

2020 is behind us, but my heart goes out to those families who suffered and whose lives have changed forever. We have cause to think that this year will be different, however. Hopefully, the COVID-19 vaccines will be effective and can eliminate much of the anxiety that has been gripping the country.

In times of trouble, believe it or not generations of Americans have turned to the Farmers' Almanac to see what the future held for them. Here is the entry for our area:

*THE DRY SIDE--Areas across the Desert Southwest, (Arizona and southern California), are predicted to experience a dry and generally mild winter. Not good news considering signs that drought conditions were beginning to ramp up in these regions at the close of the winter of 2020.*

The Farmers' Almanac also supports the Gardening by The Moon Philosophy. Their editions include a calendar of the best days for sowing, planting, weeding, and other garden chores, as determined by the phase and position of the Moon. Readers have long sworn by this method of managing their gardens and crops.

But how could a chunk of rock more than 200,000 miles away affect how plants on Earth grow?

Those who swear by this ancient growing method say the water in both the ground and in plants are affected by the gravitational pull of the Sun and Moon, just like ocean tides are. Just as the tides are highest during the New and Full phases of the Moon, this theory holds, seeds, too, will absorb the most water during these times.

Over the course of a 29½ -day lunar cycle, the Moon goes through four basic phases, New, Full, and two Quarter phases. For half of its cycle, between the New and Full phases, the Moon is waxing (growing in illumination). Then, after the Full Moon, it begins to wane (decreasing in illumination).

Aboveground Crops--All aboveground crops should be planted when the Moon is waxing. During the New Moon is the best time to sow or transplant leafy annuals such as lettuce, spinach, cabbage, and celery, while the First Quarter phase is good for annual fruits and foods with external seeds, such as tomatoes, pumpkins, broccoli and beans.

Below-Ground (Root) Crops--Root crops do best when the Moon is waning. When the Moon is just past Full, it's a good time to sow or plant root crops and fruit trees like apples, potatoes, beets, turnips, asparagus, and rhubarb. During the Last Quarter phase, it's best to avoid planting at all. Work instead on improving soil, weeding, mulching, composting, etc.



A picture like this makes me thankful I live in coastal Southern California.

Diane Harris, Secretary