

The joys of spring in the time of climate change

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We are far enough from the equator to have discernible winters and summers, but the transition from one to the other can involve unpredictable and often violent weather. Spring is often the time for sudden afternoon hailstorms, hailstones being as large as footballs, which I saw once for myself as a child. Even without thunderstorms, winds can come up that can rip insecurely anchored roofs off structures, so any building in this part of the world needs to be unusually solid. Lightning can strike anywhere, and those of us with electricity learn to disconnect everything the moment that thunder is heard nearby, so that surges along the wires don't blow up our equipment. All this can happen long before any actual rain, which is supposed to come in summer but often doesn't. Enough rain will cool things down somewhat, but in these times of global warming, we never know for how long we are going to have to endure temperatures above 40 deg. C, which can scorch delicate plants even provided with shade and plenty of water.

But in winter we can still get frosts!