

Comings and Growings

What are your favorite signs of spring? Robins? Crocuses?

Try these: bumblebees, butterflies, hummingbirds, oak flowers. They are all signs of spring you might not know about. And there are lots, lots more. Some are really cool.

Here's the point: Spring is rich with life. Lots of things pop up, pop in, fly by, or settle down, right under our noses. These comings and "growings" happen in precise order. In fact, they're beginning to happen now. Read a bit about them on these pages. Then go outside and watch—and enjoy a wonderful spring!



Going Green

Watch creation go green in the spring. What happens first: Does grass green up or do trees leaf out? When do wildflowers bloom? What makes what bloom when?

Creation usually greens from the ground up: Grasses first, then woodland wildflowers, then bushes. Finally, trees unfurl their leaves.

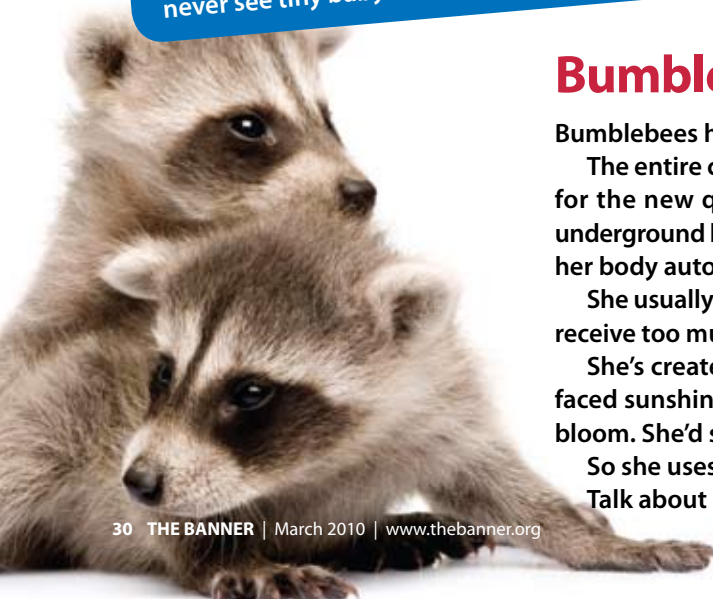
That all makes sense. To go green, *all* plants need sunlight. If trees leafed out first, they'd shade everything else. Short woodland plants wouldn't grow or bloom well. So creation generally goes green from the ground up.



Spring Babies

If you lived in the woods, what baby animals might you see in the spring? Raccoons? Skunks? Deer? Coyotes?

Most mammals are born in the spring. You never see tiny baby animals in the fall. Why?



Bumblebee Burrows

Bumblebees hibernate!

The entire colony dies in the first frost, except for the new queen bee. She hibernates in an underground burrow. She doesn't freeze because her body automatically makes a kind of anti-freeze when temperatures drop.

She usually finds or makes a burrow facing north, not south. South-facing burrows receive too much sun. She needs her burrow to stay cool in the spring.

She's created to wake up when her burrow warms to a certain temperature. If it faced sunshine, it might warm too early. Flowers that she feeds on might not be in bloom. She'd starve.

So she uses a burrow that will stay at the right temperature in early spring. Talk about cool!



SCOTT HOLLADAY

Blooming Onion

There's always a plant that doesn't follow the rules. Wild onion certainly doesn't.

When wildflowers bloom in early spring sunshine, wild onion doesn't. It puts out big, fat, smelly leaves instead. These leaves gather energy from sunlight and store it in the root. The root becomes a round, smelly . . . onion!

In late spring, after trees leaf out, the onion blooms. Sometimes it's the only flower obvious in the woods.

It doesn't get much sunlight; it uses stored energy. But it gets lots of attention from the bug world. There aren't many other flowers out at that time. Bugs will certainly visit and pollinate it. That's what it "wants."

What a great idea! You'd almost think wild onion figured this out. Obviously, Someone else did.

Maps for Monarchs

Last fall monarch butterflies made a spectacular journey south. Now they're headed north.

It takes several generations of monarchs to move all the way north. Each generation moves up a little. The butterflies that appear way up north are the great-great-grandchildren of those that migrated south last fall.

It's like you following a route that people traveled 80 years ago and ending up in the right place. How in the world do monarchs know where to go when?



Hummingbird Highways

Set up a hummingbird feeder—the little jewels are on their way north!

Lots of hummingbird "highways" run up and down North America. Each hummer has a map in its head. It follows the same highway every season.

Hummingbirds use energy so quickly they must refuel often. They can't afford to share their fuel flowers, so they fly alone.

Some hummingbird highways are long and dangerous. One goes clear across the Gulf of Mexico, 450 miles over open water. That's more than 20 hours of flight time with no fuel stops. Another runs through the Mojave Desert, where food is often scarce.

March Movements

Keep your eyes and ears open for these signs of spring: Some **robins** from the far south have begun to head north.

Have you heard **spring peepers** yet? By mid-March many of these little frogs have thawed and begun their nightly peeping.

Some **dragonflies** migrate. Look for them especially along shorelines.

Gray whales have begun their 500- to 600-mile (800-900 kilometer) trip north from Mexico and up the California shoreline. Some will go as far north as British Columbia.

Journey North

Check this website to keep track of real-time comings and growings: www.learner.org/journenorth. Click on "Kids" in the left column. You can even add your own sightings and ask questions.

Although it tells lots, the website skips the most important fact. Check that out to the right.

The Promise of Spring

"As long as the earth endures, _____ and harvest, cold and _____, _____ and winter, day and night will never cease" (Genesis 8:22).

Who said that?



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