

In the garden with Shobha Vanchiswar



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January 29, 2010

Garden musings on a balmy winter's day

The prolonged balmy weather this past week was quite unusual. Not the regular January thaw. One has to wonder if this is the weather pattern to come.

Everywhere in the country there appear to be bizarre climatic events. While those around me have been gleefully enjoying the warmer days, I've been fretting. About global warming, about the farmers and their crops, about those who make a living at the ski resorts, about my own garden. I'm worried the bulbs will be confused and the fabulous vision I had of the spring to come will not be so fabulous.

But no more. Other than doing my bit towards environmental responsibility, I cannot do more. Worrying is not going to make one iota of difference. So I've joined the ranks of those more practical and taken advantage of the pleasant days. The walks have been pure pleasure. Letting the sun warm my face as I sit on a bench to watch the birds is such a treat. I get good doses of vitamin D to boot. And I studiously avoid looking at the ground lest I observe extra early emergence of misinformed bulbs and other plants.

Garden envy, and inspiration, at the movies

I finally saw the movie "It's Complicated." It had been highly recommended by numerous friends and I was not disappointed. Laughed a great deal. But what surprised me was that not one person mentioned that stunning vegetable garden seen for about two minutes. I was instantly overcome with garden envy and could not get that lush, well-organized, beautiful potager out of my mind.

It has spurred me into making elaborate, unrealistic plans for my vegetable garden this year. My wish list of crops could only be realized if I had several acres instead of the two plots measuring a mere 3 ft x 20 ft and 4 ft x 6 ft. Still, simply letting myself dream has been therapeutic. This 'master plan' will be

whittled down to a more proper, doable one and I will then place my seed order. Planning with like-minded friends and ordering together will be fun. Perhaps collectively we will have that gorgeous garden that was in the movie.

Meanwhile, I'm satisfying my need to chase away the winter blues with my indoor bulbs. The amaryllis bulbs are in various stages of growth. The very sight of the buds, like spearheads atop erect, sturdy stems, is enough to keep me in a good frame of mind. This week, the hyacinth bulbs were awoken from their sleep in the refrigerator and placed in either pots of soil or in water filled forcing jars. I cannot describe how much I love the anticipation of what's to follow. This is what garden therapy is all about. No drugs, no fancy gadgets, just good old nature. And as the years go by, I seek these simple pleasures more and more. High time I say.