

Alh, the sun... we could be back in Africa! Even the lemons enjoy the rays as mercury hits 25C and bright heatwave is set to continue... but there will be a few showers too

- Temperatures to reach 25C (77F) in London and the South today despite scattered showers this morning
- British berries 40% sweeter and 15% bigger than normal thanks to cold and prolonged spring and late burst of sun
- Cold weather allowed 2013 crop to grow much slower and develop more succulent flavour, industry experts say
- Dorset county estate celebrates 'once-in-a-lifetime' flowering of all their rhododendrons after spell of warm weather

By Daily Mail's and BBC's Tom Ivens
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This is what the weather has of late appeared to be in the south coast, but it is the weather that has made the most of the previous weather yesterday.

The warm set back on Monday at the first of the flowers in Dorset Bay and just their backs to the sun as they opened at the very inshore waterside (approximately 77F (25C)). The good news for them – and us – is that the weather is expected to continue for much of British Summer. So, instead of getting a warm weather, it is temperatures in London and Glasgow, with highs of 71F (22C). The dry weather, however, has not been without its problems.

Problems were yesterday involving the issue of a late and unexpected 23 acres of London Forest, near High Cross in East Sussex. Eighty five farmers were needed to bring the 'the other' crop of 1000 tons of strawberries.

The weather is set to persist today and throughout the weekend. Forecasters predict, with Scotland's West Coast seeing the best of the weather. Despite being a showery day, conditions were expected to stay temperatures of 25C, with the best results seen in the morning. The mercury will hit 75F (24C) in the West today, while a warmer will see highs of 80F (27C).

The other forecast from tonight says that today will be the dry and the 'There are some scattered showers across London through to Southampton and the sea of light, but these will move westwards.

Notes:

- apparently will be kept above 60F (15C) (so we probably won't see that it's going to reach 20C this weekend)
- to more mostly moderate. Summer season has to do with the sun's heat (so long 17F)

We had 20C (68F) and we are still in the 20C (68F) today. We should reach 22C (72F) in the Midlands. Other showers will develop in Dorset, Cornwall and South Wales later this morning and the afternoon, but these should ease tonight and will stay to the west.

Saturday and Sunday were not expected to be quite as hot, but will remain largely dry and sunny, she added. The UK's warm weather is expected to end this week, with showers predicted to follow.



17-year-old Kiri Parson displays the abundance of Cheddar Valley Strawberries in Dorset after the late summer made them bigger and sweeter



The first harvest of the season was delayed by more than two and a half weeks, but the fruits are now bringing thanks to the recent spell of sunshine



Over the top, Strawberry association British Berries F&S says growers across the country are reporting berries 10 per cent larger than usual

However, the late summer has produced the best-ever crop of British strawberries which are 40 per cent sweeter than normal, industry experts claim.

A cold spring has caused the berries to grow much slower, giving them longer to develop a more succulent flavour.

The first harvest of the season was delayed by more than two and a half weeks, but the fruits are now bringing thanks to the recent spell of sunshine.

Strawberry farmer Andrew Sanger has been growing them for more than 50 years at the farm in the Cheddar valley in Somerset. He said: 'We are two-and-a-half weeks late this year, which is the latest I have ever known it, which will be good really.'



The latest strawberries (in ever green) Farmer Andrew Sanger with his bumper crop which he will need 20 staff to pick throughout the summer



Top for the picking Farmer Chris Sanger, 38, inspects his harvest of Cheddar Valley Strawberries, which grows 10 tonnes of strawberries



But now they are here they have a very good flavour, an excellent flavour because they have grown slower. They're much better than normal. Now the sun has come they are thriving.

That's and better than that, I have noticed the weather was going to make the season here a significant late year. The weather was much better than last year though, so we shouldn't have any more problems after our delay late this season.

For Sanger, 40, pick 10 tonnes of strawberries at the farm and will employ 20 people in the summer to help him pick them all.

He added: 'Fully enough, they are the bestest strawberries I've ever grown. I've spoken to a few other farmers, and they all said the same thing, the one we've made them seem so much better.

Strawberry association British Berries F&S says growers across the country are reporting berries 10 per cent larger than usual – and are much sweeter.

The sweetness of strawberries, and other soft fruits, is measured in degrees Brix (Bx). While usual strawberries are around seven degrees Bx, this year's berry fruit are expected to hit well over 10 degrees Bx – a 42 per cent increase.

Lawrence Cook, Chairman of British Summer Fruits, said: 'Strawberries are a British staple of the early summer season.

'It may have been a slow start to the British strawberry season, but there will be a good supply of British strawberries for everyone to enjoy.

'The very warm and late weather conditions might have meant disaster for commercial strawberry growers, but following decades of investment in producing quality and new varieties, the summer's strawberry crop is thriving.'

Production is expected to exceed last year's 61,626 tonnes of strawberries supplied to UK supermarkets by members of British Summer Fruits – and will last for a month or more.

Meanwhile, gardeners at a country estate are celebrating a 'once-in-a-lifetime' flowering of all their rhododendrons at once, with billions of blooms lighting up the estate.

The coolest spring on record had helped to put a dampener on the displays at Invernie Gardens, Dorset, with many of the early-flowering bushes returning to bloom.

But the recent rise in temperatures have whacked the 120-year-old perennial into life and all have flowered at once, a never-seen-before occurrence.

Some of the 3,500 rhododendron bushes have grown to a whopping 40ft tall and it is estimated each one boasts up to 500,000 flowers.

The 20 acres of open garden near Dorchester are now awash with a sea of white, pink, red and purple.

Someone compares one of Britain's most diverse and historic collections of rare rhododendrons and bushes brought back by the great Victorian plant hunters in the late 19th and early 20th century.