

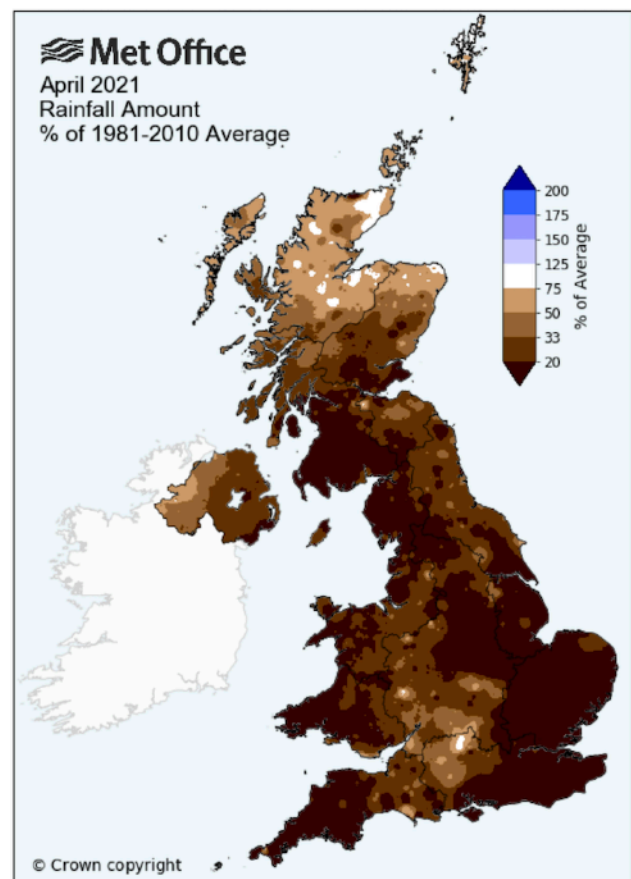
Weather for the Spring Quarter 2021

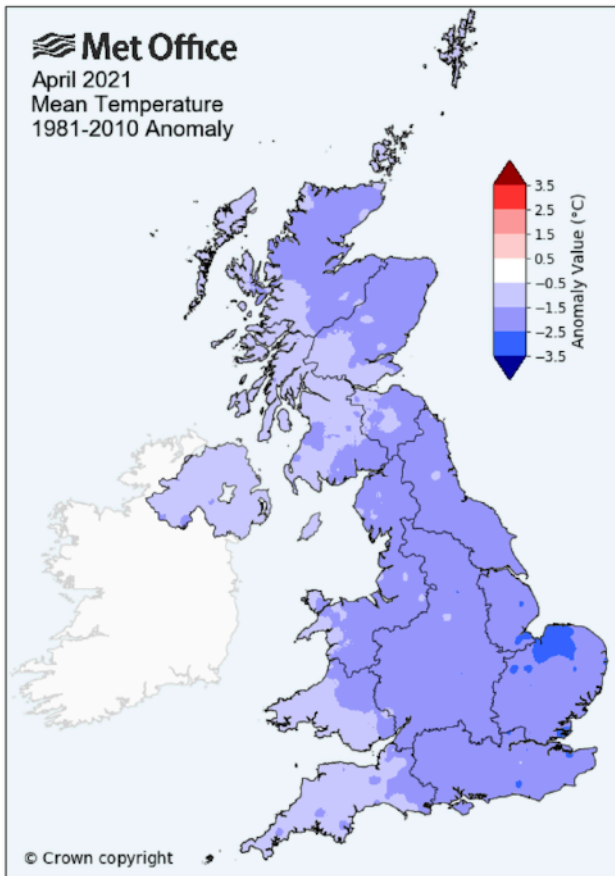
March began with a period of high pressure giving very settled conditions, however this trapped mist and low cloud giving us very few days of sunshine. When it did clear it was often at night leading to low temperatures and occasional frosts. Not a good start to spring! Only after the 9th did the skies clear to give us a wonderful day, but this was immediately followed the return to westerlies and stormy weather. The nights of Wednesday (10th) and Thursday (11th) were very windy, and Wednesday was wet most of the day. The month continued with strong winds and occasional squally showers and only after Sunday (14th) did the weather began to calm down again. As the week went on high pressure was re-established and this time it brought more sunshine and much better gardening weather.

The weather only really improved after the solstice on 21st when we had a good run of sunny days and it felt more like spring. The month then concluded with three wonderful, warm, sunny days that were exceptionally welcome as they coincided with the lifting of some of the most severe lock-down restrictions. The temperature peaked at 22.7°C on both 30th and 31st - exceptional temperatures for March.

Overall March was disappointingly grey and for the most part rather chilly. Only 107.5 hours of sunshine were recorded at Wattisham compared to a ten-year average of 122.9. It had been a poor start to the year with a total of just 230.7 hours of sunshine for January - March against a ten-year average of 273.8, a deficit of 15.7%.

April started with a couple of cloudy days, but then a string of bright, clear and very cold ones. The wind was from the north and some days gave us arctic winds and wintry showers - but without any real accumulation of snow. The settled high pressure continued almost uninterrupted until the end of the month, but all too often it resulted in cold north/north easterly winds. These conditions brought us plenty of sunshine and clear skies, but frequent frosty nights - there were 10 nights with sub-zero temperatures in April when on average would have expected 2 or 3. On 20 nights the minimum temperature was below 2°C - certainly cold enough for a 'grass frost'. April was generally cold overall - the average temperature (over the full 24 hours) was 7.3°C compared to the ten-year average of 9.3°C. It was also significantly dry with just 2.7 mm of rain and nearly all of this in the first 10 days. The chart shows that very wide areas of the country had less than 20% of the 30-year average rainfall.





The mean temperature Chart for April is just as dramatic with mean temperatures for the whole country below the thirty-year averages.

On the brighter side 202 hours of sunshine were recorded at Wattisham, much more than the 10-year average of 174 - almost the same as April 2020 (210 hrs) but that was really exceptional.

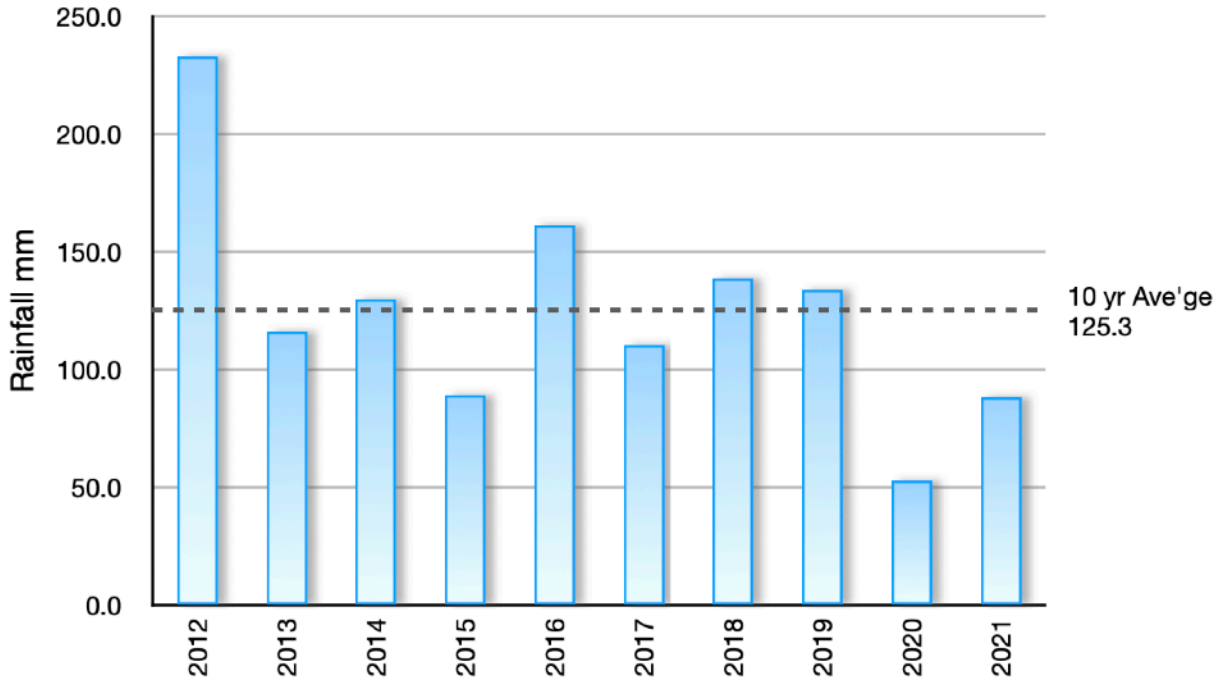
May began with a day of sunshine and showers - not a lot of rain (1.0mm) but more than in the previous three weeks. The evening of 3rd brought a change in the weather as an Atlantic storm swept through bringing high winds and rain to most of the country. However, as so often, we missed the heavy rain, which would have been welcome - over the 3-4th we had just 11 mm. The weather then reverted to chilly northerlies until the following weekend, when the wet pattern

of wet and windy westerlies returned and on Saturday 8th May we had 10.2 mm of rain. May was already wetter than the whole of April had been. The following week brought some pleasant but still rather cool days - much better for growing and for gardening! However Saturday 15th was again dull and wet - the third Saturday in a row. There were heavy, thundery showers in many parts of the country - but for us just 0.8 mm. Unfortunately this set the trend for the following week with temperatures remaining below average for the time of year. It was generally dull and damp but without any significantly heavy rain. Thursday night into Friday (19/20th) brought us more strong winds - unusually strong for May.

Only in the very last days of the quarter did the weather finally improve to give us a lovely late-May Bank Holiday weekend. Daytime temperatures finally broke 20°C, which was very welcome, but only served to remind us just how far behind the garden plants were. The hawthorn was only just coming into full blossom and there was barely a rose bud breaking by the end of May. At least the month was free from frosts, but the sunshine hours at Wattisham (155 hours) were again 15% below the 10-year average.

Overall the quarter was fairly dry with 88mm of rain - just 70% of the 10-year average, but nothing like as dry as Spring 2020. It was significantly cooler with both the average daily maximum and minimum temperatures below the 10-year averages. It was not surprising that Spring seemed to have arrived very late in 2021!

Spring (Mar, Apr and May) Rainfall 2021



Average Maximum and Minimum Temperatures

