

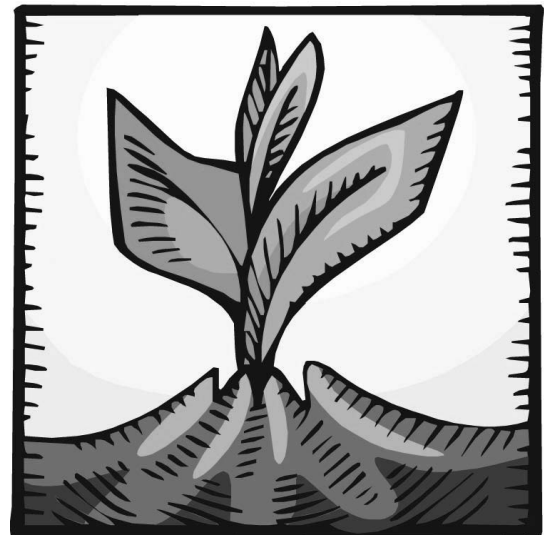
# SPRING

**E**very year, people look forward to the coming of spring. For people, plants, and animals, spring is both a date on the calendar and a season of warmer weather and new growth.

Our year is divided into four seasons: spring, summer, fall, and winter. Summer is known for its warm, sunny weather, and, in Canada, our winters are full of snow in most places. Spring and fall are **transition** seasons, when the weather changes from cold to warm or from warm to cold.

For scientists, spring begins on the **vernal** (or spring) **equinox**, when the day and night have the same number of hours. This happens around March 20 north of the **equator** and about September 22 south of the equator. This year, the spring equinox was even earlier, on March 19. Many people talk about spring in terms of the temperatures. For meteorologists, who study the weather, spring begins on March 1 and ends on May 31.

In much of Canada, plants start to grow as soon as the weather warms up or the snow melts. During the winter, the sun is up for only a few hours each day. As spring comes, the hours of daylight slowly increase. The extra sunlight that the plants receive in spring **prompts** them to start growing if the temperature is warm enough. Together with water, sunlight causes the **carbon dioxide** that the plants take in to turn into a sugar called



glucose, giving them energy. This process is called photosynthesis. Many farmers plant their crops in spring.

Many animals also respond to the extra light and warmth. Birds and many other animals have their babies in spring. That way, the young animals will have a long time to grow and become strong before the winter comes.



With its warmth and sunlight, spring is a wonderful time of the year.



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**Transition:** A change from one form, condition, or place to another.

**Vernal:** Having to do with spring.

**Equinox:** One of the two days each year, in March and September, when day and night last exactly the same length of time all over the world.

**Equator:** An imaginary line around the middle of the Earth that is an equal distance from the North and South poles.

**Prompts:** Moves someone or something to action.

**Carbon dioxide:** A gas that is a mixture of carbon and oxygen, with no colour or odour, that people and animals breathe out and plants absorb.

# SPRING QUESTIONS

1. For people, plants, and animals, spring is both a date on the \_\_\_\_\_ and a season of warmer weather and new growth.
2. What are the four seasons?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What does it mean that spring and fall are transition seasons?  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. For scientists, spring begins on the \_\_\_\_\_, when the day and night have the same number of hours.
5. When was the spring equinox this year?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. In much of Canada, \_\_\_\_\_ start to grow as soon as the weather warms up or the snow melts.
7. As spring comes, the hours of \_\_\_\_\_ slowly increase.
8. Together with water, sunlight causes the \_\_\_\_\_ that the plants take in to turn into a sugar called glucose, giving them energy.