

# April 2002 Summary

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## Spring Heats Up

Above normal temperatures were the big story in April 2002. An large upper-level high pressure system persisted from the Gulf of Mexico eastward to the Bahamas, warming the entire atmosphere. However, the month's weather could be divided in two: warm, humid, and unseasonably rainy for the first half; then very warm and dry thereafter.

For the month, temperatures were the 4th warmest on record at Tampa (Table 1) and 3rd warmest at Fort Myers (Table 2).

**Table 1.** Top 10 warmest Aprils in Tampa, since 1890.

RANK	AVG. TEMP.	YEAR
1	76.8	1991
2	76.6	1947
3	76.4	1908
4	76.3	2002
5	76.0	1945
6	75.4	1994
7	74.9	1954
8	74.7	1929
9	74.3	1999
10	74.3	1912

**Table 2.** Top 10 warmest Aprils in Fort Myers, since 1948.

RANK	AVG. TEMP.	YEAR
1	77.7	1991
2	77.4	1994
3	76.9	2002
4	76.5	1982
5	76.2	1979
6	76.1	1981
7	75.9	1964
8	75.7	1954
9	75.4	1999
10	75.3	1989

### April 1 - 15: Unsettled, but Warm

A series of weak cold fronts kept temperatures seasonable while bringing light precipitation to the region for the first week. By the second week, strong high pressure east of the middle Atlantic states brought warmer and increasingly humid air into the region. An upper level disturbance then developed in the Gulf of Mexico on the 11th, then crept slowly toward the Suncoast through the 15th, producing abundant precipitation for most of the coastal counties, where sea breeze collisions were common. Most of the rain in Figure 1 fell during this period.

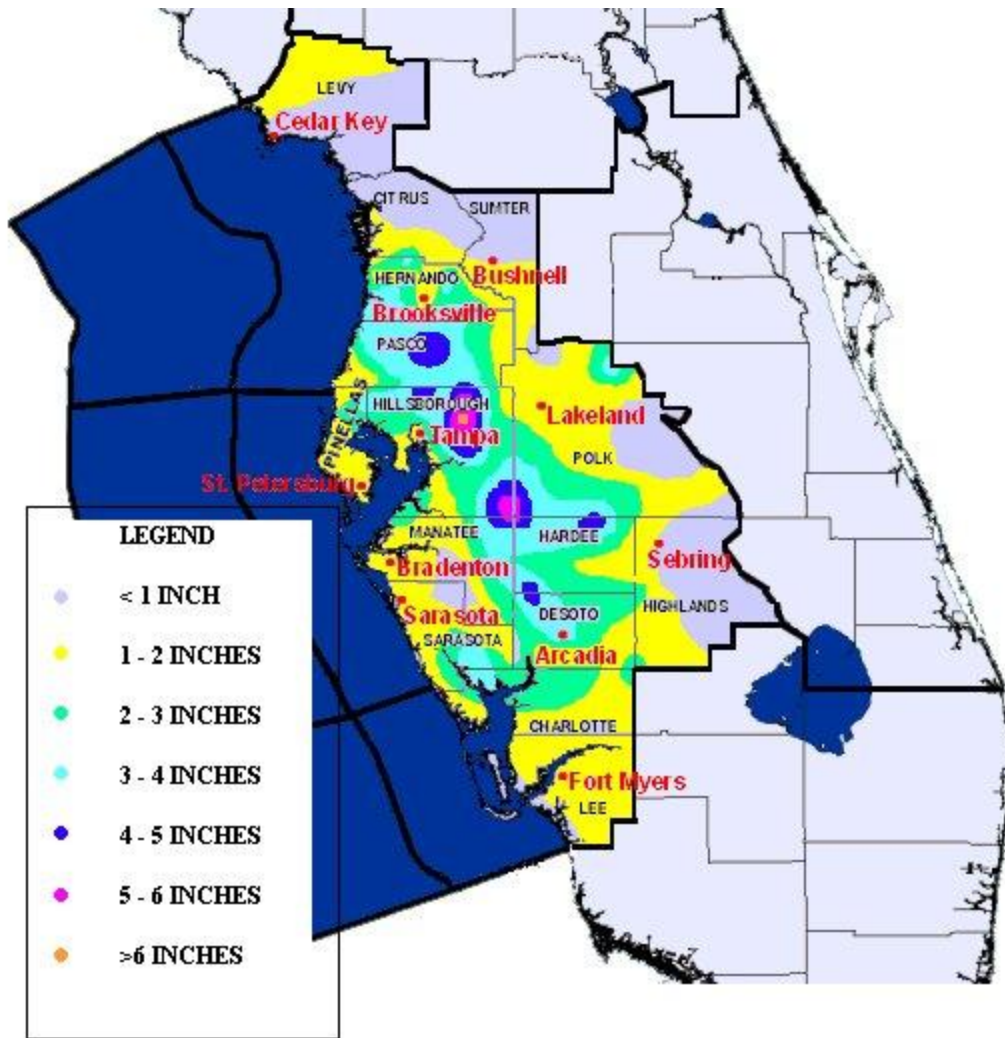


Figure 1. April 2002 Rainfall in West Central and Southwest Florida.

### April 16 - 30: Warmer and Drier

The upper level disturbance dissipated on the 15th, and soon the large scale ridge returned in force. A bermuda high set up shop between the 15th and 20th, warming much of the U.S. east coast. Low level easterly winds produced a few showers near the Gulf Coast from the 16th through the 18th, then drier air moved in as the ridge axis dropped south, ending the influx of deeper moisture. Temperatures continued to rise, averaging in the upper 80s to near 90 for the last ten days of the month (Figures 2 and 3).

# Maximum/Minimum Temperatures

April 2002 , Tampa



Figure 2. Preliminary April 2002 Maximum and Minimum Temperatures, Tampa.

# Maximum/Minimum Temperatures

April 2002, Fort Myers



Figure 3. Preliminary April 2002 Maximum and Minimum Temperatures, Fort Myers.