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APRIL 2015

Preamble.



Tree of the month up to 14th is the alder, (see previous month), thereafter the willow, above.

Welcome to the April website. Winter is now behind us - for the greater part - having said that there is still the outside chance of the odd snowfall here and there.

Easter is with us, some of the national press tell us it will be a 'heat wave Easter,' the methodology here suggests otherwise, the cold soil and conditions from March are still with us and the first moon of April is not good either, therefore the prediction remains cold and damp. Warmth will not be with us until the last two weeks in April. Then again I may be completely wrong! If cold enough, snow is a distinct possibility too.

For the cycling enthusiasts the Yorkshire cycle event 1st -3rd May, I think will be fine and dry for you, and the first real visible 'spin-off' from the magnificent 2014 Tour de France event.

An apology - to those who had hoped to hear me on BBC Radio4 Sunday 1st March on Broadcasting House - the script went to the editor and a format agreed.

However as I find with some broadcasters, the presenter runs the show, and unless he reads his brief before he starts he has no knowledge (or maybe no interest) in the lesser subjects, therefore the running time gets squeezed and what had the makings of a really interesting short succinct item just got eclipsed - a hatchet job? Maybe yes. A waste of space and my time as far as I was concerned - no wonder the BBC loses money!

However when the presenter and editor work as a team it all runs smoothly and coherently, as it does with The Paul Hudson Weather Show on BBC Radio York on Sunday mornings - an example of good broadcasting, with excellent content and interest, it makes good radio.

Several magazine articles have been subject of interviews and will appear in due course, the latest being The New Statesman, with the odd newspaper article too. Those that have the interest come and find me, I do not seek their attention. They ask the questions I give the answers.

The winter was variable in places. Not a lot of snow, some large sunshine totals, some high rainfall totals, snow in the north and Scotland and windy too.

I think spring will also be windy too, there are several saw that state this, but the most visible is the height and positioning of the rooks nests in the taller trees - not at the top, but a little lower this year, so that the nests are less buffeted by the winds.

St Winnowal on the 3rd March has a good saying for such winds which is quite reliable.

An interesting set of figures arose this month. The total of the last 18 days of February and the first 10 days of March give a fairly accurate advance prediction as to how wet, or dry, the following months will be. Over some 20 years I have set the benchmark for this period at 100mm. Above that a wetter than average year: below this, the correspondingly dry. Strange though it may seem, it is remarkable accurate too.

This year February was 65.6mm. March was 4.8mm. The total being 70.4mm.

From the above I will confidently predict that later in the year there will be an extended dry period - possibly within the 'drought' parameters (but there is sufficient water in reserve to make a drought per se unlikely). I think either June or September are the most likely periods. When I can firm this up I will.

The period 20th/22nd an interesting time for weather watchers. The first in line was the partial solar eclipse on 20th March - as I suggested last month - a non-event here, due to 8/8ths cloud for all the morning, but some were fortunate and saw it.

St Benedict - 21st March, Quarter day, therefore wind direction day. An unusual wind direction too - WNW - a cold bitter wind from the north, therefore westerly winds will be the predominant direction until well into June, with some cold drawn in from the north too. This wind direction will take precedence over the wind on 2nd February (Candlemass) which WSW. On the positive side, since there was no frost a fertile year will ensue.

The spring tides warning last month was appropriate - the Environment Dept & Met Office issued 9 flood and 34 other warning notices concerning excess water due to the abnormally high tides connected to the eclipse. The Woolwich Flood barrier in London was raised for the 175th time, but still flood water permeated lower lying parts of London. The next such high tides will be in September.

However not all doom and gloom, the tidal conditions exposed parts of a forest drowned 6000 years ago off the Somerset Coast near Minehead as the tide receded to the lowest levels ever (the residue of a large forest that stretched from England across what is now the Bristol Channel into south Glamorgan - but flooded when the ice-age melted).

As gardeners will know, the ground is still very cold from the cold February and early March frosts. So growth is about a month behind previous years. Good news for the fruit & pea farmers since all are signs of a good harvest. The prediction of no real warmth until the third & fourth weeks of April remains pretty good. Precious little blossom on the Blackthorn, Hawthorn and associated trees either, some wood violets -but you have to look very hard indeed, and a near complete absence leaf or bud burst on trees. Winter still with us a while yet then!
The saw/sayings for gardeners for the last couple of months are all falling into place wonderfully well - and as such backing up the Christmas Day weather saw. March as been dry and none too warm, but plenty of sun - in places, see the saw about dust in March!

An early request for Great Yorkshire Show weather - 14th to 16th July. The first day will be the best, dry warm sunny; day two dry warm but less sun; day three I think some dampness.

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Edenbridge

March 2015.

AND FINALLY:

The following article I found in The Times dated 7th March, and I found quite interesting. The reading here combined with the contents of 'Food for Free' by Richard Mabey, ISBN 0 00 613470 X complement each other.

Professors tell America's poor to eat weeds

United States

Rhys Blakely Los Angeles

Sprouting on street corners and thriving in pavement cracks, weeds are the bane of gardeners worldwide.

Yet two professors in California are urging people to take a fresh look at the wild plants that grow in city landscapes.

They should become a source of food, they say, especially as they tend to be plentiful in poorer neighbourhoods where residents need to eat more greens and where decent greengrocers are in short supply. Philip Stark and Tom Carlson, of the Berkeley Food

region of California, 11 of the top 15 "plant pests" can be eaten — and many are quite delicious, they argue.

"This is not special to California, though our climate does help," Professor Stark said. "These plants grow all over the world."

Weed delicacies include plants whose very names make gardeners shudder, such as chickweed. "It tastes like spring," Professor Stark said. "It's fresh and bright — like alfalfa sprouts, only better, with a delicate crunch."

Sow thistle is a substitute for lettuce, while the fronds of sweet fennel taste like aniseed or liquorice, and the leaves of wild mustard and black mustard yield a satisfying, pungent kick.

Those with more adventurous palates might want to try bristly oxtongue (*Helminthotheca echioides*). It resembles a warty, spiky dandelion. "Looks like it would be torture to eat it," Professor Stark's guidebook reports. "But it's delightful and surprising, and only slightly scratchy... Some chefs say it tastes like beef. Good in salad, but not by itself."

Professor Stark and Professor Carlson have identified 90 edible species in the Oakland region of California, in areas labelled "food deserts" because they lack greengrocers. They advise new foragers to follow a "white list" of plants that are safe to eat and that they are certain they can identify.

Professor Stark admits that many city dwellers will resist picking food from the streets. The first question asked almost always involves dog urine, he said.

"It's sterile and it's water soluble," he reports. "I wash my food, and it comes off — though some people think eating a little dirt [makes for] a healthier gut."

The real barrier, he believes, is that we have become blindly reliant on a "food clergy", composed of supermarkets, restaurants and commercial entities to tell us what is safe to eat.

"We are evolutionarily wired to scan our environment," he adds. Foraging from the pavement can "change the way you relate to the world".

Cheap and tasty

Chickweed Tastes like alfalfa sprout

Miner's lettuce Mild, silky taste

Sow thistle Lettuce substitute

English plantain Needs to be blanched before eating

Curly dock Lemony salad leaf

Cat's ear Less bitter than dandelion

Source: Philip Stark

Institute, have become experts on the delicacies sprouting on America's pavements and roadside verges.

The two academics argue that most town dwellers could easily supplement their diet with servings of salad plucked from the streets.

"We're talking fibre, phytonutrients — weeds are a source of nutrition, not calories," Professor Stark said.

Extending such thinking to commercial agriculture could yield a huge new source of food, he added. It is estimated that as much as 40 per cent of the edible output produced by some farms is weeds.

On urban farms in the San Francisco

APRIL 2015

NEW MOON = 18th @ 1957hrs = Fair
1st QUARTER MOON = 25th @ 00.55hrs = Fair
FULL MOON 4th @ 13.06hrs = Snow/rain + Lunar Eclipse
LAST QUARTER MOON 12th @ 04.44hrs = Rain.

DoP = 3rd Good Friday.

Highest spring tides 19th - 21st.

- 1st All Fools Day Should it rain on All Fools Day, it brings good crops of corn and hay. Apogee 14.00hrs
- 2nd Maundy Thursday Fine on Holy Thursday, wet on Whit Monday (25th May).
- 3rd Good Friday DoP up to 25th May (St Urban). Rain on Good Friday and Easter Day, good year for grass and a bad one for hay (wet June). - This signifies a wet year and such weather on Good Friday will last for 40 days.
- 5th Easter Day If sunshine today, so at Whitsun (24th May). Rainy Easter = cheesy year (wet). Greenfly at Easter - June will blister.
- 6th Latter Lady Day - the cold comes on the water.
- 7th Hop Monday Hop pole erection day.
- 8th Apogee 1453hrs.
- 11th - 14th Blackthorn Winter
- 12th Low Sunday This Sunday settles the weather for the whole summer.
- 14th Cuckoo Day The cuckoos song is first heard about this time.
- 15th St Basilissa Swallows arrive.
- 16th St Padarn Celtic Goddess - traditionally the day to start weeding growing crops.
- 17th Perigee 04.54hrs
- 19th Pastor Sunday If it rains this day it will rain every Sunday until Pentecost (9th June).
- 23rd St George Comes the cuckoo and the nightingale. When St George growls (thunder) in the sky, wind and storms are drawing nigh. Harebell flowering day.
Mallard Day From a festival at All Souls College, Oxford. Perigee 0024hrs
- 23rd to 26th A cold stormy period bringing heavy showers.
- 25th St Mark As long before this day frogs are heard a-croaking, so long will they keep quiet afterwards. The cuckoo heralds the arrival of migratory birds from the south, indicating the return of summer.

29th Apogee 04.56hrs

NO MET OFFICE NOTES: BUCHAN NOTES: 11th to 14th is cold period.

The full moon this month is known as the Pink Moon.

The tree of the month up to the 14th is the Alder, thereafter the Willow.

General Notes and Comments

The month of season changes, young leaves and blossoms unfold. April and May are the keys to the whole year.

The first really cheerful month of the year.

Rarely a very wet month, can be completely dry.

Annual humidity is at its lowest and can produce dust storms.

Hottest ever April in 2007/2011

As a general rule, April weather is a mixture of all sorts.

April weather, rain and sunshine together.

We must suffer a cold wet April if we want a good summer.

Cold weather in April is supposed to be good for bumper harvest. A cold April - barn will fill.

A dry March and a rainy April makes a beautiful May.

Most old sayings say it is best to have a wet April.

When April blows his horn, 'tis good for hay and corn.

[the reference to 'horn' means thunder, it also means a good summer]

April cold and wet fills the barns best yet.

April wet, good wheat.

After a cold April the barns fill best.

April cold and wet fills barns and barrels.

April rain makes large sheaves.

April showers bring May flowers.

East wind in spring a brilliant summer will bring.

When doves start to coo the last frosts have gone.

After a wet April a dry June. After a moist April a clear June.

Spring has come when a virgin can cover six daisies with her foot.

When winter meets summer it foretells a hot dry summer [sometimes a prolonged winter seems to turn into summer overnight].

The weather in the second half of April fortells the summer. [wise words commanding respect]

*Cloudy April - dewy May. Thunderstorms in April - floods in May.
Showery April -Flowery May.*

Dry Spring - wet Autumn. Thunder in spring and cold it will bring.

Blackthorn Winter - 11th -14th April.

Just as the Blackthorn is coming into blossom expect some fine weather. However if the flower arrives before the leaf then expect a cold snap.

AND

If he blooms before the leaves appear, be sure there will be a bitter spell - perhaps even with snow. [this is a most accurate saying]

23rd St Georges Day - If it rains today St George eats all the cherries.

Much February snow - April summer doth show. [check records]

Early Cuckoo - dry summer (arrival in or before early April). The later he arrives the worse the summer.

*When March has April weather, April will have March weather.
E/NE winds reach their greatest frequency during April and May.
After a warm April and a warm October, a warm year to come.
A dry Lent spells a fertile year.*

April, more than March, can have both summer and winter embrace it. April can also be more snowy than December. Classic April snowstorms of 1966 &1981. Whilst in 1949 the mercury topped 80F(27C).

April has the face of a monk and the claws of a cat.

Thunderstorms in April is the end of hoar-frost.

If the first three days be foggy, there will be a flood in June. (rain in June will make the lanes boggy)

April may be famous for its showers, but it is rarely a very wet month. Quite the contrary - April is one of the driest months of the year in all parts of the UK.

Greenfly at Easter, June will blister.

Rainy Easter - a cheesy year (much rain = plenty of grass)

Northerly winds over northern Europe reach their highest frequency around 15th June. But are rare after 20th June. Meanwhile SW winds blow comparatively infrequently from late March until 10th June, but are very much more common during the rest of June.

From the same research, taking England & Wales as a whole, the driest months of the year are:- March, April & May, and occasionally February and June. These months are also the months when long drags of unsettled westerly

winds are unlikely to occur. Monthly rainfall is between 2.3/2.6 ins (58/66mms) for each month from February to June. From July onwards 3.2/3.8ins (81/96mms).

23rd/26th - A cold stormy period brings heavy showers. There is also a similar period mid-month.

Tidal energies are ruled by moon particularly this month, possibly the reason for the severely changeable weather at this time.

Late Easter = long cold spring. The weather at Easter fortells the harvest.

THE FULL MOON THIS MONTH IS KNOWN AS THE PINK MOON

The tree of the month up to the 14th is the Alder. Thereafter is the Willow.

MONTHLY AVERAGES FOR EDENBRIDGE (USING 1981-2010 FIGURES)

Mean Max:	15.5C	Mean Min:	3.3C	Mean Avg:	9.4C
Rainfall:	60.5mm	Sunshine:	191.9hrs	(day = 6.4hrs)	

Whilst I appreciate the above are local figures, it will be an indication of what the averages are, and, of course there will be local variations. Such variations can be found by trawling the various weather websites, or by using the superb data found in the Climatologists Observers Link website.

The following figures are for the average temperature at 12 noon and again at 4pm, taken at the beginning and again at the end of the month.

1 st	12.2C	13.3C
31 st	14.4C	15.5C

