A Season for all of America: Understanding the American seasonal imaginary

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The Four Season motif
Currier & Ives lithographs
Autumn - On the Hudson River, 1860. Jasper Francis Cropsey
Seasonal dissonance
Snow Belt

Snow Belt States
Click on State for more details

Legend
- In Snow Belt
- Not in Snow Belt

http://insideari.arifleet.net/SnowBelt/
“... people who had not seen snow until they were adults reported that they believed that once they had experienced snow they were ‘real’ Americans.”

Almanacs

- Calendar
- Clock
- News source
- Civic reference
- Art and entertainment
- Scientific information
- Political commentary
- Commercial advertising
- Weather prognostication
- Horticultural advice and planting guide
First American Almanac Publications, 1639 - 1876

The Seasons

**Spring**
- March, 1835 - 58. *Uncle Sam’s Large Almanac*. Philadelphia, PA
- March, 1836. *Cherokee Almanac*. Park Hill, OK
- March, 1869. *Blum’s Farmers’ and Planters’ Almanac*. Salem, NC

**Summer**
- August, 1823. *The Maine Farmer’s Almanack*. Hallowell, ME
- July, 1835-58. *Uncle Sam’s Large Almanac*. Philadelphia, PA
- Jun-July, 1869. *Blum’s Farmers’ and Planters’ Almanac*. Salem, NC

**Winter**
- February, 1835. *Uncle Sam’s Large Almanac*. Philadelphia, PA
- January, 1846. *Allen’s Land Bill Almanac*. Columbus, OH
- February, 1854. *Farmer’s and Dairyman’s Almanac*. Albany, NY
- January, 1869. *Blum’s Farmers’ and Planters’ Almanac*. Salem, NC

**Autumn/Fall**
- October, 1869. *Blum’s Farmers’ and Planters’ Almanac*. Salem, NC
- November, 1879. *Webster’s Calendar or the Albany Almanac*. Albany, NY
American seasonal tropes
Seasonality in the industrial/urban era
American seasonal tropes
Seasonal aridity? Year-round growing seasons?

Annual Average Precipitation
United States of America

Legend (inches)
- Less than 5
- 5 to 10
- 10 to 15
- 15 to 20
- 20 to 25
- 25 to 30
- 30 to 35
- 35 to 40
- More than 180

Period: 1981-1990

Modeling performed by Christopher Daly using the PRISM model, based on 1961-1990 normals from NOAA Cooperative stations and NRCS SNOTEL sites. Sponsored by USDA-NRCS Water and Climate Center, Portland, Oregon.

Oregon Climate Service
George Taylor, State Climatologist
(541) 737-5705

http://www.wrcc.dri.edu/precip.html
Season?
Southern Fall and Winter Landscapes

December, 1887. Crescent City Almanac. New Orleans, LA

February, 1887. Crescent City Almanac. New Orleans, LA

September, 1868. The Atlantic Almanac. Boston, MA
Politics of (mis/un)representation


- Cognitive dissonance in landscape and identity
- Absence of familiar symbols or “visual vocabulary”
- Colonial environmental imaginaries and Orientalism