

Charlie on the Cost of the War; plus April 11-12 Results!



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# GrowerTalks' Acres Online

News and Commentary from GrowerTalks Magazine

## COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Iran War and cost of inputs  
How was April 11-12? Strong!  
- Where was it hot, sales-wise?  
- A few more choice comments  
Adding weather maps  
Who needs rain?  
Finally ...

**NEW  
FOR  
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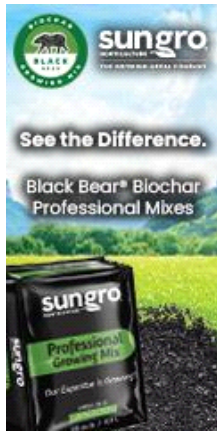
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## The effect of the Iran War on the cost of inputs

I don't tend to report on mainstream news topics like tariffs or fluctuating fuel prices here because 1) they change so frequently and 2) you can learn more about them on a daily basis from the news outlet of your choice. But when Texas A&M's Dr. Charlie Hall, chief economist for AmericanHort, offers some timely economic information, I pay attention and share it when appropriate.

Such as a recent appendix he added to his "[Your Market Metrics](#)—Index of Prices Paid By



Growers 2007–2025” regarding the impact of the 2026 Iran War and specifically the closing of the Strait of Hormuz, through which about 20% of the world’s oil and liquified natural gas supply flows.

Since 2015, Charlie has worked with upwards of 70 leading growers with more than \$3 billion in aggregated annual production to gather real-world data on nine categories of inputs, and then he calculated an estimated change heading into 2026. But now, with this war on, Charlie has taken the opportunity to update these numbers for spring. He states that a shorter conflict will moderate his estimates, while a longer one will push them higher. Here are his original estimate cost increases and his new estimates:

INPUT CATEGORY	ESTIMATED CHANGE	UPDATED ESTIMATE
Containers & Other Plastics	+2% to +12%	+8% to +15%
Media (Soilless Mixes)	+2% to +10%	+6% to +12%
Propagative Materials	+3% to +6%	+5% to +10%
Plant Protection Products	+3% to +8%	+5% to +12%
Fertilizers	+3% to +15%	<b>+15% to +30%</b>
Labor	+4% to +7%	+4% to +7%
Fuel & Energy	Flat to -5%	<b>+20% to +40%</b>
Supplies & Repairs	+3% to +10%	+8% to +15%
Freight & Trucking	+1% to +3%	+5% to +15%
<b>Weighted overall change</b>	<b>+4% to +7%</b>	<b>+10% to +15%</b>

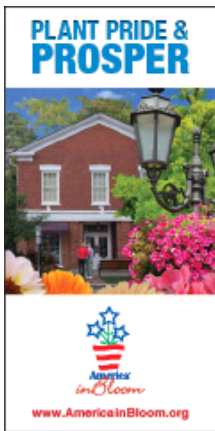
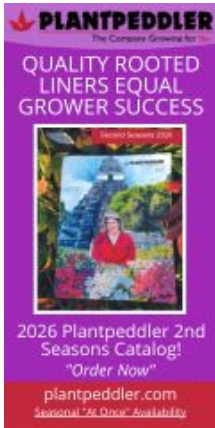
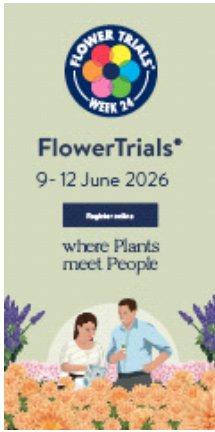
Not surprisingly, Charlie expects fuel to go up the most—and it already has. Fertilizer is also up considerably, because a lot of raw materials flow through the Strait.

Even if the conflict is over quickly, the effect on prices will remain for a while, says Charlie—presumably through spring, which is when we’re making many of our sales. Which is why it’s important you cover your costs while you can.

Bottom line: If your costs go up, do your best to pass them along. Every other industry does, and we pay it. Why should we not make an appropriate profit for our equally valuable products?



**How was April 11-12? Still strong in many places (while others**

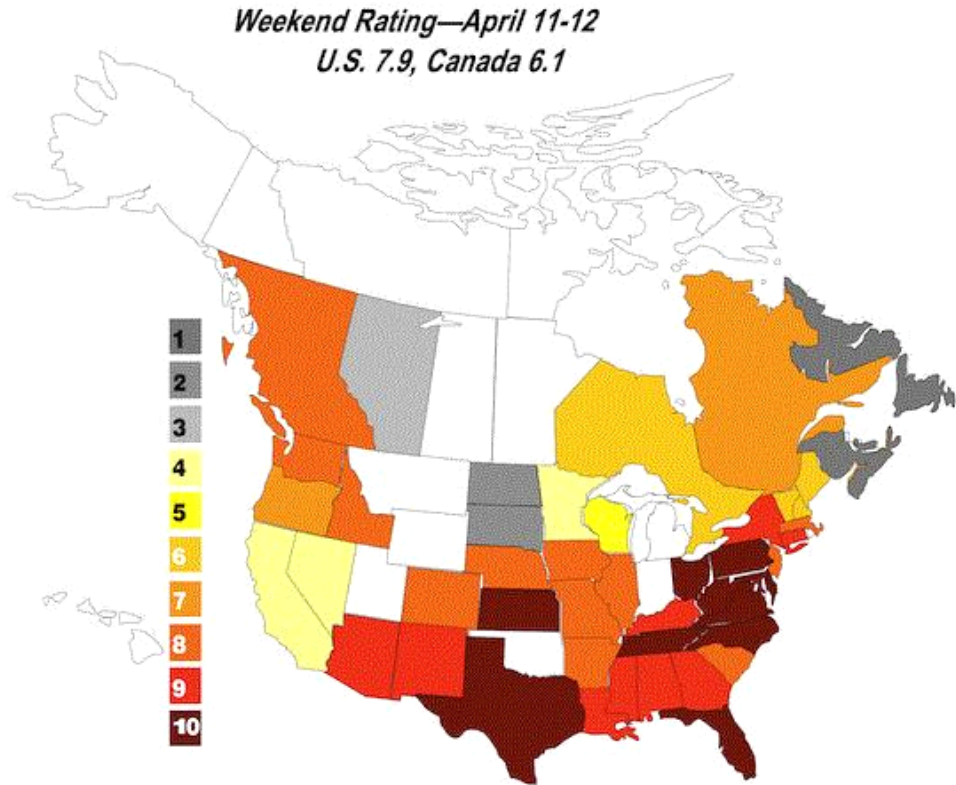


**await spring)**

I was hoping Easter's good scores (7.9 in the U.S.) weren't a fluke ... and they weren't! Fully 28% of you sent in perfect 10s, and another 13% scored your weekend a 9. As my old golf instructor used to say when I caught the pill squarely on the seat of the pants, "That's pretty salty!"

The end result: **7.9 in the U.S.** and **6.1 in Canada** (where my contributors remain chilly but optimistic).

Here's the map:



That's based on 87 scores from 41 states (where are all my regular Michigan contributors?) and eight provinces.

What an improvement over last year's 6.0/4.9, eh? It's the best score in the U.S. for the second



weekend of April since 2021's pandemic-inspired 8.7. And it's certainly well above the 13-year average of 6.5, even though that average includes four Easters (2012, 2015, 2020 and 2023). And it's just a tenth of a point below our Easter score from last week.

As for Canada, the 13-year average is 5.7, so you're just a tad above that. Scores for this weekend have ranged from a low of 4.1 to a high of 8.4 (in 2024), so just about anything can happen north of the border in early spring.



### Where was it hot, sales-wise?

This past weekend, you wanted to be doing business in the South (9.3) or the East (9.3), as the weather must have been flawless. In states with multiple scores, North Carolina reported two 10s and a 9.5, Virginia scored two 10s and two 9s, and Alabama scored 10, 9 and 8.5.

The Midwest was not bad, but not great (6.8); Ohio lifted that average a lot, scoring three perfect 10s.

And even states that should not yet be killing it are doing so—Pennsylvania scored two perfect 10s, New York came in with 10, 9, 9 and 7.6, and even Connecticut and Delaware scored perfect 10s.

East	9.3
South	9.3
Mountain	7.7
Northwest	7.5
New England	7.1
Midwest	6.8
West	6.4
Plains	5.9

The Pacific Northwest is kicking off pretty strongly, too. Washington scored 9, 7.5 and 7, Oregon 8, 7.5 and a so-so 6, and even Idaho managed a 7.5. BC came in with a solid 8—despite freezing temps and a hail storm!

I didn't get many negative comments from you this week ... Derek Lynde in Minnesota noted that he had a good Sunday but a rainy Saturday, which cut his business in half compared to the same weekend last year. Said Derek, "Those rainy Saturdays are a death sentence. Hopefully, we're getting them out of the way now before May."

All of this tells me that, as I said last time, given good weather, customers are ready and willing to spend. I hope you and your staff are ready to meet their needs!



## A few more choice comments

**Connecticut (10).** “I don’t like to give 10s, it implies that the weekend could not have been better in any manner. This weekend was a 10. I still expect a regression to the mean for overall sales as we proceed thru the next several weeks.”—*Chris Hallene, Casertano Farms*

**Virginia (10).** “Our spring rush seems to have started a week or two earlier than normal! About as near perfect of weather this weekend as we could possibly ask for!”—*Gary Garner III, Gary’s Garden Center*

**New York (9).** “Brisk sales in all departments despite the cool and windy conditions.”—*Sig Feile, Atlantic Nursery*

**Washington (9).** “Perfect weather all week made for a strong weekend—let’s get this show on the road!”—*Davis Vos, Vander Giessen Nursery*

**Virginia (9).** “Gardeners were out in force this past weekend and they were buying! We had a great weekend.”—*Duane Weaver, Millmont Greenhouses*

**Alabama (9).** “The mid-April pre-Mother’s Day slowdown has begun. Time to stop ordering and sell what we can while we can. Starting to get hot, too. Great weekend, but I can tell the crazy busy is about over.”—*J.D. Boone, Dothan Nurseries*

**Wisconsin (8).** “Last weekend was a good start to the spring selling season.”—*Chris Williams, K&W Greenery*

**Alberta, Canada (8).** “We had a strong weekend! Customers were buying, browsing, and asking lots of questions in preparation for planting. Tropical sales remained strong and seeds were flying out the door. The kind of weekend that reminds us why we are in this business.”—*Trudy Watt, Parkland Nurseries & Garden Centre*



## Bringing weather into my scoring system?

This little survey, which I’ve been doing since 2011, I believe, occasionally inspires some of you to think about how I might take it to the next level—go beyond “an amalgamation of opinion” as professor Charlie Hall calls it, and find a way to scientifically connect the scores to the weather.

Hans Dramm, president of the [family business](#) bearing his name, has taken it farther than

anyone ever dreamed possible, doing a statistical analysis of 14 years' worth of scores using NOAA environmental data and this equation:

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4X_4 + \beta_5X_5 + \beta_6X_6 + \beta_7X_7 + \epsilon$$

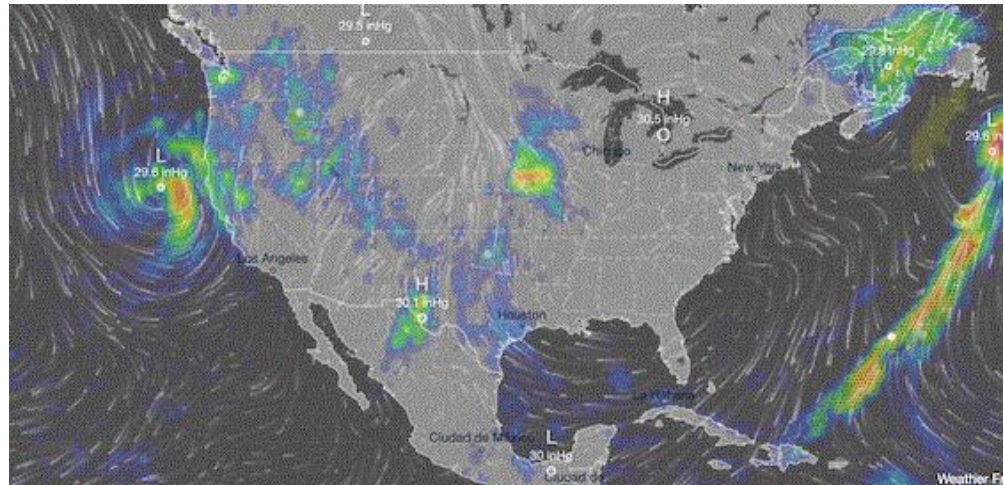
Yes, my head is swimming, too. I don't even know what those squiggles represent. Then again, I flunked high school algebra, while Hans has an MBA in Analytical Finance and Economics.

Anyway, his idea was to see if there was any hidden information that might help businesses make smarter decisions—such as if a particular holiday weekend would be strong enough to warrant additional staffing even if a lot of rain was expected.

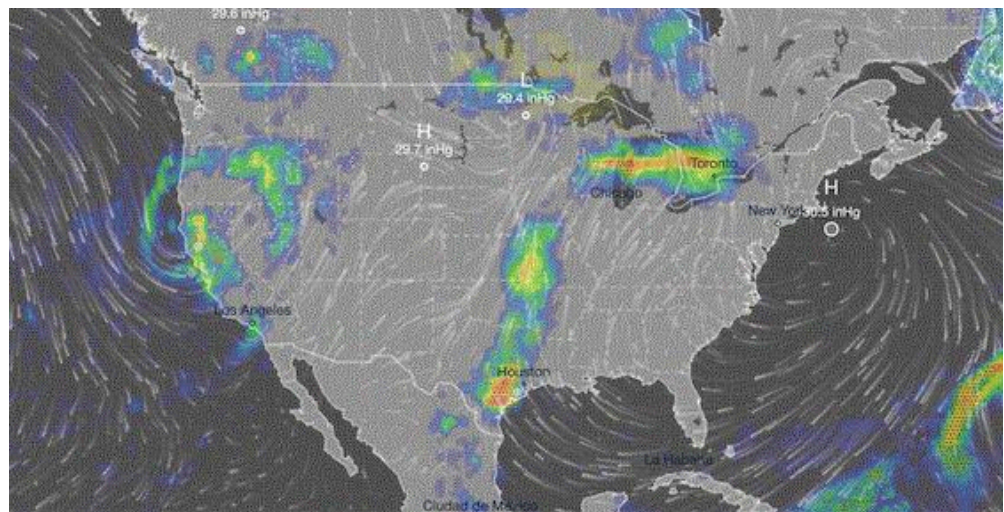
I'm working with him on seeing if there are solid conclusions to be drawn, and how to put them in a language and format that makes sense, so stay tuned!

In the meantime, another reader, Peter Rofner from Richmond Nursery, wondered if it would be useful to include a national weather map from the weekend so we can see any correlation between lower-scoring areas and any associated weather events. He mentioned a website called Ventusky, which I'd never heard of, but I checked it out and found that I could go back in time and call up a national precipitation map. So I did—two of them, one for Saturday and one for Sunday:

#### Saturday, April 11



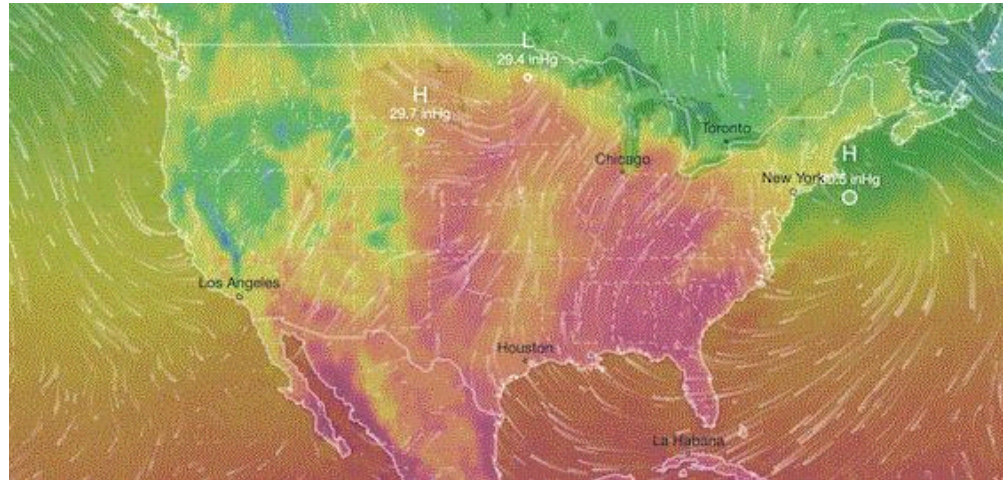
#### Sunday, April 12



Both these snapshots are from 2 p.m. As you can see, not much in the way of widespread rain on either day.

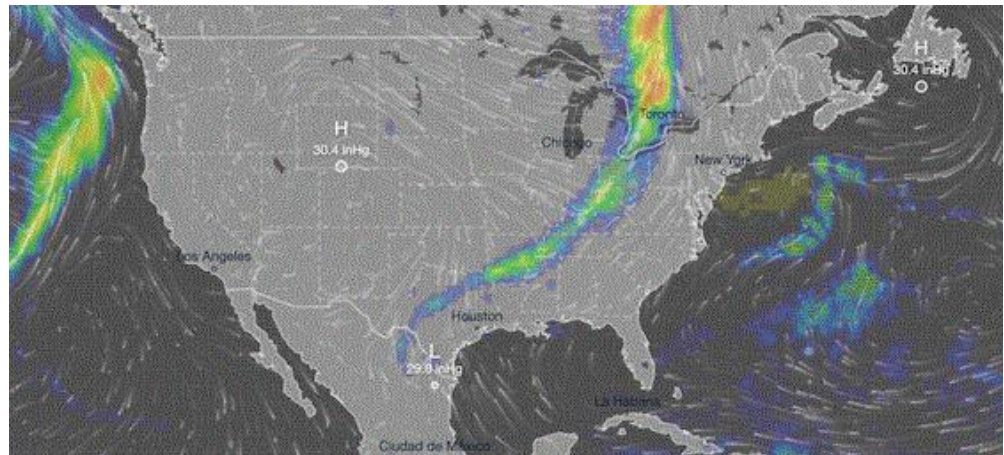
Curious about temperatures, I found that Ventusky will show that, too (but not precipitation and temperature at the same time; perhaps I can find a way to overlay the two into one map). Anyway, here's Sunday's 2 p.m. temperatures (Saturday was about identical):

### Temperatures (darker = warmer)



I'm not sure if I'll be including this each week or not, but if you find it interesting, click [HERE](#) to check out Ventusky. It even shows future maps—for instance, here's the precipitation forecast for this coming Saturday:

### Saturday, April 18



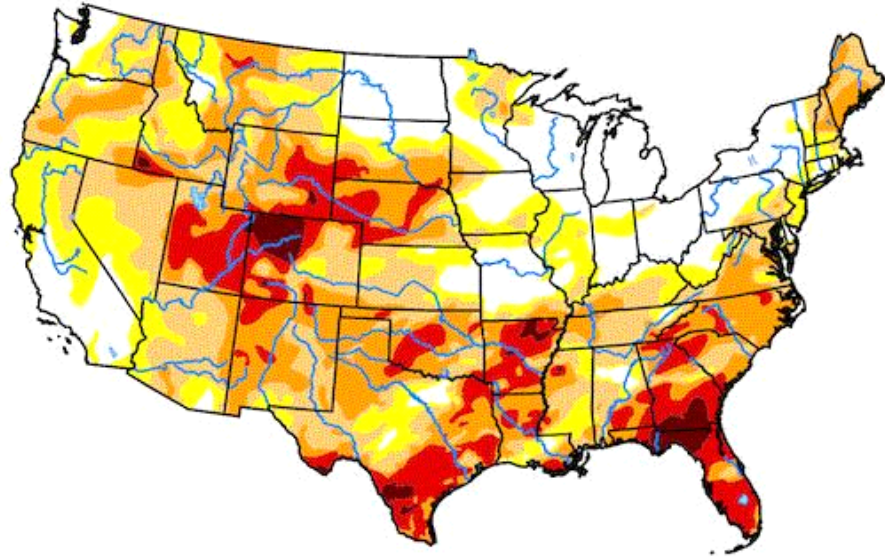
Watch out, Ontario!



### Who needs rain and who doesn't?

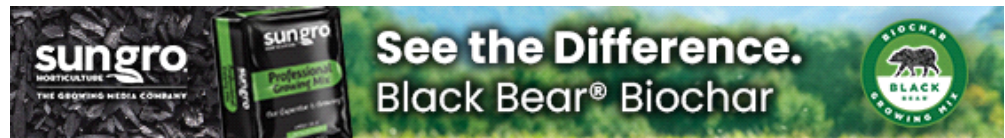
If only we could order up the idyllic weather of Camelot, where it doesn't rain until after sundown, and by 8 a.m. the morning fog must clear. But we do need regular rain, and some of us haven't gotten enough, according to the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#) and their handy map showing conditions

across the country. Here's the current map:



That storm across the Midwest eased just a bit of the drought situation in Iowa, Missouri, Illinois, Indiana and Ohio, along with Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana. My state of Florida got some needed rain during the week last week, while the weekend was crystal clear, and this weekend's forecast is for more of the same (but it'll be hot, reaching 90F in Orlando).

Oh, and get this: According to the latest U.S. temperature and precipitation analysis by NOAA's Center for Environmental Information, March 2026 was the warmest March on record for the contiguous U.S., with average temperatures reaching 9.4 degrees F above the 20th-century average. Also, the April 2025 to March 2026 period was the warmest 12-month span recorded for the contiguous states since 1895.



**Finally ...**



Here's an idea for selling small plants that I spotted at the annual Spring Fling in the Garden plant sale in Winter Garden, put on by the Bloom & Grow Garden Society this past weekend.

For those who don't know, a "flight" is a selection of small samples, usually of wine or beer, served on a board and designed for tasting multiple samples without having to commit to a full glass. Why the term "flight"? That's a group of similar items ... haven't you wondered why it's a "flight" of stairs?

Anyway, it's a clever, attention-grabbing idea for selling multiples of something.

Also spotted at Spring Fling was a species of adenium we are not familiar with: *A. arabicum*, which seems to have a much bigger caudex than the *A. obesum* we are familiar with.



Alas, the woman showing them didn't have any small specimens for sale. Pity, because we would have bought one for sure.

Feel free to email me at [beytes@growertalks.com](mailto:beytes@growertalks.com) if you have ideas, comments or questions.

See you next time!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chi".

**Chris Beytes**

Editor-in-Chief

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