When it is spring in the northern hemisphere, it is autumn in the southern hemisphere. In the northern hemisphere spring starts around March 20<sup>th</sup> and lasts until about June 2l<sup>st</sup>. (This varies a bit from year to year.) In the southern hemisphere spring lasts from August to November.

The first day of spring is called the vernal equinox. It has about twelve hours of daylight and twelve hours of darkness. The term "vernal" is Latin for "spring" and the term "equinox" is Latin for "equal night".

Before this season was called spring, it was called Lent in Old English. In the 14<sup>th</sup> century this season was often called "springing time" because of the plants "springing" from the ground. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century people began calling it "spring time" and then in the 16<sup>th</sup> century it was shortened even further to what we say now...spring.

If you were at the North Pole, the first day of spring would be the beginning of six months of uninterrupted daylight. The first day of spring at the South Pole would be the beginning of six months of uninterrupted darkness.

The first spring flowers that pop up include lilies, irises, tulips, daffodils, lilacs and dandelions. In Japan, the opening of the national flower, the cherry blossom, signals the beginning of spring.

Honeybees are most likely to swarm in the season of spring. A swarm contains the queen bee and thousands of worker bees who leave the hive to create a new colony somewhere else. The honeybees do this to produce two successful colonies from one.

Days become longer during spring months because the Earth's axis (an imaginary line that runs through the Earth's North and South Poles) is tilted towards the sun. It is tilted away from the sun in winter months.

The expression "spring cleaning" was first known to be used between 1855 and 1860. Today it usually refers to the yearly cleaning of a house or other place from top to bottom which would occur in the first warm days of the year. There are many thoughts as to where the expression actually came from.