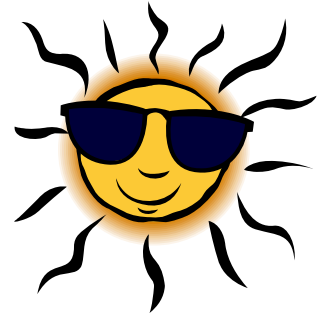


Summer Is Here

Perhaps the thought has crossed your mind: The weather we have been experiencing has been just a “warm-up” (pardon the pun) to summer. Temperatures in Tennessee have been hovering in the 90s for several days, and the humidity has been climbing as well.

And summer? That season made its debut at 7:28 this morning (June 21). That may or may not be exciting news for you, depending on where you live and as you contemplate the effects of the three H’s – heat, haze and humidity – awaiting you. Whatever the climatic conditions where you live, however, summer provides some wonderful memories from years gone by, and the opportunity to make some special ones this year. For example...



- It’s about time for the song of the katydid to peal across the South, and I expect to hear that melodious concert in the trees any evening now. Legend says that from the date the first one is heard, count off 90 days and expect the first frost. I’ve been serenaded to sleep many evenings by the comforting sound coming through an open bedroom window of a farmhouse in rural Tennessee.
- July the Fourth is just around the corner. In addition to that being the time for celebrating our nation’s independence, it also signaled the occasion for our family to be in the brier patch picking blackberries. The delicious fruit is generally ripe by then, and my father had a holiday from work. All the family pitched in, and by noontime, we had buckets of blackberries – and lots of chiggers, too. It was all worth it when my mother put piping hot blackberry cobbler on the table.
- A swimming hole or two generally comes to mind when summer is mentioned. The two shall always be linked in my thoughts. Somehow, the professionally designed swimming pools today just cannot compare to the delight of walking two or three miles with boyhood pals, along a dusty road, usually barefoot, to a bend in the stream where the flow was deep and wide. The gurgling tune of water cascading over rocks to feed our adventuresome playground provided the ultimate background music.
- And what can be more special in summer than for a boy to hear his father say, “Son, let’s go fishing!” To gather up the cane poles, select some bait, walk a short distance to a huge pond, sit on its bank in the cool of the day – the stillness sometimes interrupted by the hoot of an owl, the faraway call of a whippoorwill or, occasionally, conversation of things that could be – these are moments indelibly etched on my mind.

But now it is Summer 2010. Stretching before us are adventures to claim, memories to make. Let’s get started.

– Beecher Hunter