



NAMING A FORCE OF NATURE

What links the names Valerie, Oscar, Florence and Gordon? No, they're not long-lost family members, they're hurricane names.

Hurricanes are given names to identify them. These names are chosen from a list by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO).

Each name on the list has a different first letter and is listed alphabetically, for example Alberto, Beryl and Chris. Names beginning with Q, U, X, Y and Z are not used.

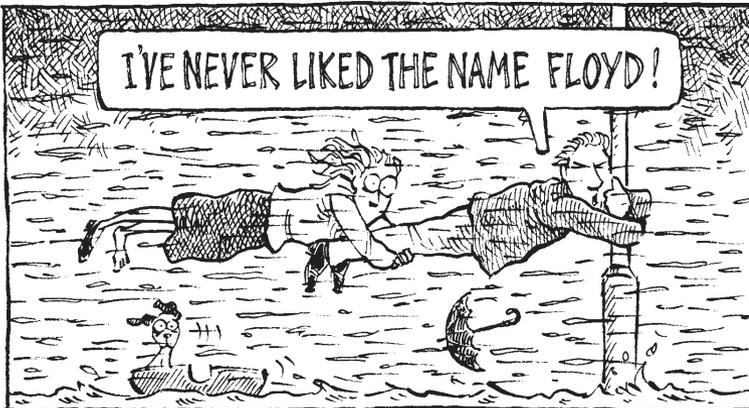
Hurricanes were first given women's names in 1953, to make them easy for members of the public to identify. Before this, they were identified by their geographical location, which could be very confusing.

Women's names were chosen after the tradition of giving ships women's names.

Men's names were added to the list in 1979.

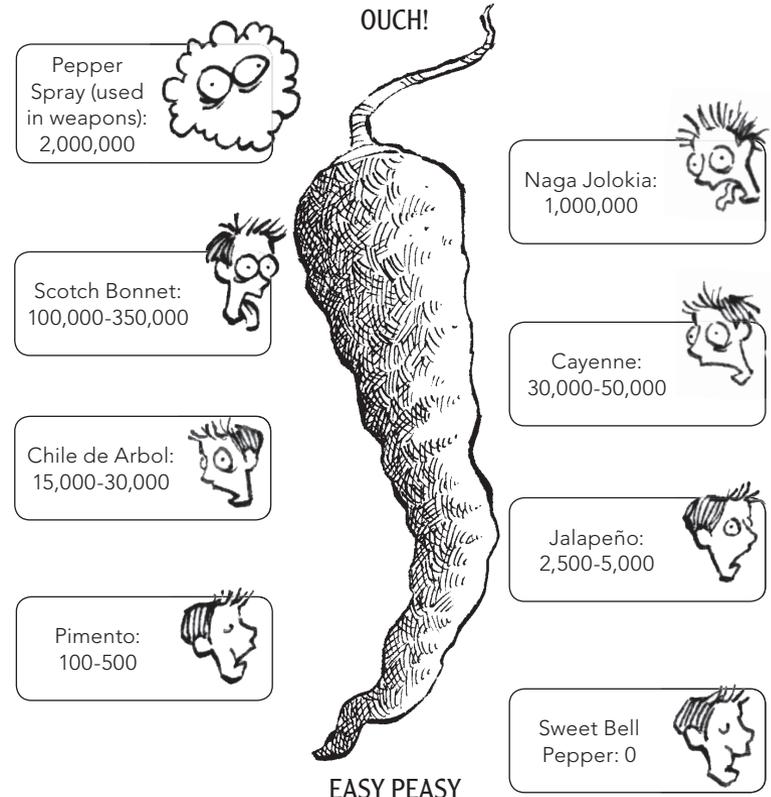
Hurricane names are reused every six years unless a storm with a particular name has been extremely destructive, such as Hurricane Katrina. In this case, the name is retired and a new name is added to the list.

Over 40 names have been dropped since 1954, including Allison, Andrew, Floyd, Igor, Luis and Michelle.



RED HOT CHILLI PEPPERS

Named after its creator, Walter Scoville, the Scoville Scale is used to measure the strength (or heat) of chilli peppers. Ratings are based on how much the chilli needs to be diluted in water before its heat is undetectable. Here's a brief guide to the coolest and hottest chilli peppers around.



If you've eaten a chilli but you can't handle the heat, gulping water won't help. Instead, drink milk-based products. And if the chilli is really burning, try swilling your mouth out with vegetable oil and then spitting it out.