

It's Spring!



Mini Fact:

Flowers can bloom from roots, buds, seeds or bulbs.

Have you been feeling extra perky lately? Nature is waking up. Animals, including people, are kicking up their heels. The weather is changing. It's spring!

Weather heats up

- Days get longer.
- Temperatures warm up.
- Extra light, warmth and moisture get plants growing.
- Warm spring air mixing with colder winter air can mean troubled skies.

Warm air can hold more moisture than cold air. Unstable moist air can lead to storms. Thunderstorms, tornadoes and flash floods (from heavy rains and snowmelt) can spring up.



Spring weather can be dangerous. Stay inside during storms.

Trees dig deep

When temperatures rise above freezing, the sugar-rich sap of trees and bushes begins to flow again. This is when farmers tap maple trunks and boil the liquid into syrup.

Leaves, flowers and cones grow from tree buds that developed between fall and spring.

In most of the United States, trees that are not evergreen slowed down or stopped growing in winter. As the icy soil warms, roots can take up water, and growth begins again.



Evergreens grow faster now than at any other time. New needles are softer and brighter. New cones are small and colorful.

Flowers look up

Woodland wildflowers usually appear in early spring. For a brief time they get plenty of sun. Most trees have not yet grown leaves that block the light.

Animals wake up

In the spring, animals may look and act different. They might lose some fur or feathers. Their fur might change color, or their feathers might get brighter.



Notice how this mother buffalo's fur is shedding for the warm summer months.

• Some animals, especially birds, travel north, or **migrate**. They return home after wintering in warmer areas to the south.

• Many birds build nests. To attract mates, some develop songs. Others might stake out territory, stop living in flocks and start living in pairs.

• Some male animals add body muscle as they get ready to fight other males over territory.

Baby animals arrive

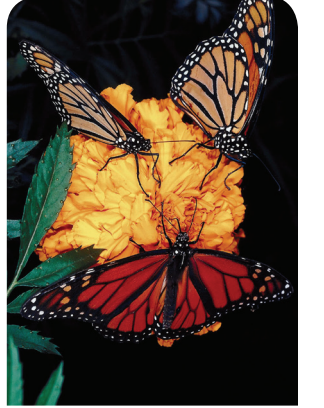
Many wild animals, such as raccoons and birds, can have two or more litters throughout the year. But the first litter usually comes in spring. If the mother is not healthy, that may be her only one.

Farm animals usually have babies in the spring because the farmers plan it that way.

Insects come out

Social insects, such as ants and bees, go to work. They've been huddled together inside their hive or nest during the cold months. They've used up most of their food. Workers have to find more food soon.

Some insects fly north. Monarch butterflies travel from Mexico and southern California. Along the way, they lay eggs on milkweed buds, then continue their journey.



When these eggs hatch and change to butterflies, they fly north, too. They know where to go even though no adults are around to show them the way.

Some eggs, such as those of grasshoppers and crickets, hatch underground. Little grasshoppers push their way to the soil's surface and start eating their favorite plants.

Some butterflies and beetles spend the winter in **pupa** stage — wrapped in a cocoon. As it warms, the adult comes out of the case.

Resources



On the Web:

- bit.ly/2kNa1zg
- bit.ly/2kNIS0g

At the library:

- "Signs of Spring" by Colleen Dolphin
- "How Do We Know It Is Spring?" by Molly Aloian

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Try 'n' Find

Words that remind us of spring are hidden in this puzzle. Some words are hidden backward or diagonally, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find:



BABIES, BIRDS, BULBS,
BUTTERFLIES, EGGS,
FEATHERS, FLOWERS,
FOOD, GROW, LITTER,
MIGRATE, MOISTURE,
PLANTS, PUPA,
SEASONS, SPRING,
SUN, WARM, WATER,
WEATHER.

B Q M O I S T U R E T Q S U N
A S P R I N G R P A P T W B S
B I G I A R E N B S N V S K R
I M M K E H R I U A K P R G E
E B U T T E R F L I E S E W H
S T T A Q D Z P B S J A W A T
N I E W S K B M S Q T P O T A
L W G A W O R G R D N U L E E
B F G R S N O S A E S P F R F
Z K S M F O O D E T A R G I M

Cook's Corner

Easy Spinach Casserole

You'll need:

- 1 (10-ounce) package frozen chopped spinach
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 cup grated Swiss cheese
- 1/2 cup reduced-fat milk

- 1 tablespoon finely chopped onion
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3 teaspoons melted butter
- 1/2 cup fine bread crumbs



* You'll need an adult's help with this recipe.

What to do:

1. Cook spinach according to directions. Squeeze dry with paper towels.
2. Combine cooked spinach, eggs, cheese, milk, onion and salt in a medium bowl.
3. Coat a medium-size baking dish with cooking spray and pour in mixture.
4. Combine melted butter with bread crumbs; spread evenly over the top.
5. Bake for 30 minutes at 350 degrees. Cut into squares to serve. Makes 4 to 6 servings.

7 Little Words for Kids

Use the letters in the boxes to make a word with the same meaning as the clue. The numbers in parentheses represent the number of letters in the solution. Each letter combination can be used only once, but all letter combinations will be necessary to complete the puzzle.



1. morning drink (6) _____
2. what a referee blows (7) _____
3. they open locks (4) _____
4. riding the waves (7) _____
5. robber (5) _____
6. New York baseball team (7) _____
7. space traveler (9) _____

CO	TLE	TRO	EE
KE	EF	YS	ING
NAUT	EES	SURF	WHIS
YANK	AS	THI	FF

Answers: coffee, whistle, keys, surfing, thief, Yankees, astronaut.

Mini Jokes



Sydney: When do monkeys fall from the sky?
Sam: During Ape-ril showers!

Eco Note



Are you going to the beach this spring or summer? Plastic bags and other garbage thrown into the ocean kill more than 1 million sea creatures every year. Some of the garbage comes from boats or ships, but most of it comes from beaches or rivers. When you visit the beach, take along a garbage bag and fill it with trash, then dispose of it in a garbage can. Put recyclables in the proper containers.

adapted with permission from "The New 50 Simple Things Kids Can Do to Save the Earth" by The Earthworks Group, Andrews McMeel Publishing (andrewsmcmeel.com)

Thank You



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Teachers: For standards-based activities to accompany this feature, visit: bbs.amuniversal.com/teaching_guides.html

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