

The phenomenological calendar

The nature's seasonal clock

According to our timing, a new year has just begun with its exactly calculated dates. The processes in nature, however, do not exactly correspond to these schedules, as they strongly depend on the changing weather conditions. Whereas in the tropics and sub-tropics, the plants' vegetation and rest periods are triggered by rain and dry periods, the average temperature influences the state of the vegetation in our latitudes. In our imagination we combine the four seasons with certain images: Spring brings greenery, summer blossoms, autumn ripening fruit, winter shows bare branches and fir green. But nature does not always stick to this calendar. Often a harsh wind blows or even snow falls at the beginning of the spring as marked on the calendar. The activities in the garden must, of course, be in harmony with the real conditions. A better orientation as the regular calendar is so provided by the phenomenological calendar, which is based on longstanding observations of recurring events in nature.

The often smiled at peasants' rules reflect this knowledge, whereby some "wisdom" should be evaluated critically. From these traditions "the doctrine of phenomena", the phenomenology developed in the 18th century. Within phenomenology the observations from agriculture and forestry, meteorology and ecology are linked. The phenomenological calendar of the German weather service mentions ten seasons for vegetation. The development states such as flowering and maturing of certain plants mark the beginning of a season. However, this may be different from one landscape region to another. Due to weather conditions, there are often outbreaks, which can lead to a phenomenological season starting very early or very late. Based on decades of recordings in many small regions, there is a tendency, despite some irregularities, of an advancing in time of spring.



1. Prespring

Beginning of the hazel flowering or alternatively of the snowdrop blossom



2. First spring

Beginning of the forsythia flowering or alternatively of the leaf development of the gooseberry



3. Full spring

Beginning of the apple flowering or alternatively of the stem's leaf development



4. Early summer

Beginning of the black elder flowering



5. Midsummer

Beginning of the flowering of the large leaved lime or the ripening of the currant



6. Late summer

Beginning of the ripening of the spring apples or alternatively of the fruit of the ashes



7. Early autumn

Beginning of the ripening of the black elderberry



8. Full autumn

Beginning of the ripening of the pedunculate oak or alternatively of the buckeye



9. Late autumn

Beginning of the leaf colouring of the common oak or alternatively of the buckeye



10. Winter

Beginning of the growing of the winter wheat or alternatively the leaf fall of late maturing apples or of the pedunculate oak

Text and pictures

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