



May 2026

Indigenous UK Weather Forecast

MAY 2026
PREAMBLE



Wildflowers of the month:

Crowfoot: 3rd

Dandelion: 22nd

Flower of the month: Lily of the Valley

Tree of the month: Up to 12th is the Willow, thereafter the Hawthorn.

Full Moon this Month: Flower Moon

*“Among the changing months, May stands confest the
sweetest.”*

James Thomson

April 2026

April 2026 in the UK has been a very changeable spring month so far, we seen everything from stormy winds and snow to unusually early heat and then a return to mixed, cooler weather.

Early April was Stormy and unsettled The month began with a highly changeable spell. Around the Easter period, low pressure systems brought strong winds, rain, and some hill snow, especially in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and northern England. Gusts in exposed Scottish areas were near 80–90 mph.

We then saw around the 7–8 April A burst of high pressure then brought one of the warmest early-April spells in decades. On 8 April, temperatures reached 26.5–26.6°C at Kew Gardens in London, making it the hottest day of 2026 so far and one of the hottest early April days in around 80 years. Central, southern and eastern England were especially warm and sunny.

Mid-April turned Cooler, showery and mixed for most and After the warm spike we saw temperatures drop back closer to seasonal averages. Mid-April has seen a mixture of, sunshine and showers, breezy Atlantic weather in western areas, cooler days than the early-month heat and drier conditions at times in the south and east For the remainder of the month High pressure has tried to rebuild at times, bringing calmer weather and sunshine, but the pattern remains fairly springlike and changeable rather than settled summer weather.

And as predicted April 2026 has been a classic British spring month — wild swings from storms to near-summer warmth, then back to showers and cooler air. The standout event was definitely the 26°C+ early April heat in London.

Regional Feel for April 2026

South East / London: Warmest part of the UK during the hot spell, then mild and mixed.

Wales / Midlands: Warm early April, then variable with showers.

North England / Scotland: More wind, rain, and occasional colder snaps.

Northern Ireland: Frequent Atlantic fronts and breezier conditions.

Onto May

We will likely see a golden opening to May, with the first two weeks being particularly beautiful – though cool evenings are likely. May is expected to end on a much wetter note, although sunshine should continue throughout. I will add here that farmers and growers should be aware of the Ice Maidens this year. Fogs in February can mean frosts in May, and we have had a notably foggy start to February – well worth bearing in mind, as overnight frosts seem likely in May.

Temperatures will tick up, and the first two weeks should be fair – but do bear in mind those cold evenings. Chestnut Sunday is invariably pleasant (but cold overnight). The last two weeks of May will be wetter, but sunshine should continue throughout the month.

Magic Sightings waiting to happen in May are:

- Adders
- Badgers
- Bats
- Bee Flies
- Bluebells
- Brown Hares
- Butterflies & Damselflies (Use Jim's Guide)
- Cuckoos (and flower)
 - Curlews
 - Dippers
 - Fox Cubs
- Glow Worm Larvae
 - Goshawks
- Great Crested Grebes
 - Hawthorn
 - Lapwing
 - Mayflies
 - Newts
 - Nightjars
 - Orchids
 - Otters
- Oyster Catchers
 - Squirrels
 - Redstarts
 - Robins
- Sand Martins
 - Snipe
 - Stoats
- Swallows & Swifts
- Tawny Owls/ Short Eared Owls



The Cuckoo: Credit to Trevor Eldridge

This May is the perfect time to plant sunflowers, a cheerful and easy to grow flower that brings instant magic to gardens, balconies or even pots on a windowsill.

With warming soil and longer days, sunflower seeds germinate quickly when sown directly outdoors, and children especially love watching their rapid growth.

Choose a sunny spot, plant the seeds about 1-2cm deep and keep the soil moist. Within a week or two shoots will appear – brightening your garden and attracting bees, butterflies, and later birds, making them a wonderful way to support wildlife.

MY TOP FORAGING PICKS FOR THIS MAY:

- Elderflower (YouTube video coming soon – elderberry cordial and or wine time)!

Word of warning: when the wood of the elder is burnt it gives off deadly cyanide fumes – be careful.

Also, a great time of year for: Lime, Watercress and Wild Garlic.

**IF YOU ARE UNSURE OF IDENTITY
DO NOT EAT. WE HAVE A
SURPRISING NUMBER OF
POISONOUS SPECIES IN UK.**

Now for the collated expert notes on May:

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 – hence why we generally advise planting out after Ice Maidens. 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.

Notes from Nature (Now available each month on YouTube and Spotify)

Nature and the moon phases move in perfect partnership. While regional variations occur, each year they fall into sync in their own time. The phases of the moon set the tone for the weather, and nature follows - eventually complementing the rhythm.

This year, we observed that the oaks leaf burst before the ash, as such:

“Oak before ash, we’re in for a splash.”

Combined with the moon phase patterns, this points to a dryish summer overall.

That said, we think Summer 2026 will bring a real mix of sunny spells and showers, with warm temperatures and more thunderstorms than average. A real variety - plenty of bright days scattered with rain and at times thunder.

On 21st March, for the majority the wind blew predominantly from an easterly direction - this explains the chilly winds that have been with us ever since.

Nature, has already started laying in stocks for next winter, and in particular holly is well ahead of schedule. This suggests an early winter, and as ever, nature seeks balance. As such we expect a true gardeners summer.

The next significant wind date is 24th June, with a south-westerly predicted - bringing warmer, more typical summer weather.

The cuckoo flower bloomed on 19th March—around two weeks earlier than usual - and the cuckoo was seen on 7th April, likely arriving nearer the 1st. This early arrival suggests an early departure, likely before the usual first week of July. To me this indicates July may be one of the wettest months of the summer.

On a brighter note, all fruits and berries are setting well, which means they'll be in place and protected, should the Ice Maidens make a late appearance. All evidence, including the ever useful Christmas and New Year saws also points to a fantastic fruit harvest – more good news for growers. Expect an abundance of apples, bullace, sloes, plums and damsons once again.

The rooks have nested lower this year - suggesting it could be quite a windy summer, and indeed at times we have had quite windy conditions this spring too.

Beautiful flowers are everywhere you look now: buttercups, bluebells, sweet violets, stitchwort, coral root, periwinkle, camellia, wild garlic, garlic mustard, plantain, juniper, dog mercury, lords-and-ladies, green alkanet, and three-cornered garlic, to name just a few!

Cows parsley deserved an honourable mention too – well taller than average for April.

What an amazing time of year. Get out and see what you can see. ☺

MAY 2026

Full Moon = 1st @ 18:23 = Fair

3Q Moon = 9th @ 22:10 = Fair

New Moon = 16th @ 21:01 = Rainy

1Q Moon = 23rd @ 12:10 = Very Rainy

Full (blue) Moon = 31st @ 09:45 = Changeable

DoP: St Urban – 25th

Highest Spring Tides: 1st – 4th & 16th – 20th

APOGEE: 4th @ 22:32 PERIGEE: 17th @ 13:49

Eta Aquarids Meteor Shower – 6th & 7th, Micro Moon – 31st

Met Office Notes: None/ BUCHAN NOTES: Cold Period: 9th – 14th (Ice Maidens)

FULL MOON THIS MONTH IS KNOWN AS FLOWER MOON

General notes and comments.

If you are looking for a good summer, the best May weather you need should be cold and rainy.

May can be/likely to be cold, but nothing strange in this.

He who dofts his coat on a winter's day will gladly put it on in May.

A cold May gives full barns and empty churchyards.

Goddess of Spring. Sacred Hawthorn tree blossoms this month.

Severe gales are very much the exception to the rule, though boisterous breezes are fairly common.

E/NE winds reach their greatest frequency during April and May.

SE England, London in particular, suffers from more short intense storms than any other part of the country

Goddess of Spring. Sacred Hawthorn tree blossoms this month.

Flowers in May good cocks of hay. Water in May - bread all year.

A cold wet May is good for corn and hay, a dry May fortells a wholesome summer.

A cold May and windy, a full barn will find ye.

He who shears his sheep before St Mamertus Day (11th) loves his wool more than his sheep.

The later the Blackthorn in bloom after the 1st May, the better the rye and harvest.

If rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, and summer's lease hath all too short a stay.

Rain in May makes plenty of hay.

Mist in May, heat in June, puts the harvest right in tune/makes the harvest come right soon.

Who sows his oats in May has little to repay.

A May flood never did anyone any good.

A leaky May and dry June makes harvest come right soon.

St Urban (25th) gives the summer.

[this does give an indication, a fair indication - it can however be ambiguous or a little optimistic]

MONTHLY AVERAGES FOR EDENBRIDGE (USING 1991-2020 FIGURES)
All the figures below have been upgraded to comply with the current 30 year period above.

Mean Max: 19.3C Mean Min: 8C Mean Avg: 13.6C
Rainfall: 62.8mm Sunsh0ine: 213.2hrs (Day = 6.87hrs)

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.

1st: 15.28C/ 16C

31st: 18.83C/ 20.14C

What to Look out for in May

Flowers & Plants

- Herb Robert – small pink flowers, reddish stems, slightly strong smell
- Yellow archangel – yellow flowers in shady woodland
- Meadow buttercup – taller buttercups found in long grass
- Common sorrel – reddish seed heads in meadows
- Plantain – spiky flower heads on lawns and paths
- Cleavers – “sticky weed” that clings to clothes



Common Sorrel



Cleavers



Herb Robert

Grasses & Early Meadow Growth

- Timothy grass – cylindrical flower heads
- Cock's-foot grass – clumpy, spiky heads
- Seed heads forming = sign summer is on the way



Timothy Grass (left) & Cocks- Foot Grass (right)

Trees

- Ash tree – one of the last to leaf out (“ash before oak”)
- Sycamore – winged seeds already forming

- Silver birch – light green leaves shimmering in wind

Birds (Behaviours to keep an eye out for)

- Wood pigeon – constant cooing everywhere
- Magpie – very active, often in pairs
- Starling – noisy flocks.
- Wren – tiny but can be very loud



Wood Pigeon (left) & Wren (right)

Insects and Small Creatures

- St Mark's fly – slow, dangling legs in flight (around late April–May)
- Green shield bug – bright green, shield-shaped
- Seven-spot ladybird – classic red with black spots
- Common carder bee – fluffy, ginger-brown
- Garden snail – more active after rain
- Woodlouse – under logs and stones
- Slugs and beetles in damp areas



Green Shield Bug



Common Carder Bee



St Marks Fly

Near Water (Ponds, Rivers, Lakes)

- Yellow flag iris – bright yellow flowers at water edges
- Mallard – ducklings everywhere
- Common damselfly – thin, bright blue insects
- Ripples from fish just below the surface

Evening / Night Nature

- Bat – start appearing at dusk
- Moths gathering around lights
- Cooler air + louder bird choruses at sunset