



Around the Place

Spring 2020

March has lived up to its reputation this year, sometimes a lion and sometimes a lamb. We have had shirtsleeve days when the air was so soft and warm we thought it was time to bring out the lawn chairs. And then, like this week, we've had all-day snows and the air has had the hard sharp smell of winter.

Still each day we have a bit more sunlight. Each morning the sun travels a little more northward along the mountaintops across the valley. And each day the sagebrush is greener out on the desert and the grass on the lawn pokes up verdant little shoots.

These March days, even the cold ones, are filled with the lovely songs of the meadowlarks, which returned to Snake Valley several weeks ago. We have already seen some red-winged blackbirds, a mountain bluebird or two, and some fly-catchers.

Pockets of activity are visible throughout Home Farm. Several days of hard work went into clearing out brush along the fence rows near the south trailer and also in the plum thicket. Besides showcasing the lilacs and the plum trees, this project eliminated a potential fire hazard.

The pond area has also received a lot of attention. The pond was drained to allow the water weeds such as cattails to dry out enough to be partially mowed. The east dam face has been mostly cleared of many years of detritus consisting of reeds and cattails pulled out from previous cleanings and tossed over the bank. Old woodpiles and abandoned fencing have been removed, too, leaving the pond banks ready for summer and showing off the willow trees that are beginning to bud out for their fourth season.

It is fun to walk around the buildings here and notice so many signs of spring's arrival. Daffodil leaves are almost always the first sign that change is really on its way, and now those leaves have given way to beds filled with fragrant yellow flowers. The tulips and columbines show healthy foliage, full of vitality; each spring we are hopeful that they can bloom before the deer find them. Tulips and columbines (and daffodil flowers, too) seem to be favored items on deer springtime menus.

Some of the apple, plum, and pear trees have been pruned, and preparations are underway for the springtime spraying with a non-toxic miscible oil, which suffocates insect eggs and helps insure a good fruit crop in the fall.

In the garden, several of the perennial beds along the fences have been cleared of last year's old growth. The hollyhocks and ground geraniums have begun to grow, and a few brave parsley sprouts are visible.

Our usual “spring kick-off garden party” was cancelled this year due to coronavirus concerns, and instead a seed inventory was emailed to our community gardeners along with a request for seed suggestions. In a few weeks the first seeds will be planted under grow-lights, and a new season will begin.

We have plans to repaint the Main House dining room and hallway this spring. We narrowed our choices down to three colors, and samples have been painted on various wall areas so we can see how the colors look in situ before we make the final decision.

We are fortunate here at Home Farm. We, too, are avoiding close contact and practicing social distancing, but we have so much space here in the high desert that we can work a safe distance apart and yet be close enough to interact at the same time. We can dig in the garden together or haul weeds keeping a safe distance yet still able to interact with one another. Our two schoolchildren can complete their daily homeschooling—some of it delivered via computer from their teacher’s house across the valley—and then go outside to fly their kites or play on the swing.

Marj Coffman recently shared the following thought with us:

The whole human race is suddenly being forced to start living the precepts of the new cycle. What Vitvan called the Pleasure/Profit cycle is at an end and we are being thrust into the new Love/Security cycle that will characterize the next 2000 years. Many folks around the globe are coming to the realization that what really matters is family, and also that we are ultimately all one family. Tribalism will die hard, of course, but total strangers are reaching out to help one another. I’m so excited to be alive to see this beginning of the new cycle. “We are all in this together” has never been more apparent.

May the peace and power of the Infinite Spirit, which passes all understanding, hold us and keep us in the Christed consciousness while we are seemingly separated one from another.

Susan Wetmore