (victim,
honored guest)
Should wear (a
garland, concrete
overshoes, *an
armored vest*).
So raise your (voices,
glasses, weapons,
hands, fists, spirits,
eyes)



WIT

And join me in (a toast,
a curse, a song, a
cheer, *outcries*)
To one whose (illness,
wedding, birth,
arrest, retirement,
death)
I must (deplore,
congratulate, *await*
with bated breath).

—Norm D. Bloom



DAFFYNITIONS

Satin: past tense of
sit-in

Tweed: call uttered by a
bird with a cold in the
head

Gaberdine: loquacious
member of college
faculty

Seersucker: gullible
fortune-teller

Overlap: head of
Lapland

Autocracy: a society
dominated by
automobiles

Barometer: instrument
for counting the
number of drinks
served at a bar

That Stinks!

Teacher, commenting
on little boy's poem:

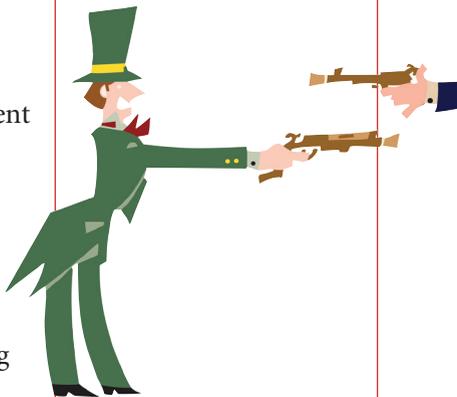
“Since your poem is
about flowers, Wilbur,
I think that the word
'smell' would be more
appropriate. You can
still have it rhyme by
substituting 'bluebell'
for 'mountain pink.'”

19TH-CENTURY NONSENSE: DUEL TARGETS

Having exhausted other
means of settling their
dispute, diminutive
Esq. Robertson
challenged the much

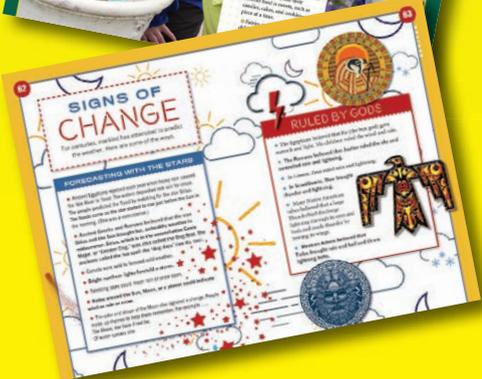
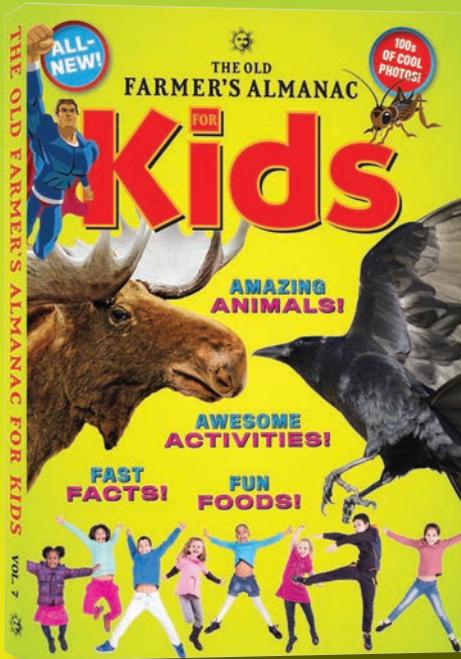
larger Esq. Smythe to a
duel.

The latter objected,
however, saying, “You
are so little that I might



fire at you a dozen
times without hitting,
whereas the chance is
that you might shoot
me at the first fire.”

“Upon my
conscience, that's
true,” responded Esq.
Robertson, “but to
convince you that I
don't wish to take any
advantage, you shall
chalk my size upon
your clothing, and all
hits outside of it shall
not count.”



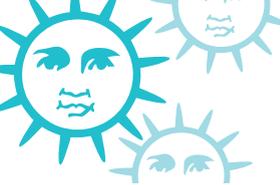
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WHAT'S NEXT



GARDENING

How to handle frost



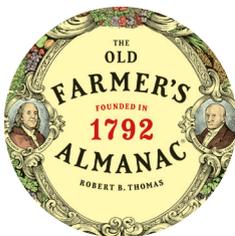
CALENDAR

Full Harvest Moon, birthstones opal and tourmaline, Canada's 1967 record rain, 1793 Almanac tidbits



LIVING NATURALLY

The many uses of apples



ANNIVERSARY

The Mystery of the Missing Fingers



FOOD

Preposterous pumpkin preparations



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 October *EXTRA!*

CELEBRATING THE ALMANAC'S 225TH YEAR!