

Advance prediction Spring 2024 (April to June)



Red Admiral

Peacock

Brimstone

Small Tortoiseshell

Species of the season: The Butterfly

Photo credits due to: Wildlife Wonders Home and Away.

“Despite the forecast, live like it’s Spring.” Lizzy Pulitzer

Welcome to the Spring 2024 website entry which covers the months of April, May and June 2024. Spring is here and nature is coming back to life (and earlier than usual this year too)! Flowers are blooming, Oak buds are now very prominent virtually ready to burst into leaf! The skies are filled with birdsongs (Wheatears were around 3 days early this year, Chiffchaffs and blackcaps have arrived already), butterflies (Red Admirals, Peacocks, Brimstones and Small Tortoiseshell have all been spotted), and I have even seen the odd Bumble Bee! I relish these small everyday reminders that we are now in the beginnings of a brand-new season, and all the excitement that brings; both personally (Spring family adventures), and professionally (for of course April & May are they keys to the whole year)! As the days lengthen and the temperatures rise, put the ‘Spring’ back into your step and get out in nature – we are so very lucky to have it.

Before I get into the business of this website entry – a suggestion/ something to think about. This year is an election year both locally and nationally. Elections will take place across Dorset on May 2nd 2024 with a general election taking place later in the year. Local Councils have a huge part to play in improving the state of our Oceans, Rivers and Green Spaces. Consider engaging with prospective MPs/ Councillors, we have the power to put these vital issues at the top of their Agendas. Collectively this is our opportunity to make a real difference to the world we call home.

We have experienced an exceptionally mild and wet winter, due to a persistent W/SW wind direction which started on September 29th 2023! I am not going to delve too far into this, as David King from Weather Without Technology has kindly put together the below article for us to enjoy. Thank you so much David, we truly appreciate your voice, experience and wisdom as always.

SOME WEATHER COMMENTS – WINTER 2023/4

Please excuse my intrusion into Lesley's website, however a few comments about this current winter (my winter runs to the end of March, and this is written on the 15th)

The winter prediction was for a none too cold, with snow for some, but not all, winds and frost being the main features, this based on the tried and tested methodology. However, the wind half-way through September changed to a persistent W/SW direction. This gave a W/SW wind on the wind day on the 29th September, again on the 11th November and again on the 21st December, and also on 2nd February. What is more, is that the next wind day on the 21st March (equinox too) I expect also to be from the SW direction. (The wind day on 24th June (Mid-summer) will bring our normal summer warmer air in the form of then Tropical Continental air mass from the S/SW.)

Winds from, at this time of the year, blow off the Atlantic which are warm and carry a lot of moisture, and do not normally encroach the eastern side of the UK. Such air currents are part of the Tropical Maritime current. In normal years the winds on the eastern side of the UK are from the Polar Continental current bring colder air and snow, hence colder winters adjacent to the North Sea. This current has had no such winds of note, bar the odd couple of days. Therefore, the SW winds have had free reign over most of the UK, bringing rain and low cloud plus warmer temperatures too. Such warm also generates winds, which too have been in evidence over this winter. The net result has been a very wet winter, windy, stormy at times, but not that cold and a distinct absence of frost. We live on an island surrounded by water, and times, the unusual occurs, as this winter. I keep constant weather records, and this is a winter that according to records here last occurred in 2014, when this persistent W/SW wind occurred. That was also a very wet winter. I hope that the above gives an explanation as to why it has been so wet, windy and relatively mild winter.

Having said the above, there are consequences, for many who work the land, very serious indeed. With such flooded/saturated land, it is impossible to work it. One cannot plant, maintain or harvest crops. Much of the crop is destroyed and that which survives is of low/poor quality. Farm equipment cannot access the ground. Cattle cannot be allowed outside since they will destroy future pasture/grazing land. Winter wheat has been flooded and destroyed, as has winter beet. Spring wheat, if planted, too has been partially destroyed at best, maybe for some, completely lost. So, more shortages of vegetables, delayed harvesting, where possible, late planting, or in the worst cases a change of direction with alternative cropping. We cannot as a country supply all our needs in such food at the best of times, with such a poor winter, the situation is exacerbated, meaning less UK produce, greater imported food, and inevitably much higher costs for us all. Sadly, for many farmers/growers disastrous, with loss of livelihood. It is an ill wind indeed.

A word for amateur gardeners, the very last thing we need now is a hot dry summer, since that for sure will decimate such growing you have, or may have, to come. The plants are saturated, and, as such, are not rooted well. With a hot dry summer, without the necessary roots formation they will perish.

Thank you, Lesley, for letting me explain the very wet winter.

@David King Edenbidge 15 March 2024.

So we have heard it directly from the man himself, the wind direction on March 21st is very likely to be coming in from a SW direction. I will confirm this detail in the April website entry, which will be published as quickly as possible after March 21st. Indeed, the wind on this day, will be the predominant wind direction until June 24th. The wind direction on June 24th is always SW and will remain there until September 29th – this air stream brings the warmer weather we all call “summer”.

As per usual I have seen some utter madness being reported in the national newspapers. Deep snow next week? Forget it.

As for Summer 2024, I have seen articles from the usual offenders stating that it will be a summer of extreme heat, wildfires and droughts. Really?! There is absolutely nothing in the methodology that supports these claims. We will have four great weeks of Summer, beginning during the last week of June and gradually getting hotter throughout the first three weeks of July. 31/32c is a good bet. Nothing extreme, just what us old fashioned folks would call ‘Summer’. That said, droughts are always a serious concern. This is not due to climate change but due to our inability to harvest and store sufficient water. David has gone into this in great detail over the years, so I won’t go into much detail today. Just a quick reminder that without water we cannot survive; wars are fought over water. We must build new reservoirs or accept the consequences.

“We have neglected the truth that a good farmer is a craftsman of the highest order, a kind of artist”. Wendell Berry.

Farmers are protesting against cheap food imports (deals currently being agreed with Australia and New Zealand are a bad deal for British Farmers), they are demanding politicians protect high British Food Standards, to save our food security and introduce legislation to ensure that supermarkets cannot have contracts that pay producers below the cost of production. Too right!! In 2022 Sainsbury’s CEO was paid nearly £5m in cash and shares. The bulk of Mr Roberts package was made up of a £1.7m bonus and £2.2m in share awards. According to ‘Farmers Weekly’, overall, the average salary for people who work on farms is £25,578. Of course, sectors and regions vary but when you compare the salaries it is mind boggling.

In all honesty I have only had some low-level insight from David as to what life is like as a farmer, and before I had said intel, I was indeed part of the problem. I never spent a moment thinking about where my food came from. I just brought it at the supermarket as cheaply/healthily as I could. Like the majority I would moan when food prices went up. How ungrateful I have been for all these years. My regret is sincere and profound, I will support our farmers from this day forwards.

The knowledge, skills and sheer hard graft required for being a farmer is overwhelming. It is without doubt one of the toughest but most important jobs on the planet. Especially this year with such heavy rainfall, you and I couldn’t believe what our farmers are going through. If you are on X (formally known as twitter), check out @nofarmersnofood or @farmersweekly. British food is something our politicians should be truly proud of, yet clearly are not. We can live without politicians; we cannot live without food. We must back British Farming.

Spring is early this year, with the persistent W/SW wind we have been experiencing everything has been warmer than usual for some weeks now. Blackthorn Winter (11th-14th April) comes on the back of a 'fair and frosty' moon on April 8th. Therefore, I would not advise planting anything out until this period has passed. Additionally, there is usually one more frost to come once the Magnolias have bloomed. Happily, there will be an absence of May Ice-maidens this year (11th-15th May), so once Blackthorn Winter has passed you will be fine, not further frosts will be due.

Alas, due to the significantly wet weather we have experienced, David has given an excellent outline of the problems ahead for farmers, livestock owners and horticulturalists/ growers.

As established readers know David's winter season runs from mid-November to the end of March; this entry therefore starts from April through to the end of June. So here we go.

The first week of April normally brings quite uneventful weather to most districts of Britain, though it remains rather in northern districts, with frost at night, and this can be quite severe in the enclosed valleys and over the Scottish Lowlands generally. Mid-April tends to be unsettled, particularly the period 10-15th April, which produces moderately stormy weather two years in every three, the peak day for storms being the 14th April. Prevailing winds at this time blow generally from between west and north-west, bringing heavy showers, these affecting western districts and high ground facing west coasts in particular. Some of the showers fall as hail. This unsettled weather normally acts as a decided check in the seasonal rise of temperature, for day and night temperatures are cold. Between 10 and 13th April very cold nights are frequent in London and the Home Counties areas. The second half of April normally opens the thunderstorm season in Britain. The third week of April is generally quite bright and sunny, but also gives showers at times, and some of these of a thundery character. There is a risk that the moderately warm daytime temperatures may be countered by a day or two of colder weather, with snowstorms in some northern and eastern districts around 17-19th April. Every other year there is a period of decidedly cool, unsettled weather between 23 and 26th April, with considerable risk of snowfall in Southern England. The final days of the month normally see better weather, with quickly rising day temperatures and less risk of night frosts in all areas.

APRIL 2024

NEW MOON = 8th @ 1920hrs = Fair & Frosty
1st QUARTER MOON = 15th @ 2013hrs = Rain
FULL MOON 24th @ 0048hrs = Fair
LAST QUARTER MOON 2nd @ 0414hrs = Rain

LYRIDS METEOR SHOWER 22nd -23rd

Highest spring tides 8th to the 11th

Apogee 20th @ 0310hrs: Perigee 7th @ 1850hrs

MOON THIS MONTH IS KNOWN AS PINK MOON (from the name of the herb moss pink or wild ground phlox) OR SPROUTING GRASS MOON/ EGG MOON/FISH MOON (for tribes on coastal waters), RAIN MOON, GROWING MOON

BUCHAN COLD PERIOD 11th – 14th.

Fun fact: Few people are aware of the origin of All Fools Day; with its cry of “April Fool”. New Years Day originally fell on March 1st, then changed to April 1st, but was later altered to St Benedict’s Day, 21st March. Those who forgot and who still wished their friends a Happy New Year on April 1st were greeted with the words “April Fool”.

Nature Gnomes: Whilst we wait for the new Nature Gnomes website to launch, a fun suggestion for the kids in April: Puddle jump o’ metres. Tape insulating tape to the back of your wellies and mark out CMs in permanent marker. Now you can measure the depth of your puddles! Grown ups can get involved too you know – I do! Try keeping me out of muddy puddles!

To Summarise: The wet weather looks set to continue across April, we will have a mixture of rain and sunshine but now being Spring it will be marginally warmer, with a definite respite towards the end of the month – the Pink Sprouting Moon on the 24th brings fairer and dryer weather to end April with. There is also the potentially dangerous combination of highest tides, Perigee and a total solar eclipse to contend with so stay aware and vigilant between 6th – 10th. Those who live in coastal and tidal waters, this combination raises the possibility of a natural catastrophe somewhere in the world by 100%, therefore localised flooding is to be expected.

MAY 2024

The month of May has two notable characteristics: first, there is a rising seasonal temperature trend, but, secondly, a marked degree of day-to-day temperature variation that makes the sequence of warm and cold spells less regular than in most other months of the year. However, there are generally two cold periods. The first occurs 5-9th May, when there are cold winds generally from the north-west, with showers by day and a certain amount of frost at night. A more marked cold period normally sets in around 15-19th May. Winds tend to be gusty, strong, and cold, from the north, with squally showers producing hail, sleet, and snow from time to time, and although accumulations are seldom great in southern England and over lower ground in general, they may be heavy locally over high ground in the north. This period however holds for fruit growers and horticulturalists the most dangerous period of the whole year due to severe night frosts, called the Ice-Maidens, when around 4am the temperature suddenly drops from 4C to minus 4C in less than an hour, and, in so doing burns/kills all the fruit blossoms and tender shoots – there will be no Ice-maidens this year thankfully. The intervening periods 1-4th May and 10-14th May, produce rather nondescript conditions with no marked temperature or general weather trend. From the 23rd May onwards the weather is often fine and normally gives warm weather with less risk of temperature setbacks than earlier in the month. But the period has been known to produce some notable thunderstorms, at times severe and heavy enough to cause quite considerable local damage and occasional flooding; their greatest impact is in the southern and eastern counties of England.

To Summarise: For the first three weeks of May it will be very wet. The 23rd brings a full moon, a flowering moon with better weather to end the month, enjoy this fair spell as it won’t last. Gardeners/growers/fruit farmers note there will be no more frosts – no Ice-Maidens to endure.

MAY 2024

NEW MOON =8th @ 0421hrs = Rain
1st QUARTER MOON = 15th @ 1248hrs = Very Rainy
FULL MOON 23rd @ 1453hrs = Changeable
LAST QUARTER MOON 30th @ 1812hrs = Fair

DoP = 25th St Urban

ETA Aquarids 6th – 7th = Above average meteor shower

Highest spring tides 7th - 10th

APOGEE 17th @ 1958hrs: PERIGEE 5th @ 2304hrs

MOON IS FULL FLOWER MOON (since flowers are plentiful at this time) OR CORN PLANTING
MOON/MILK MOON, HARE MOON

BUCHAN COLD PERIOD 9th – 14th

NO MET OFFICE PERIODS

Fun Fact: May is named after the Greek goddess Maia, the time when flowers emerge and crops begin to sprout. In Anglo-Saxon times the name for May was Tri-Milchi, in recognition of the fact that with the lush new grass the cows could be milked three times a day. It was first called May in about 1430.

Nature Gnomes: If you missed our moon phases activity sheet earlier this year please e-mail me and I will send you a copy. May is a fantastic time to track lunar phases.

JUNE 2024

The first week of June tends to be changeable. The first two or three days tending to be bring widespread thundery showers to many southern and midland districts and occasionally further north. Then around 3-5th June, there is a change to cooler weather, with fresh north-westerly winds and passing showers in all areas. The drop in temperature at this time is sometimes as much as 6C and in some years frost may occur in sheltered valleys. By 8-10th June there is generally an improvement, and much of this period 8-21st June tends to be moderately fine (*Ed note: sadly, in recent years June has tended not to be the 'flaming June' of old but a quite wet month*)- not always with spells of drought but with no serious interruptions apart from the odd thunderstorm or showers. From 22nd June to the end of the month there are generally two or four very hot days, but the period is notable for a considerable increase in the risk of heavier type thunderstorms. At times these merge together, and thundery heavy rainfall occurs most often between 27 and 29th June particularly in South Wales and the southern districts of England. Between 30th June and 23 July there is generally a small drop in temperature; this however coincides with the Buchan cold period 29th June to 4th July, hence the propensity for it to rain on the Wimbledon tennis tournament at this time.

To summarise; Much like May, June will be another wet month. It is of course Glastonbury time, and as such rain is practically the norm! The light at the end of the tunnel will indeed be the last few days of June when the weather finally changes to fair and dry. It will gradually get warmer day by day going into the first three weeks of July. Indeed, this will be the best time to book your holidays in the UK – 31c/32c seems likely.

JUNE 2024

NEW MOON = 6th @ 1337hrs = Very Rainy
1st QUARTER MOON = 14th @ 0618hrs = Wind and Rain
FULL MOON 22nd @ 0207hrs = Cold and Showers
LAST QUARTER MOON 28th @ 2253hrs = Fair

FULL MOON THIS MONTH IS THE FULL STRAWBERRY MOON/ STRONG SON MOON

21st June is summer solstice

DoP = 15th St Vitus AND 24th St John + Quarter Day + Mid-summer

Highest Spring tides = 6th till 8th

APOGEE 14th @ 1435hrs: PERIGEE 2nd @ 0816hrs AND 27th @ 1230hrs

BUCHAN COLD PERIOD 29th to 4th JULY

NO MET OFFICE PERIODS.

Fun Weatherlore: You will recall the old jingle about the cuckoo, that “in June he changes his tune”. He changes his call from a straight “cuckoo” to a “Cuck-Cuckoo”. Very occasionally you will hear him give two preliminary “cucks”. When he does so you are in for a particularly fine spell.

Nature Gnomes: Given that June contains a vitally important wind day (June 24th), why don't you get outdoors and blow bubbles to measure the wind direction? You will need to take the wind direction every hour and then make the most accurate wind direction forecast you can when you have collated all the data. You can use a compass app on a mobile phone to figure out which direction you are facing. Whichever way the bubbles blow will reflect the way the wind is blowing. Who needs fancy computers and weather models?! Further into the summer you could have even tried to find a compass plant, hint – they always point North!