

Little Things in the Garden

By Nancy Bliss

This time of year, spring is teasing me! Too early to plant seeds for summer gardens, the weather is back and forth with rain, frost, and clouds. It's a time of waiting, anticipation, and impatience!

Time to wander the gardens and yard looking for little things, little promises, taking the time to peek, breathe and notice. Gardening is like that. You plant seeds in a windowsill and watch daily for little green sprouts (even though the seed packet tells you how long before germination, you check anyway), knowing that this tiny seed will bring so much joy later on—summer tomatoes or flowers. I wander outside looking for the shoots of bulbs I planted in the fall, or those that return year after year.

The first tiny things I notice are the violets. Most times I need to really get down to see color and detail. They are such bright spots of color when there's so little blooming. And this year, a new color, fuchsia flowers. What a surprise!

Daffodils are bright and cheerful, but first were the grass like blades of crocus which even popped up in the snow. I randomly planted many bulbs last fall, so it's a bit like an Easter Egg hunt, wondering what's going to emerge and where. Keeps things interesting. It's also possible that the gophers moved a few, (perhaps they're good for a little something, after all!). It sure makes it worthwhile to wander, discover and anticipate the colors that will follow.

Mosses are fascinating too. Ancient plants with no roots, they reproduce from spores and survive the harshest conditions. Our rains have brought them back to life and abundance this season. My husband found a recipe (yogurt, moss, milk, a blender and paintbrush) for "seeding" moss onto our new brick wall. Examining the moss while collecting it, you can see tiny stems with little spore heads on them. Wonderful!

Speaking of daffodils, as soon as the trumpets opened, miner bees and honey bees zoomed in on them for a much-awaited feast. Love these pollinators, working from one flower to another, soon to pollinate our fruit trees and vegetables. One daffodil had five small bees in it, making me smile!

Turning over rocks, we see earthworms doing their part to aerate the soil while giving us worm castings, building up and nourishing. Centipedes and Jerusalem crickets are just starting to move around (as long as they keep their distance, they're interesting). Occasionally now, I'm hearing frogs, a sure sign of spring. Mostly they're in the covered raised beds with the Bok Choi or geraniums.

Snow dusted us last week and while wandering around, I spied two bright orange mushrooms poking up through the snow. The contrast of white and orange, mushrooms and snow, was lovely and totally unexpected.

Slowing down is a healthy, restful exercise. Notice the small, interesting, beautiful things; anticipate the life and beauty that's emerging; appreciate moist, watered soil that will produce all manner of things. There's hope and joy in this that I often miss with my busyness.

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