State of Ohio Monthly Climate Update

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Review – April 2026

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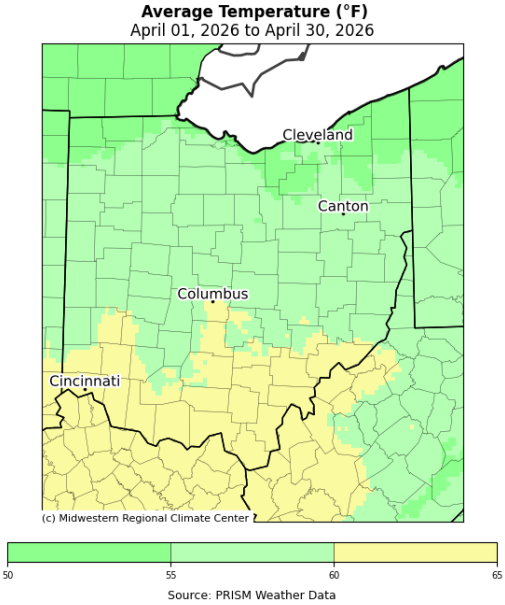

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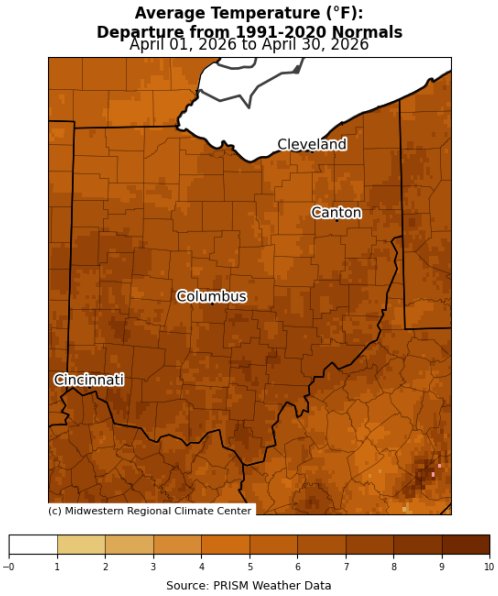

Figure 1a: Average temperature and 1b: Departure from Normal for the month of April 2026. Data courtesy of the Midwestern Regional Climate Center (http://mrcc.purdue.edu).

Temperature

April gave Ohioans an early taste of summer, with average temperatures ranging from the upper 50s to the lower 60s across the state. The warmest conditions were observed in southern Ohio, where temperatures averaged between 60–65°F, while northern regions remained slightly cooler in the mid-50s (Fig. 1a). Compared to previous years, April temperatures showed a notable increase, with average temperatures running 4–8°F above normal across much of the state (Fig. 1b).

At the county level, all of Ohio was above average. In fact, a majority of the counties were much above the average, resulting in a mean temperature of 49.2 °F. April of 2026 is one for the books as it is the warmest April in Ohio's climate record of 132 years (Fig. 2). Although these warmer spring conditions may feel enjoyable, this "false summer" effect can significantly influence plant development. Warmer temperatures encourage earlier germination and effectively lengthen the growing season. However, if a late-season cold snap or frost occurs, newly developed buds and vegetation become especially vulnerable to damage. During these events, covering sensitive plants with cloths or sheets can help retain warmth and reduce the risk of frost damage.

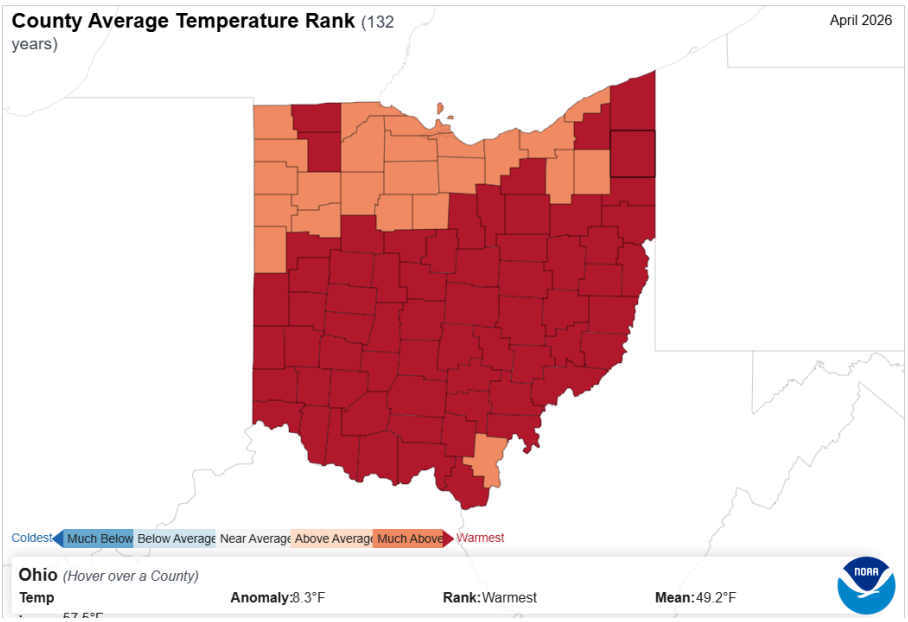

Figure 2: State of Ohio average temperature ranks by county for April 2026. Courtesy of the National Centers for Environmental Information (https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/).

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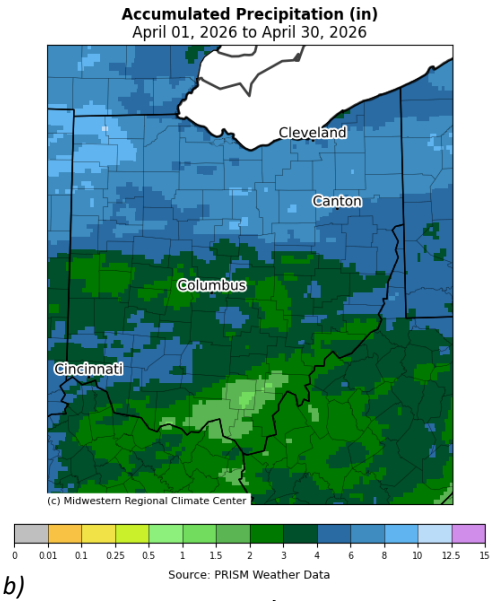

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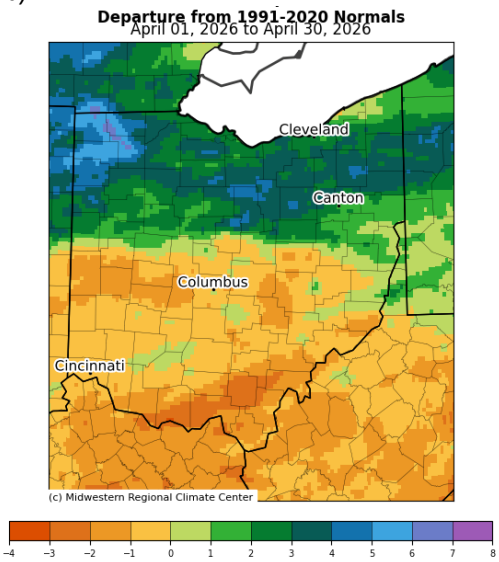

Figure 3a: Accumulated precipitation and 3b: Departures from Normal for the month of April 2026. Data courtesy of the Midwestern Regional Climate Center (http://mrcc.purdue.edu).

Precipitation

A distinct contrast in precipitation totals between northern and southern Ohio this month highlighted the variability of the state's weather patterns. Northern Ohio received the greatest amounts of precipitation, with accumulated totals ranging from 6–10 inches. In contrast, southern Ohio recorded between 0.5–6 inches, with the highest concentrations centered around Cincinnati (Fig. 3a). Compared to the historical average, northern Ohio experienced well-above-normal precipitation totals, particularly in the northwest, where amounts were 5–8 inches above average. Meanwhile, southern Ohio saw below-normal precipitation, with many areas receiving 1–3 inches less rainfall than usual (Fig. 3b).

Again, this divide between north and south Ohio is present in the county precipitation rank, with above-average values in the northern half and below normal to normal values in the southern half. The mean precipitation was 3.51 inches, making this month the 32nd wettest in the climate record (Fig. 4).

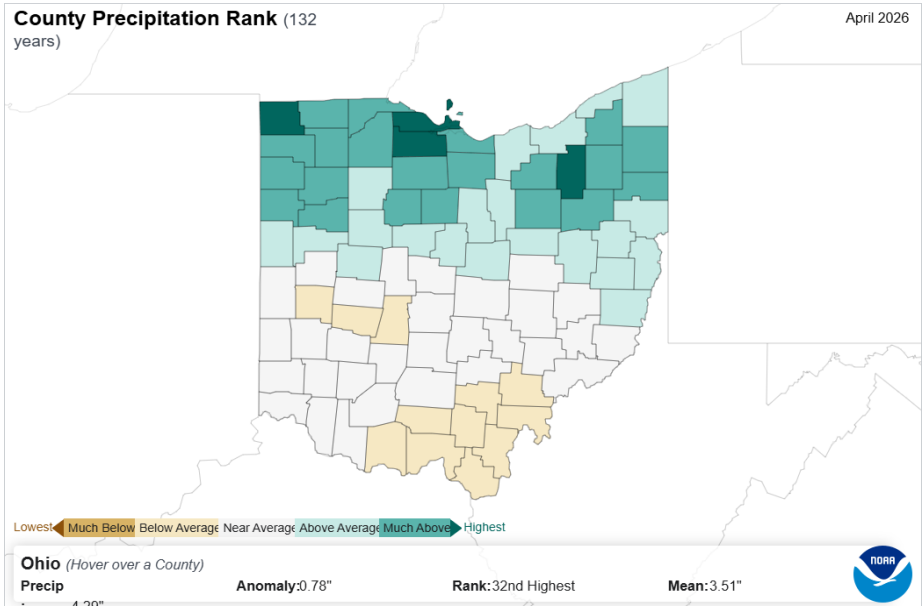

Figure 4: State of Ohio precipitation ranks by county for April 2026. Courtesy of the National Centers for Environmental Information (https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/sotc/).

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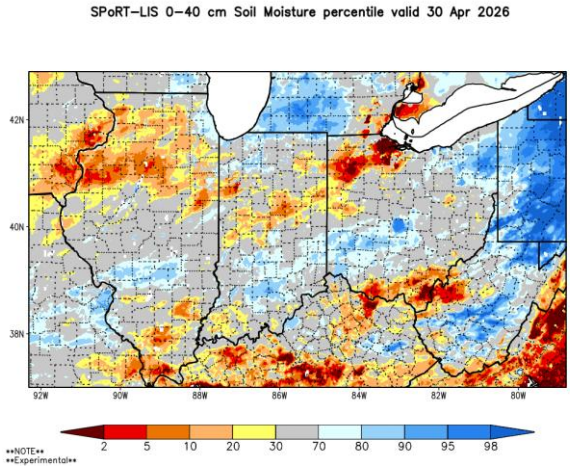

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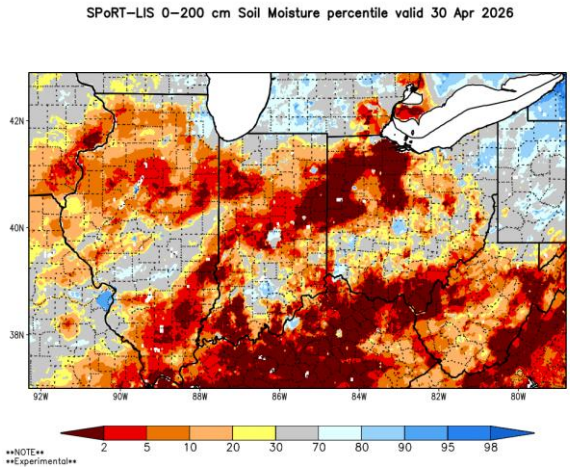


Figure 5a: 0-40 cm and 5b: 0-200 cm soil moisture percentile across the region at the end of April 2026. Courtesy of NASA SPoRTLIS (https://weather.msfc.nasa.gov/sport/case_studies/lis_IN.html).

Soil and Energy

Northwest Ohio is finally beginning to see relief from the persistent dry conditions that have affected the region since August of last year. By the end of April, soil moisture at the 0–40 cm depth showed only a small portion of northwest Ohio remaining in the 2nd percentile, while surrounding areas improved toward the near-normal 30–70th percentile range. Wetter-than-normal conditions, within the 70–95th percentile, were observed across parts of northeast and southwest Ohio (Fig. 5a). At the deeper 0–200 cm soil moisture depth, much of the state continued to experience dry conditions, with the exception of small areas in central and northeast Ohio. The driest conditions, falling within the 2nd percentile, remained concentrated in northwest and southern Ohio (Fig. 5b).

With April temperatures running warmer than normal, Cooling Degree Days (CDDs) and Heating Degree Days (HDDs) differed significantly from statewide averages. All 10 climate divisions recorded below-normal HDDs and above-normal CDDs. On average, the state accumulated 252 HDDs, which was 188 fewer than normal, and 37 CDDs, which was 30 above normal (Fig. 6).

Product Note: Both NASA SPoRT LIS soil moisture products contain small pockets of inaccurate data indicating extremely wet or dry conditions. These small-scale errors can emerge in remote sensing products covering large areas or grid-spacings. For more information, please contact Geddy Davis (davis.5694@osu.edu).

Climate Division	Heating Degree Days	Normal	Departure	Cooling Degree Days	Normal	Departure
1	310	488	-178	27	6	21
2	309	487	-178	24	6	18
3	330	513	-183	18	5	13
4	259	448	-189	41	7	34
5	235	426	-191	41	8	33
6	295	475	-180	2	5	19
7	277	455	-178	29	6	23
8	188	381	-193	54	10	44
9	168	359	-191	55	11	44
10	202	404	-202	44	7	37
Statewide	252	440	-188	37	7	30

Figure 6: (Left) April 2026 heating & cooling degree days. (Right) Corresponding Ohio Climate Divisions. Data courtesy of the Midwestern Regional Climate Center (http://mrcc.purdue.edu).

Notable Event

Although Ohio is currently in the midst of tornado season, the state has experienced fewer tornadoes and a greater number of hail-producing storms this spring. On April 14, the Storm Prediction Center issued slight and marginal risk outlooks for severe weather across portions of Ohio (Fig. 7). This storm system produced 24 wind reports and 6 hail reports, with the largest hailstone measuring 1.5 inches in New Washington. In west-central Ohio, straight-line wind damage was reported in Logan County, where wind speeds were estimated between 70–80 mph. Benjamin Logan Local Schools experienced some of the most significant impacts, including an overturned school bus, debris damage to nearby buildings, and bent or broken light poles at the football stadium (Fig. 8). Another severe hailstorm impacted northeast Ohio late on April 15, leaving hundreds without power, causing flash flooding, and producing golf ball-sized hail (Fig. 9). In Solon, 19 of 30 police vehicles sustained hail damage, including cracked windshields and extensive dents (Fig. 10). This storm system developed from the same warm air mass that affected the region on April 14 and intensified as it interacted with an approaching cold front the following day. The clash of warm, unstable air with the advancing front helped generate several supercell thunderstorms, highly organized storms characterized by persistent rotation aloft. This rotation supports the development of larger hailstones and, when combined with strong winds, can produce the widespread damage experienced across Solon and surrounding areas.

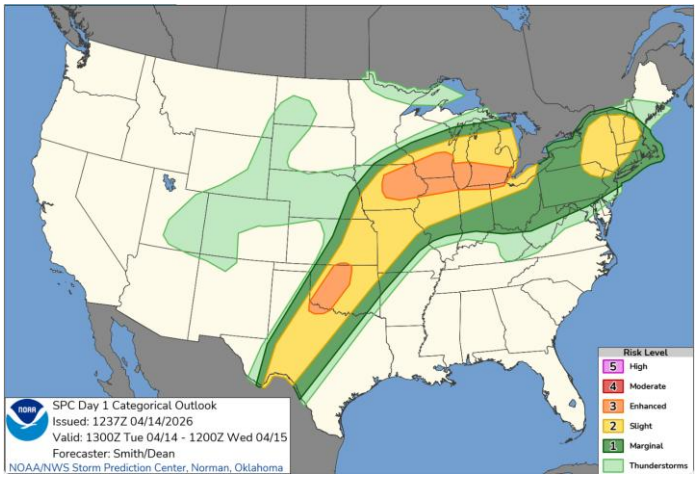


Figure 7. SPC Day 1 categorical outlook for April 14, 2026. Storm Prediction Center. Accessed at https://www.spc.noaa.gov/products/archive/

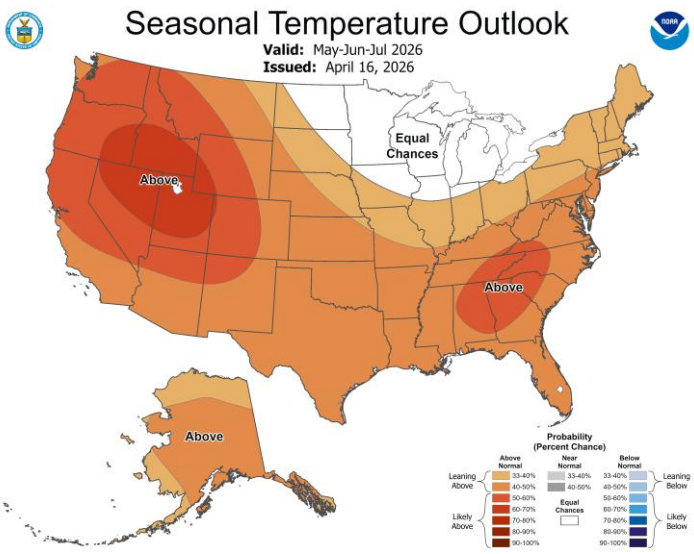
Figure 8. Result of straight-line winds that occurred on April 14, 2026. Sally Stolly. Accessed at https://www.peakofohio.com/local-news/nws-confirms-70-80-mph-winds-caused-damage-at-benjamin-logan/

Figure 9. Golf ball-sized hail in Solon, OH. AJ Brilla/X. *Accessed at https://www.weather.gov/cle/event_20260415_severe*

Figure 10. Solon police car damage from the April 15 hail storm. Solon police department. Accessed at https://www.news5cleveland.com/weather/weather-news/multiple-solon-police-cruisers-damaged-in-hail-storm

Forecast: May – July 2026

a)



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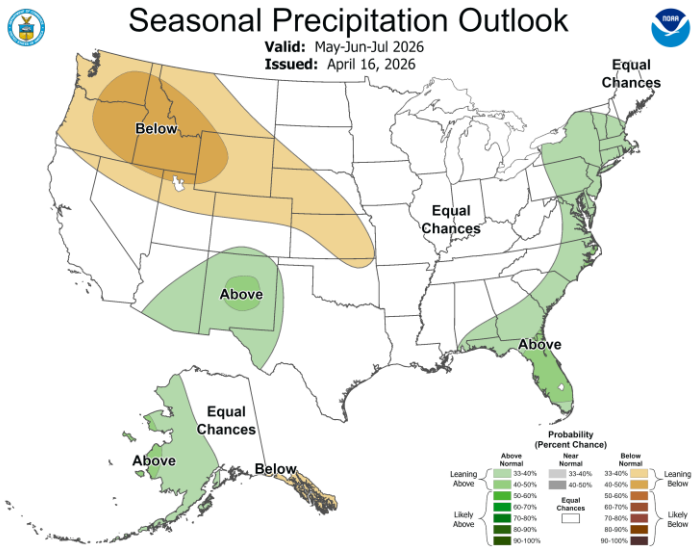

Figure 11a: Nationwide Seasonal Temperature and 10b: Precipitation Outlook for May – July 2026. Courtesy of the Climate Prediction Center (https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/).

Looking Ahead

As Ohio heads into the summer months, warmer temperatures and variable precipitation patterns are expected across the state. The seasonal temperature outlook indicates that much of Ohio has a 33–40% chance of experiencing above-normal temperatures. Portions of northwest Ohio show equal chances for either above- or below-normal temperatures, while southern Ohio falls within a higher 40–50% probability of warmer-than-normal conditions (Fig. 11a). In contrast, the seasonal precipitation outlook provides little indication toward either wetter- or drier-than-normal conditions over the next several months (Fig. 11b).

Meanwhile, concerns over the cooler temperatures experienced in early May remain prominent among Ohio farmers as wheat crops begin to flower, increasing the risk of cold weather damage. Key factors to monitor include the severity of low temperatures, the duration of exposure, and the developmental stage of the wheat crop. Despite the arrival of May, colder-than-average temperatures and above-average precipitation persist.

Note: these outlooks do not provide the quantity of above or below normal conditions, just the likelihood of occurrence (i.e., the probability).

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