



Henderson County Master Gardeners Weekly News Article February 19, 2018

Spring's Arrival Predicted by Lydia Holley

Several years ago, I kept hearing a certain buzzword among gardeners: phenology. Phenology is the study of plants and animals and how they change with the climate. Simply put, it is when plants (or animals) react to the seasons. If you have ever wondered if your bulbs emerge at the same time each year (or noted it in a journal), or been curious if the birds migrate on the same day of each year, then you have thought about phenology.



Some gardeners became citizen scientists: observing, recording, and submitting their data to universities or other organizations interested in collecting that type of information. They recorded numerous events in their gardens from year to year such as the dates they first sighted migrating birds or the the date of their first rose bloom.

Cornell University recently published an article on phenology in [Texas Gardeners Seeds](#). Having collected several years of information, by using these past phenology records, predictions for future spring forecasts are now being ventured. Last year's spring was later than normal by up to 20 days. In looking at their collected data, they realized they could have predicted its late arrival.

So, they put together their information to forecast this year's spring arrival. What about us? Will this year's spring come early or late? According to the "Forecasted Spring Leaf Index Anomaly", North Texas should have spring arrive five days later than average, while South Texas should have an earlier spring than average by five days. On the map, our area is almost exactly dissected between the two. I guess that means spring should come right on time for us. Are you ready for it?

Although gardeners love to see spring come, their garden chore list is usually so long they could use a few extra days before it arrives. You may not get those extra days this year. If Cornell University is correct, you should time your work on seasonal garden chores for an average spring arrival.

If you are interested in gathering data, there are several phenology projects which will accept recorded information from citizens. You just may help predict the future.

For more information, call 903-675-6130, email hendersonCMGA@gmail.com or visit www.henderson-co-tx-mg.org.