

Spying on spring



KATHY RENWALD

When the temperature shot up this week, neighbours emerged from their homes like earthworms after a rain. Most were looking for something to do that resembled gardening.

One woman was clearing the storm-sewer grate of winter treasures that included gloves and soccer balls.

Neighbour Nora was already rearranging chairs on her lovely porch, and neighbour Hank was thinking spring as he discussed sailing in a front-yard gab session.

After my walk, I went home and dug a hole in the snow to see what the plants looked like. Goofy, I know, but it was encouraging to see the bright green of pachysandra looking yummy enough to be on the shelf at Whole Foods.

Real magic is happening under the snow and soil. I like to think about the double bloodroot bulking up for its spring emergence. It will be in bloom in about six or seven weeks, and I must block off the calendar so that nothing interferes with gazing at the perfect white flowers.

I saw Jim Lounsbury on TV this week — another sign of spring. You can lose yourself in one-of-a-kind plants at his Vineland Nurseries. I taped dozens of interviews with him when I was



KATHY RENWALD, SPECIAL TO THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

Spring will soon return, and with it the double bloodroot.

shooting *Gardener's Journal*, and he's still the expert on dwarf evergreens for today's small gardens.

Canada Blooms opens at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre on Wednesday. Colour, fragrance, flowers and furniture will all be there to help ease the messy transition between winter and spring.

The scope at Canada Blooms has always been wide, from tips on composting to a garden composed of Granny-Smith apples that was a highlight two years ago. This year's theme, *Love in the Garden*, promises a return to the '60s and sounds mind-blowing.

Work is under way on a new atrium at the Royal Botanical Gardens, and we'll see the opening of the new Helen M. Kippax Garden later in the season. It is near the Rose Garden's teahouse and is being designed by landscape architect Martin Wade.

Wade's work is always inven-

tive and sensitive to place, so it will be good to see how he links the new garden with the woods and trails beyond.

In rooting around for spring news, I learned that Toronto landscape architect Janet Rosenberg is working on designs for Peace Memorial Park on the former grounds of Peace Memorial School on East 36th Street on the Mountain. The city's website calls it a passive neighbourhood park.

That's hardly a rousing description, but I've never known Rosenberg to do anything dull, so let's hope it's magical, wonderful and actually gets built. A grand memorial arch honouring the men and women who fought in the First World War is a feature of the design.

Start ticking off the signs of spring, and before you know it, it will be here.

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