

Garden Kalendar: Winter 2021

The Winter 2021 edition of my Garden Kalendar is composed of edited excerpts from my daily garden journal written in January-March 2020, accompanied by occasional commentaries on those passages. This Kalendar posting includes about 50% of my original, hand-written journal. The selections primarily focus on entries discussing either the Coe Alumni House Garden or my vegetable garden near Wickiup Hill Outdoor Learning Center. The italicized quotations inserted into the Kalendar are from *Cultivating Delight: A Natural History of My Garden* by Diane Ackerman, one of my long-time favorite authors. For many years I assigned her *Moon by Whalelight* in a summer reading course I taught for incoming first-year Coe students. Her book on natural history is rich with many beautifully written passages, and I discovered this fall that her book on gardens (and many other interrelated topics) is an equally fertile and inspiring text. In this Kalendar I've included several passages from her "Winter" chapter.

. . . a book is like a garden. There is always something to tinker with and improve; it has seasons: research, writing, production, publication; it inspires ceremonies, rituals, struggles, and rewards. . . . the physical garden and the recorded one [are] staked out with language. Writing about an event allows one to re-experience it in slow motion, whether it is a flower or an idea. Both flower and idea are dramas. They are at the atomic level, of course, where all is motion. ~Diane Ackerman

Excerpts from Garden Journal, January-March 2020

1 Jan 2020. First garden entry of a new decade. I wonder if I'll still be around to celebrate 2030 with a garden journal entry. At the moment I feel confident I'll make it, but I also know one's health can turn on a dime. I began my gardening efforts in the new year by editing photos shot at the Alum Garden on 23 December. I'm sorting the photos into two groups: seedheads and foliage. Overall I have been pleased with the photos, including several decent closeups. Started with 150 photos and should have 70+ I can use in two web slideshows. I still have about 40 photos to edit, which mostly involves cropping so viewers will more likely focus on the photo's primary subject(s). I also spent an hour working on the Alum Garden map, mostly on the initial layout for the "I" bed. [*Alas, one year later this map project remains unfinished, hampered by my failure to settle on a clean layout that accurately represents what's located in each perennial bed and how the prominent vegetation changes through the seasons.*]

In the afternoon to Coe. Watered the plants on the 3rd floor of Peterson Hall and sprayed the big ficus with Neem oil. Despite evidence of a scale infestation, the ficus has really grown since I trimmed it in October, when we brought it inside after a summer in the Alum Garden. The Neem oil has an odor, so I'm glad I could do the spraying when no one was around. The scented geranium also needs trimming--which I had failed to trim in October when we also brought it back from the

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Alum Garden. I'll return to Peterson on Friday, give it a haircut, and use those cuttings to start new geraniums in the greenhouse.

After watering the Peterson plants, I worked in the garden for another hour. The temp was in the 40s and occasional sunshine so it was quite comfortable; didn't need a winter coat. I began by trimming vegetation behind the NE bench. I collected seedheads from the *Verbena bonariensis* and sprinkled its seeds in 3 new areas: middle of the "I" bed, area in front of the amsonia in the "K" bed, and east end of the "M1" bed between the peonies and cranesbill. [*As usual, the Verbena ignored my efforts, no emergence in the three areas where I sprinkled fresh seed, but it did expand its coverage of the garden, popping up in several new areas—most notably in the sundial flower bed in front of the gazebo. The Verbena has again demonstrated it marches to the beat of its own drummer.*]

2 Jan. Started the day by driving to Iowa City to spend the day with my buddy Theo, but by the time I got there I felt awful: lightheaded, queasy stomach, no energy. I called MVM and she replaced me. After I got home, I worked on editing the December garden photos and read some commentary on miracles in the Gospels—and why Jesus should not be perceived as a magician. After lunch, took an hour nap and felt much better. Went to Coe, mailed some Alumni Garden calendars, and worked in the garden shed for a couple hours. After getting four "buckets" of water from the Alum House, I watered the basil, cilantro, and other plants in the greenhouse. Then spent 30 minutes recording names of plants in the "F" bed. In locating plants on the digital map, I realized I needed more precise info than my memory could recall. So I switched to working on December photo slideshow. Managed to identify one mystery photo as a 'David' phlox seedhead. It's my impression the seeds are sterile but a lovely seedhead and one of my best photos from December.

3 Jan. I believe Philip Larkin wrote, or said: "I don't think I write well—just better than anyone else." I was thinking about Larkin's remark with regard to my garden journal and my commentaries and photos dealing with the Coe garden. I have never thought of myself as a good writer or photographer, but I am better (or at least more dedicated) than anyone else writing about this garden—so I'm the guy, for better or worse.

One task I finished today was putting together information concerning the lore and symbolism associated with flowers that H. photographed in the fall. I had promised to send her my observations last week but never got them done. Finally, today, I more carefully looked through her photos and put together comments on most of the flowers she photographed: red roses, dahlias, thyme, sunflowers, Rudbeckia, coreopsis, a couple of others. In the process I discovered some things I can use in the December almanac, which is still in its first draft stage.

I also cleaned up around the greenhouse and compost piles. Put several buckets and plant supports in the old portable greenhouse/storage unit—which is looking much worse for wear. The door zipper is broken and the door can no longer be closed completely. That's one reason why I've moved the chipper/shredder into the greenhouse: it's our most expensive piece of machinery and I

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would hate to see it disappear. We have a lot of vegetation to shred, including two piles outside the garden shed and a compost bin full of unshredded materials—but nothing is going to happen anytime soon.

One other task I worked on was taking notes on flowers in the “K” bed. We have lost a couple of signs, including one for the purple lovegrass. In working on these maps, I have finally acknowledged the value of creating a comprehensive list of all plants in the garden. That would save me needlessly looking up information on plants that I have already identified and researched. Joe-Pye weed, for example, will appear in at least seven different maps, as is the case with coneflowers, daisies, lady’s mantle (and I just discovered the “lady” in the name originally referred to the Virgin Mary).

14 Jan. An 11-day break from the journal due to a combination of health issues (dizziness, borderline flu symptoms) and a six-day trip to Kansas to do some family history research at the Kansas Historical Society in Topeka. We also visited MVM’s sister, had a wonderful lunch with an old college friend who we last saw when he sang at our wedding, and met up with two of my old elementary school/high school classmates. But now I’m back in the gardening groove. This morning to Coe, where I posted my final MMGR for 2019, a draft I started four weeks ago, describing the mapping project and posting the latest draft of the “F” bed map. Last night I spent three hours completing a December garden walk celebrating various flower seeds in the garden. Many of my favorite photos of the year focused on seedheads. The photos help me see them more clearly, their details enlarged while the surrounding distractions have been removed. I’ve shot dozens of purple coneflower seedheads, each one different, invariably attractive even when missing some of their seeds. They are an interesting contrast with the black-eyed Susan seedheads, which are usually intact. Perhaps the birds prefer the coneflowers over the Rudbeckias—which are more compact and tight fisted. Perhaps Susan’s seeds are consumed later in the year? I don’t know.

One other accomplishment today was that S. in Computer Services did some upgrades on my garden shed computer, doing everything by remote. I now have regained access to my F Drive files and should be able to use Adobe for opening pdf files. One problem he could not fix was the computer’s ability to open Word file attachments. It appears my WordPerfect software interferes with those downloads.

This afternoon I worked in the garden studio at home. Started transcribing the 2019 garden journal into the January Kalendar blog post. Always interesting to review the past year and see how it compares with the present—and be reminded of how little I can remember. I can’t imagine why any readers would care about reading these journal entries, but I still find it a satisfying reading/reviewing/editing process. Another garden studio job was creating an updated 2020 version of my vegetable seed order table. I started by removing seed cultivars and sources that I don’t plan on using. I’m surprised how detailed is the 2019 chart. I still have a lot of work in updating the current

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seed options, now that I've received all the seed catalogs I plan on using—with the exception of Victory Seeds.

This evening MVM discovered that the dried Jacob's Cattle shell beans stored in a glass jar were covered with a white fungus and smelled like the seeds were fermenting. Had to throw them all out. Apparently they were not sufficiently dried out—either internal moisture or from the cleaning process. Very sad to lose that quart jar of dry beans. It took several hours to shell them and I was looking forward to using them in soups.

15 Jan. I've been reading Jean-Martin Fortier's *The Market Gardener*, an excellent book by an organic farmer whose business is based on a 1 ½ acre farm in Canada. He provides informative explanations of his techniques on growing garden produce for his customers from March through November in what is probably a Z4 garden. Major emphasis on floating row covers to protect veggies from cold and insect pests. He advocates minimum till practices, using a tiller for surface tilling but not going deep. He's also a convert for the benefits of a broadfork. [*I would agree. In 2019 I started using a broadfork purchased from Johnny's Seeds. It was a bit expensive, but so far I've been impressed with its ease of use and its ability to aerate the soil without major disturbance to the raised beds.*] I'm now reading chapter on his recommendations for soil prep, fertilizer, planting practices (relies on starting plants in a greenhouse and transplanting), spacing, and cultivar recommendations—many of which are new to me. I'll consult his seed recommendations when I order my seeds in a couple of weeks.

16 Jan. This afternoon I worked on my vegetable seed order table. It's taking far too much time, but I enjoy trying to create a comprehensive list and descriptions of potential seed purchases. Today I moved around a lot of plant descriptions in the computer file so the varieties are in an alphabetical order, but it gets complicated when I'm also trying to classify similar types—such as accurately labeling the lettuces (leaf, buttercrunch, iceberg, etc). But the table is becoming more orderly. As for my seed sources, I'm staying with those I've used the last two years: Baker's Creek, Johnny's, Territorial, Annie's Heirloom, Botanical Interests, Pinetree, J. Scheepers, Victory, Seeds from Italy, Natural Gardeners, Old Maine Potato Lady, Totally Tomatoes, and Seeds 'n Such. The last two have not received great reviews on Dave's website, and I may reduce my dependence on those two companies; however, they both offer seeds for tomato varieties not available from the other sources. And their prices are quite reasonable. Last year I ordered far more seeds than I could ever use. I hope this year to do a better job of planning and accurately predicting what will get planted where. [*On this issue I failed. Perhaps 25% of the vegetable seeds I ordered were never used; however, last year I did a better job of giving away to other gardeners unused seeds and the extra plants started in the greenhouse.*]

16 Jan. Spent several hours in the garden studio working on the seed order table. In the table are dozens of seed varieties I'll never order. I would need a garden ten times the size of the Wickiup

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garden to handle all these seeds, but there are so many tempting options. It would be wonderful to have the time and space and discipline as a record-keeper to track the pros and cons of so many varieties. But I'll never have that kind of organizational rigor. Still, it's fun to imagine the presence of so many diverse varieties in a garden. Certainly the garden at Wickiup is in better shape for the spring than in previous years. Probably 1/4 of the garden never got used last year, I have ten new raised beds that didn't exist last spring, and the garden size will almost double because of the addition of the west field. And what better way to spend a cold, snowy winter's day than in my garden studio dreaming about this summer's vegetable garden. One supreme joy of a vegetable garden—in contrast to my backyard garden or the perennial flower beds at Coe—is that every year is a fresh beginning with new seeds, new varieties, new designs. Of course success depends on some patience and discipline and luck—hoping the weather will cooperate and my health will be okay. At age 74, it becomes harder to ignore the many ways for the body to fail. But maybe my luck will hold out and I will have one more good year. Actually, I'm greedy. I'm still hoping for ten or fifteen more good years. So much still to learn—and I feel like I'm just getting started.

*“Garden writers are fond of claiming that every season is as full of beauties and pleasures as any other. This is of course nonsense. Watching an equinoctial gale toppling the *Verbena bonariensis* and sweeping away the asters, the second flush of penstemon blossoms, the cosmos that came on so late, and all the other autumn flowers, opening the curtains on a March morning to see the magnolia flattened under ten inches of fresh wet snow; peering out from the porch into the sixth dismal day of non-stop May rain—the heart does not merely sink, but bumps along the bottom.”* Diane Ackerman quoting the garden writer Charles Elliott

20 Jan. One significant step today: I ordered 15 Alum Garden T-shirts with the aster design by H., the student from Viet Nam. Cost of \$175 for 15 shirts, in 3 colors and 3 sizes. Perhaps this is the beginning of an Alum Garden Boutique? I do hope they turn out okay. Worst case scenario, I end up with several new 100% cotton T-shirts to wear while gardening.

22 Jan. This evening I “finished” the seed order table. Although it still needs some editing, the basic work is done. Tonight I started going through the tomato options, trying to make some initial choices. After my first culling, I had 20 varieties I wanted to order, so I went through that list and trimmed it to 15—which should be close to my final decision. I have space for about 50 tomatoes, so this plan would enable me to average three plants per variety. After I finished that list, I was looking through the tomato recommendations in Fortier's *The Market Gardener*. He identifies his three favorite cultivars for his Canadian garden, all names new to me. Doing a websearch, I could not find any information on one of the varieties. I also find it interesting that Lemon Boy, which has been my most consistently productive and reliable tomato the last three years, is only available from one seed source I use, the Seeds 'n Such catalog. I am curious why Lemon Boy does not have wider distribution.

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29 Jan. Spent four hours today with D., who was so helpful in 2014 when I first started working in the Coe garden. We were at Buffalo Methodist, walking around the area where Cara's outdoor sculpture has been installed. Our conversation focused on possibilities for plants in the triangular area west of the sculpture. As I was talking with D., I found myself getting a clearer idea of how this area might be landscaped—seeing ornamental grasses in the center and native perennial flowers along side the two paths that would lead from the sidewalk to the outdoor worship area. We also talked about creating a meandering path through the grasses. Might try a pennisetum, perhaps 2-3' tall, with a clump of a taller miscanthus in the center. Flowers on the outside could be coneflowers, black-eyed Susans, blazing stars, short goldenrod, salvias. Might also include clumps of a few tough annuals, such as zinnias and plains coreopsis.

All historic gardens live in the imagination. As do the gardens of childhood. Or the gardens of past loves. Heraclitus was right when he observed that we never step in the same stream twice. We breathe the same molecules of air, we till the same soil, but a garden left untended by laziness or death vanishes because, like a life, a garden is a cultivated space. ~Diane Ackerman

31 Jan. Finally posted the January Kalendar to the web at 11:15 tonight. This evening I struggled with final editing, trying to remain faithful to the voice and phrasing of the original journal entries while also seeking a minimal fluency and clarity to the phrasing. Spent a lot of time searching for ways to replace my dependence on the simple phrase "cleaning up." Entry after entry talked about "cleaning up" a flower bed or cleaning up the front yard or cleaning up the asparagus bed. I wanted to convey the facts as written without making it sound so bloody repetitious—though, of course, most gardening work is repetitious, the same weeding and raking and hoeing repeated day after day after day. Well, the Kalendar entry isn't perfect, but I got it posted and can now move on to other tasks—such as starting on February's annotated bibliography posting, another text that is easy to start (just write down bibliographical information on each gardening book I read the past year) and hard to finish. It's so difficult to compose annotations that are accurate and succinct, giving an insightful assessment of each book.

1 Feb. After attending the Elizabeth Warren rally in the basketball gym, I worked at the Coe garden for an hour, shoveling the walkways so I had a clear path from the garden shed to the gazebo. Snow was about 6" deep, soft and wet. The temp was in the mid 30s and sunny, a lovely February day. Had no trouble feeling comfortable wearing just a hoodie, no winter coat. In the greenhouse, I was glad to see the 12 scented geranium cuttings I planted yesterday all looked perky. The basil, which I watered yesterday, had bounced back, but several cilantro remained wilted. Most of the vegetable seed orders have arrived, and next week I'll start sowing some seeds.

2 Feb. This evening we went to the caucus and cast our lot with E. Warren. As usual, the caucus was confusing, ill-organized, loud, unwieldy. Warren drew the second largest number of supporters after Sanders, who also won the majority at the caucus at Garfield elementary four years ago. We left after two hours, once they had tabulated our votes. As we were departing, it became apparent that Klobuchar would get one delegate, Warren one delegate, Sanders two delegates. The remaining two delegates would likely be split between Sanders, Warren, and Mayor Pete, who was about 10 votes short of earning a delegate. A campaign organizer for Biden was present but only a couple of people were initially in his corner, and they soon drifted into other camps. There were similar low numbers for Andrew Yang and the other also-rans. It is an ungainly, time-consuming system—definitely time for a change.

As for gardening, this morning I composed a long email for Jim. Last fall Jim and I had agreed to share a garden space at Wickiup, between our two garden plots and the creek, an area that I have labeled the “west field.” I described the seeds and plants I could contribute to his garden and our joint melon/pumpkin/squash/potato garden area. The rest of the morning I prepared a slideshow of Alum Garden photos shot on December 23, emphasizing images of new growth throughout the garden. Rather disheartening that in several slides, I could not remember what plant(s) were being featured, even though it was only six weeks ago. While editing the web posting, I was surprised to discover how many red oak leaves appear in the photos. The leaves often add an aesthetic richness to the photos and help to establish a visual scale for perceiving the size of the primary subjects. I also edited photos by Anh that I will post next week to the garden website. She has provided short quotations with each photo, a lovely job selecting passages to accompany each photo.

4 Feb. Just heard on MSNBC that Trump’s approval rating has soared to 49%, his popularity with voters well beyond my ability to comprehend. But then the Democrats totally screwed up the tabulation of the caucus results, and it is still not clear—two days after Iowa’s primary—who was the winner or winners. Darn near absolute incompetence. Thank goodness gardening work makes it easier to leave all that political noise behind and spend the day thinking about seeds and soil and evil-minded nematodes.

This afternoon at Coe I unpacked the bag of Johnny’s seed starter mix and positioned it under the work bench in the greenhouse. I then opened the box with the Little Free Library and set it on a work bench in the garden shed. Anh’s assignment will be to cover the wood with several coats of polyurethane. In the mean time I’ll contact Physical Plant and schedule a time when they can help me install it by the NW gate.

When Anh arrived, I explained the library project, and then I showed her how to prepare the seed starter with water and use the soil blocker to create the cubes for sowing seeds. After we filled a plastic tray with 45 cubes, we got out some old seeds and sowed two cubes with nasturtiums and 3 with lavender (the latter with a notoriously unreliable germination rate). I finished the afternoon by doing some research on beans I planted last year. I had totally forgotten the strong, positive

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evaluations the Mascotte and Roc D'Or beans received, both beans that proved disappointing in my 2019 garden. Perhaps I need to try them again.

11 Feb. Sunshine, temp in the upper 20s, breezy but overall a nice winter day. This morning in the garden studio at home I worked on the annotated bibliography. It's always enlightening to review my marginal notes and underlined passage, but it is time consuming and often difficult to assess books for which I have an imperfect recollection. Would be much better if I wrote the annotations immediately after reading each book, but that would require a discipline I don't have—though I can always hope I'll acquire more productive habits this coming year.

After lunch I headed to Coe to water plants. Discovered three cubes with flower seeds that had germinated, including one nasturtium. These are all old seeds, some going back to 2016, so I'm sure we'll have some duds. I also worked on a new MMGR, the second one this year. My commentary focuses on three plants with an attractive winter fragrance: giant hyssop, English thyme, and sweet Annie—all growing at the end of the "A2" bed, all within ten feet of each other. I'm sure most garden visitors—assuming we ever had any visitors in February—would walk by those three plants without giving them a second thought. They are mostly brown sticks and quite ordinary looking at this time of year—yet they each have their own attractive aroma. The detection of each fragrance does require intimacy, but perhaps their aromas are easily detected by more sensitive animals. I wonder what is the survival value of these fragrances for the three plants or are their fragrant molecules just accidental byproducts?

17 Feb. In Coe email this morning was a message announcing the death of Bob Kocher, one of the truly great faculty in the college's 150+ years. It was such a privilege to be teaching at Coe when he was on the faculty, and that I had the good sense to ask him to serve as a guest lecturer for several of my composition classes. His passing is an enormous loss in so many ways.

As for my gardening work, I shot some photographs of the garden and composed (and revised) this week's MMGR. My goal is to do another editing tomorrow evening and get it posted to the garden website. Perhaps this year I will be more responsible with posting MMGR's in a timely manner. As for the afternoon, I worked on the annotated bibliography and spent a couple hours reading Roy Lancaster's memoir on his life as an English gardener and popularizer of gardening. Not a great book—his prose is quite ordinary—but he worked with many great gardeners, and he's very knowledgeable about plants. He comes across as a friendly, good-natured, even-keel personality, someone who probably got on well with nearly everyone. Rarely does he offer a disparaging remark about any colleagues. Because it's an easy read, I would like to finish it and include an annotation in this month's blog post. I'm also close to finishing Floud's book on the economic history of the English garden—impressive research, providing a unique perspective on the economics of large estate gardens. While at times a bit slow, I've been reading it in small chunks and still enjoying it.

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22 Feb. The last few nights we've been watching the first season of the series *Outlander*. One small flower moment. Claire, the series protagonist, is looking at some small blue flowers in Scotland, wondering if they might be forget-me-nots. Last June, when we were crossing a hillside in Scotland, after two nights in Pitlochry, we frequently saw these small blue flowers, and I asked two women we encountered on the trail if they knew the identify of these flowers. One said she thought they were forget-me-nots. That reminded me of a Boundary Waters canoe trip when we were camped near Hoist Bay and I came upon a patch of beautiful, small, light blue flowers with yellow eyes. They had to be forget-me-nots.

24 Feb. A productive gardening day. Temp was into the 30s, and most of the snow on the north side of the garden has melted. The "A" walkway, which gets no direct sun, was icy and slick this morning and flooded with melting ice this afternoon. Despite the soggy conditions, I put on my kneepads and spent over two hours working on the "K" bed, removing last year's vegetation. Cut down all the big miscanthus behind the NW bench and the asters, Joe-Pye, and goldenrod in the "K"; also removed dead foliage from the pulmonaria, lamb's ear, and Lancaster cranesbill at the front of the bed.

Another job I tackled was installing a new thermometer and humidity gauge on the wall of the gazebo. Purchased from the Garret Wade catalog, this thermometer looks much better than the one installed last year. I'll probably put the old one in our backyard at home. Another task was bringing up to the shed the wheelbarrow for the William Carlos Williams' poem on the Red Wheelbarrow. I asked Anh to remove the rust with sandpaper so we could then paint it red. [*This project remains unfinished though the wheelbarrow has been sanded and is ready for painting.*]

25 Feb. This morning at home in the garden studio, 3 hours working on the annotated bibliography. Wrote two new annotations and finished reading the last pages of the *Language of Flowers* book that I started reading in Scotland last summer. The annotations were on Hamer's memoir as a mole catcher and Lancaster's autobiography. They are British contemporaries, both highly knowledgeable garden consultants, but so dissimilar in style, tone, persona, content.

In the afternoon I intended to work in the Coe garden, but it was chilly and windy and the air felt wet so I remained in the garden shed and finished this week's MMGR, a posting that focused on Bob Kocher. It's certainly different from any other MMGR. After I posted it, I realized that it should have been treated as a Garden Shed essay, but it really makes no difference. Not likely anyone will read it, regardless of where it's posted. Occasionally I imagine that my grandson, 40 years from now, will be wondering who this guy Bob was that he knew when he was a little kid. Perhaps he is my intended audience.

In addition to completing the MMGR, I also sowed new seeds in the soil cubes that had initially been used for old seeds that didn't germinate. I also transplanted several small flowers and one tiny lavender. Hard to believe the lavender will survive, but I thought the transplanting and moving it

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to a dryer environment might help. As for the seeds I sowed, they were bunching onions, shallots and red Genovese basil. I also filled a large pot with potting soil mix and sowed about 25 18-day radish seeds. [*The onion seeds never germinated; the scallions did germinate and were later transplanted into a raised bed at the Wickiup garden; the radish seeds germinated, but I failed to thin them properly and only harvested a couple of full-grown radishes.*]

This has been a glorious year in the garden, though a hard year otherwise, filled with many losses. My garden existed as a sanctuary beyond the world's fevers, comforting me as it has gardeners throughout the ages. All burdens can be dropped at the garden gate, beyond which light sings in the trees and the flower beds patiently wait for attention. Each spring, a garden triumphs over adversity and flourishes again, despite change, dormancy, and any number of setbacks. A garden is always a stage of life and death,

mystery and marvel, as another Marvell once eloquently said:

Meanwhile the Mind, from pleasure less

Withdraws into its happiness:

The Mind, that Ocean where each kind

Does straight its own resemblance find;

Yet it creates, transcending these,

Far other Worlds, and other Seas;

Annihilating all that's made

To a green Thought in a green Shade. ~Andrew Marvell, "The Garden"

~Diane Ackerman

26 Feb. One lovely development this morning while at Coe. I was reading my marginal notes on Fiona Stafford's *A Brief Life of Flowers* and noticed that in her bibliography was a reference to a poem on daffodils by Gillian Clark, "A Miracle on St. David's Day" (which is March 1, a national Welsh festival day). I looked up the poem on Clarke's website and discovered it focuses on the poet's encounter with a man in an insane asylum who never speaks; however, in listening to Clarke—or her persona in the poem—reading poetry aloud to the asylum residents, he suddenly starts reciting Wordsworth's poem on the daffodil. Impulsively responding to her emotionally moving poem, I sent an email message to Clarke's website address, asking for permission to reprint the poem in *The Garden Quarto*. Within five minutes, she responded, saying she would be glad to authorize such a reprinting. She later sent a second message with her mailing address and a request that I correct an editing error in the poem's on-line version. In the meantime, I discovered she has several books of poetry, including a book of nine poems on a medieval garden that has been restored in Wales. And for eight years (2008-16) she was the National Poet of Wales. I'm rather excited that one of her poems will appear in the *Garden Quarto's* spring issue.

The rest of my gardening efforts were more pedestrian, working in the garden studio at home, writing annotations on Vesey's winter gardens book and Robin Fox's collection of essays originally published in the *Financial Times*. Neither review is well written, but at least I have the first drafts

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finished, providing a revisable text. I also wrote the bib entry for Rupp's delightful book *Blue Tomatoes and Square Potatoes*—or whatever is the book's amusing title. I found the text very informative, one of the best gardening books I read the past year.

The temp reached into the mid 30s this afternoon, with sunshine and a little melting of snow, but our backyard is still 90% snow pack. The one exception is the flower bed above the retaining wall. Today I saw a lone snowdrop in bloom in the middle of the bed, and several more have popped up and will be blooming in another day or two. The first flowers of 2020. :)

28 Feb. Big international news is the spread of the coronavirus with 65 cases reported in the U.S., but it's evident the epidemic is just beginning. Of course Donald is calling this potential epidemic a hoax, foisted on America by the liberal media. The big shots governing the stock market do not think it's a hoax, the Dow Jones falling 3,500 points just this week, over 1,200 points yesterday, an all-time record collapse. It will be interesting to see how our retirement funds handle the turbulence in the coming months.

As for gardening, I finally completed the first draft of the annotated bib: 25 books, 20 pages. This afternoon I removed a large chunk of commentary that I decided could be the basis for the next MMGR. I also sent in my final Bluestone flower order. The total bill for my four orders this month will come to about \$1,000. Let's hope I do a better job planting the Bluestone flowers and grasses this year than I did last year. I have a lot of projects in mind for all four gardens--Alumni House, Wickiup, Buffalo UMC, and home. Just hoping we have some decent spring weather and I'm lucky healthwise. I'm still having periodic problems with dizziness and lightheadedness. I'm dizzy almost every morning when I wake up, but my head usually clears after 10-15 seconds. I did have some problems yesterday while taking care of T., particularly when I had to get up after playing with him on the floor, a move that frequently occurs in gardening. I'm hoping this is caused by my head cold and will clear up in the spring. Of course, last year my head and ear problems began in April and continued into the summer.

4 March. Good gardening day. Sunshine, temp into the 50s, not much wind. Spent most of the morning in the garden shed, posting a slideshow of photos taken on 21 January, featuring the snow-covered garden. Many photos of blue shadows on the white landscape. I also finished first draft of this week's MMGR, focusing on new plants purchased for this spring, indicating where they will most likely be placed. A useful exercise for me to go through those orders and think more carefully about where I will be putting those plants arriving in early May. The rest of the morning was straightening up the greenhouse work bench, creating space for the germination trays. In the afternoon I sowed 9 varieties of peppers in 50 germination seed blocks:

Ajvarski (Macedonian pepper from Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds)

Lipstick Pimento (Natural Gardening)

Corno di Toro, Felicity, and Wisconsin Lakes (Pinetree Seeds)

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Habanada Low Heat and Pizza Pepper (Territorial)

Ace and Banana Pepper (Johnny's)

[The peppers did great in the greenhouse: close to 100% germination and by the first week of May, I had close to 100 healthy pepper plants. After giving away my "extras" to other gardeners, I planted about 20 pepper plants in the Wickiup garden. Two nights later they were all wiped out by cut worms, the first time I've ever lost peppers to cut worms, which also cut down most of my tomato plants. Most of the tomato plants eventually rebounded and did okay, but none of the pepper plants survived. Fortunately I had saved a few pepper plants in reserve, but the 2020 bell pepper crop was far below the yields in 2018 & 2019.]

6 March. Worked for an hour cleaning up around the honeysuckle next to the NW gate. That honeysuckle has runners all over the west end of the "M1" bed. The ground is still frozen so I can't dig up where the runners have taken root. Tomorrow I'll unleash the leaf vacuum and suck up most of the leaves. That should make it easier for me to see what is growing where and to expose the soil to the sun's warmth. The two Knock-Out rose bushes also require my attention; one has a honeysuckle vine growing out of it. And then there are the rock and crevice gardens which need their leaves removed. I'm anxious to see how many of the reticulated iris come up, both the new bulbs planted last fall and the first group planted in 2018.

Is it spring yet? Spring travels north at about thirteen miles a day, which is 47.6 feet per minute, or about 1.23 inches per second. That sounds rather fast, and viewable. I start looking for subtle clues and signs in the snowscape. Weeping willow branches have already started to turn yellow, and the tops of distant trees look dusty pink from new buds. A few cardinals have arrived early to claim the best nesting sites before their rivals return, and I swear I heard the steely twang-and-kazoo of a red-winged blackbird. ~Diane Ackerman

7 March. The first day of real, uncompromised spring gardening weather. Temp up to 60F, though it felt colder because of a brisk wind. Still, we had sunshine and I got in over 7 hours of garden time. This morning I worked at home, raking leaves in front of the house (the area in front of the dining room window and the long bed on the south side) and cleaning up the astilbe/peony beds. Collected the leaves into several big piles and will use the lawnmower to chop them up before dumping them in the compost bins.

In the afternoon to Wickiup. Part of the afternoon was a series of social calls, talking with various people who came by the garden. Dale gave me a package of venison and a bag of miscanthus chips for mulch. In exchange I gave him 2 big parsnips that I had just dug up. Other garden tasks today included:

- Fixed a hole in the fence on west side that rabbits had been using.
- Repaired Cara's Scare Deer sculpture, which had fallen over. I got her back up and tied to a post. She had lost one dreadlock but otherwise unharmed. I've begun to think of her as Dorothy, but that was my mother's name, an association does not feel quite right.

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- Dug up four parsnips—all big and healthy looking.
- Dumped two bags of manure and some vermiculite into one of the steel beds installed last fall. Still need more soil and compost to finish filling in that raised bed.
- Cut back the raspberries and blackberry in an east side bed. Those plants are now small enough so I can dig them up and move them to the wider berry beds on the west side.
- Cleaned up two of the raised “J” beds: one had eggplants last year and the other had carrots and chard. Tomorrow I should be able to sow spinach and lettuce seed.
- Began covering with newspapers (mostly *New York Sunday Times*) and grass/straw mulch the walkway around the round bed where watermelons were planted last year.
- Put grass/straw mulch around the iris planted north of the garden last summer. It appears the iris have done well, though it might still be another year before most of them bloom.

8 March (Sunday). Could not ask for a more beautiful March day: sunshine, temp in low 60s, no mosquitoes or gnats. Come July, I could only dream of such a day. This morning after church I worked for an hour at home. Emptied the remaining bucket load of compost from the barrel on the patio and threw in the first container of kitchen scraps to start the process all over again. Another small job was cutting up raspberry and blackberry canes from prunings at Wickiup and stuffing them into the green yardy. Rest of the morning was raking grass/leaves in backyard, revealing many emerging Siberian squill, promising a field of blue flowers in a couple more weeks. Also a few snowdrops in bloom. This fall I need to add more *Galanthus* at home and at Coe.

After lunch I headed to Wickiup where I worked for 4 hours. Began by weeding the north asparagus row (“N1” bed) on hands and knees, removing any well-endowed weeds and several small black walnut trees whose seeds had been planted by squirrels. Around each plant I used my Japanese hand hoe to integrate into the soil 2-3 tablespoons of Gurney’s Asparagus Fertilizer. First time I’ve ever used a fertilizer for the asparagus; I’m interested to see if it has any appreciable impact. [*If the fertilizer made a difference, I couldn’t tell; growth of plants appeared the same as in previous years.*] After fertilizing the bed, I covered the soil around two plants with the miscanthus Dale gave me yesterday. The miscanthus has been shredded into 1” lengths, very light and easy to work with. I had used some on the asparagus last year, and despite my thin application, it appears to have had some efficacy in controlling weeds. I was much more liberal in today’s application, knowing that I will be purchasing a pickup load of the miscanthus once I unload the hard-wood mulch “stored” in the pickup bed since last fall.

I did manage some planting, four 3’ long rows in the J1 bed:

- Lettuce mesclun (a package of Botanical Interests seeds, a gift from a friend)
- Palco Spinach (about 40 Pinetree seeds)
- Red Ursa Kale (Baker Creek Heirloom seeds)
- Early #7 Spinach (Victory seeds)

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The Victory seeds were from 2018, the others purchased in 2019. I covered the seed with a mix of vermiculite and compost, a technique that worked well last year. The trail of the golden vermiculite shows where the seeds are sown. I did not water because of the weather forecast for rain tonight and tomorrow, but the soil temp will also be dropping so we may not get any germination. [*The Palco Spinach and Red Ursa Kale had decent germination rates and produced a good crop of greens, the kale surviving until eaten by marauding white tail deer in October. The mesclun only produced a few red-leaf lettuces and the Early #7 was a dud, zero germination.*]

10 March. This afternoon I delivered to K. in the President's Office a garden t-shirt. She insisted on giving me a \$20 bill. I promptly returned to the garden shed and went on line, looking for calibrachoa seeds, a flower I've not previously tried. MVM had read an article in the *Gazette* extolling this petunia cousin's virtues, and I thought it would be a good candidate for potted plants on the patio. Although most calibrachos are sold as plants, I did find seeds for a group of attractive, richly-colored bloomers from Swallowtail Seeds, a reliable resource I've used in the past. Four packets cost \$19.96, giving me 4 cents for a future purchase. I posted my seed order and should soon be receiving the seeds. [*As it turned out, the calibrachoa's germination rate was spotty, but I did end up with about ten plants that I placed in flower pots at home—where they were promptly eaten off, probably by some insect. I gave them up as a lost cause, but in the middle of the summer several re-emerged, only to be buried in the August wind storm by a pile of branches from a maple tree. Once they were uncovered, they grew rather vigorously, started blooming in September, and were only knocked out when temperatures dropped below 20F. I definitely will try them again in 2021.*]

In the afternoon I concentrated on the west end of the "M1" and "M2" beds. Using the leaf vacuum, I removed four bags of leaves from the two beds and still have many leaves waiting for my return. Did make some progress around the big honeysuckle. Several of the honeysuckle runners had grown over 20' long. It's going to be a challenge keeping the *Lonicera* pruned this summer. One other job unfinished is digging up and moving the big Joe-Pye weed in the M2 bed so it's closer to the garden wall and can open up sufficient space for installation of a Little Free Library.

13 March. U.S. news is consumed with the COVID-19 epidemic: 50 people dead but we're certainly at the beginning of a period when many more people will get sick and die. Notable postponements or cancellations include the NCAA March Madness, Major League Baseball, NBA season. Millions of school children are now staying at home, which will be an exhausting burden for many families. Coe's spring break has been extended to two weeks and it's possible in-class instruction will not resume this spring.

Meanwhile I just plug along with my gardening, mostly solo work in the fresh air-- the perfect occupation when surrounded by viral miasma. In this week's MMGR, I focused on the appearance of the first flowers of the spring: snowdrops, winter aconites, the beautiful Katherine Hodgkins reticulated iris [*Mistaken identification; it was actually an Eyecatcher reticulated iris*]. This afternoon I

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discovered multiple colonies of the yellow species crocus planted in the "J" bed, crocus that will soon be in bloom. Also saw the first blooms of the Tommy crocus in the NE lawn section. Although I counted only five blooms, in one case three blooms were clumped together, and I could see dozens of crocus spears appearing in the grass, suggesting that many of the crocus had not only survived but were beginning to naturalize and spread throughout the lawn. The weather is supposed to be nice this weekend so we may see significant progress in the next week. At the moment I'm feeling optimistic, cautiously optimistic.

16 March (Monday). A busy day. Not perfect weather (overcast, temp into the upper 30s, occasional light drizzle), but I was able to keep working all day. Began the morning by driving to Ever-Green and picked up 1 ½ yards of the chopped miscanthus mulch. I covered the mulch with the fabric I use for protecting plants from insects and weighed down the fabric with my garden tools. After driving back to Coe, I focused on preparing for installation of the two Little Free Libraries. Unsure about the location for the Library next to the gazebo. I called MVM and she helped determine the best location, just to the right of the gazebo entrance. I then used my Dad's old post-hole digger to dig the two holes for the two posts, but I ran into rock after going down about 15"—which is not sufficiently deep. As for the Amish-built library to be placed next to the NW gate, my first task was moving the Joe-Pye weed. I divided the Joe-Pye into two clumps and planted them closer to the garden wall. I then dug two holes for the posts, again running into a rock bed at about 15" below the surface.

After lunch, I drove to Theisen's and purchased brackets to go under the two libraries and bought 200' of polyurethane cord to go around the raspberries. At the Wickiup garden, I discovered that Marty had burned off the old grass in the west field where we are going to create our melon/squash/potato garden. Now that the grass has been momentarily restrained, we can lay out the weed control fabric, cover it with the grass/straw mulch, and prepare the soil for planting. Marty said we could use some of her firewood, recently harvested from timber along the creek, to help hold down the fabric.

I spent most of the afternoon with the asparagus bed. After fertilizing the south bed with the remaining asparagus fertilizer, I covered both asparagus beds with a thick layer of the shredded miscanthus. Did not take long to cover the asparagus beds and also put some miscanthus around the blackberries. Tomorrow I'll return to Wickiup, trim and remove the strawberries' dead foliage, and mulch the strawberries with the miscanthus. Since there was almost no wind this afternoon, it was a good day for laying out newspapers on the walkways and covering with the grass/straw mulch. Today I started using a new big round bale whose grass is much thicker and bulkier than the previous bale. I prefer the old, but it's all free so I will not complain. We are supposed to have good weather before it rains tomorrow night so I'm hoping for a productive day tomorrow before the rain arrives.

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Final note: saw a foot long garter snake in the garden. First snake sighting for 2020. Always glad to see the garter snakes. I assume they like to eat things I don't want in the garden.

18 March. While working on this week's MMGR, I have been reconsidering what to do with the Hall's honeysuckle planted next to the NW gate. It's a Japanese honeysuckle, has been in the U.S. for almost two centuries, often receives good reviews from knowledgeable gardeners, is widely available, and was chosen in part because it resembles the honeysuckle that grew on my family farm back in Kansas. That old honeysuckle was the one perennial flower we could count on to produce its sweet-smelling flowers in the spring, regardless of the weather. But the variety we have at Coe is considered invasive in some areas of the U.S. One of my first purchases when working in the Coe garden was to plant this honeysuckle, but I suspect I made a mistake in my honeysuckle choice. It might be time to dig it up and replace with another species, perhaps a "Dutch Honeysuckle." I'm now reading Graham Thomas' *Cuttings from My Garden Notebook* and am attracted to a honeysuckle named in honor of Thomas, but I need to do more research. I would prefer not to get this wrong again since it took three years to establish the Hall's honeysuckle as an effective visual border on that NW fence. I might also reconsider the honeysuckle in the "H" bed. In contrast to the Hall's honeysuckle, it has never thrived, and it has not yet produced any blooms. Perhaps both need to be replaced. [*One year later, I'm feeling more positive about both honeysuckles. The spring-time pruning stimulated a summer-long crop of blooms on the Hall's honeysuckle. The blooms on the "H" bed honeysuckle were not as prolific nor as fragrant, but they were quite large, colorful, and long-lasting.*]

19 March. According to the garden shed's calendar this is the first day of spring—and because of leap year and other factors, the earliest first day of spring for the next 125 years. But no opportunity to check the vernal equinox on Cara's sundial because it was overcast all day, including several rounds of rain and one serious downpour with lightning and thunder earlier this evening. I have not yet set out the rain gauges, but I suspect we have received at least an inch. This afternoon I worked in the garden studio at home and read Thoreau's "Bean Field" chapter in *Walden* and revised a journal passage on our visit to Ham House last fall. Also revised this week's MMGR, which I will post tomorrow.

20 March. Maybe today was the first day of spring: found a different date on a different calendar. Regardless, no sunshine for the sundial. Temp was into upper 30s, windy, damp (though no rain). Major accomplishment this morning was installing the Little Free Libraries. Chad and Tom deepened the holes to 3', put in the double cedar posts at each site, put in a bag of cement for each set of poles, and filled in the holes. We'll let them set over the weekend and attach the libraires early next week. Of course, once they're installed, they won't receive much business because the campus

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is closed for the remainder of the term, faculty working from home, most offices with reduced staff, students studying remotely. But we'll still open the garden on Monday morning.

21 March. This afternoon I worked at home for several hours:

- Picked up small pin oak branches and sticks in the front yard.
- Spread wheelbarrow load of old mulch on west side of the driveway.
- Cut back the ornamental grasses in the front yard, including the *Deschampsia cespitosa* that's between the two clusters of river oats. Also cut back the Little Bluestem and the tall, unidentified grass next to it. I did not cut back the four *Panicum rotstruhl*, my most successful ornamental grass installation.
- Removed the front panel from the square wooden compost bins, shoveled usable compost into bag to take to Wickiup, and shoveled some uncomposted material from north bin into the south bin. I was pleased how thoroughly that pile had composted—though most of it is still frozen.
- Raked leaves from crocus that surround the hydrangea. The crocus are up and will be blooming in a day or two. I cut back the hydrangea while noting it has really expanded in the last three years; it probably needs to be divided. The plant looked very healthy last year, full of foliage, but no blooms. [*As it turned out, the large sugar maple fell on the hydrangea in the August wind storm. Once the tree was cleared away, I did dig up half of the hydrangea, split that clump in two, and replanted them in a new flower bed.*]
- Raked the comfrey bed and pulled up the old railroad tie that was dislodged when the neighbor installed the chain link fence last fall. I tried to salvage one part of the RR tie but it's badly deteriorated. I suppose it was installed 40 years ago when I first built that flower bed. The comfrey is just beginning to emerge.
- Deposited several loads of leaves into two compost bins, which are now close to being full. I'm leaving the leaves on most of the hosta beds and will cover with a layer of wood mulch, which should nourish the soil, help maintain moisture, and control weeds. The hostas will have no problem pushing through the leaves and mulch.
- Spent a few minutes checking out the daffocils, which are coming up but not yet any blooms. The snowdrops have been blooming for over two weeks and they still look great. The Siberian squill have also appeared and should soon be in bloom.

23 March. Chad and Tom were at the garden by 9:30 and it only took them about an hour for the two libraries to be installed. I think they look darn good, a major addition to the garden. I have decided, however, that because of the virus, I'm going to wait before putting any books in either library. Hate the delay, but I'm inclined to be over cautious. We now have cases in Linn County, and the reports indicate that this is not a pleasant way to die. I recall how frightening it was in 1959 when I came down with pneumonia, lying in my bed at night, unable to breathe. I don't recall what my parents did, but somehow I got through the night and saw the doctor the next morning.

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24 March. Began the day by driving to Ever-Green to pick up a yard of miscanthus and then went to Wickiup to use it for mulching the raspberries and blackberries I recently replanted. But shortly after entering the garden, MVM called me and said she was having back spasms, so I drove back home and spent the rest of the day in or near the house. For supper I prepared a parsnip and carrot recipe, using freshly harvested parsnips. Recipe was quite simple: cut up chunks of carrot and parsnip, covered them in olive oil and kosher salt, and baked in 425 degree oven for about 25 minutes. Came out quite tasty.

Which tulips will have returned? Unfortunately, tulips only bloom for a few years, and I never keep track of which ones I planted when, preferring the surprise of returning familiars and new immigrants to my garden. Each mother bulb I planted in the fall is pregnant with daughter bulbs, which will inherit unequal amounts of her energy. After blooming, the mother will die, and the strongest daughters will bloom the following season. Because the energy is divided each year, in time the bulbs will simply exhaust themselves. So I treat tulips as annuals, enjoy them while they last, don't expect commitment, and count myself lucky if they hang around. As a result, I never know what the complexion of the spring garden will look like, except that there will be an exuberance of petals in a landscape where anarchy rules and any state of green decorum I may achieve is temporary, a flash of control in a wilderness of thieves. ~Diane Ackerman

27 March. After lunch I went to Wickiup. Temp was in the 50s, but it was overcast and quite windy so I needed a jacket. A bit brisk but much better than it will be in July. I dug up most of the volunteer onions from two raised beds and replanted them in the bed where I had parsnips last year—and there are still about 15 parsnips waiting to be harvested. I also worked on two strawberry beds. I cut back old foliage, dug out the quack grass (or as much as I could pry out of the soil), raked up debris from the beds, fertilized the strawberries with the Territorial organic, added a bag of compost that I brought from the compost pile at home, and covered each bed with the miscanthus mulch.

On the way out to Wickiup today, I stopped at Frontier and purchased yellow onion sets and four kinds of seed potatoes: Kennebec, Yukon Gold, Red Pontiac, and an improved Irish Cobbler. Would like to have them planted in the west field next week.

30 March. Beautiful day, sunshine, temp near 60F, not much wind. Unfortunately I had to spend most of the morning inside, first in the kitchen preparing an evening meal and then in my basement office revising and posting last week's MMGR, which took much longer than it should have because I could not recall the name of the blackberry lily (*Belamcanda chinensis*). I had it written as "blue bead," but I knew that wasn't right. Finally unearthed the right name when I opened a slideshow from last fall that included a photo and caption.

After posting the MMGR, I did a garden walkaround. A lot of papers, food packages, and miscellaneous trash had blown into the "M" bed (yesterday was quite windy) so I had a lot of stuff

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to pick up. Found two redeemable pop cans but nowhere to redeem them. Also discovered more broken glass from a bottle thrown into the garden. But also welcome discoveries. The yellow crocus are at their best: many blooms along the walk in front of the patio. Also winter aconites. The reticulated iris "Eye Opener" in the crevice garden are finished blooming, but we have several nice patches of the 'Katherine Hodgkin' in full bloom, as well about twenty or more blooming in the gazebo sundial. Appears to be darn near perfect survival rate for these iris. In the NE corner of the lawn, the Tommies have now emerged, thick enough that they show up even when viewed from the patio. Probably at least 600 blooms and evidence they are naturalizing. And the first daffodils have opened. Two groups of Tete-a-tete blooms in the "I" and "K" beds; also yellow daffs at the back of the "K" bed. With this warm weather, a lot more daffs will open in the next couple of days.

The Imperial Fritillary planted in the fall of 2018 have begun to emerge and evidence at least one has produced offspring. I just read in Graham Thomas's *Cuttings* that one great aspect of spring flowers is that we can enjoy them without worrying about the absence of any sophisticated color schemes. All these exuberant spring arrivals are to be celebrated. It's only in the summer that we become so concerned about acceptable color combinations and complementary tones.

I forgot to mention the two old forsythia are beginning to bloom and they are going to have a lot of flowers this year. I did not trim the forsythia last year, which probably explains this spring's impressive bloom cycle.

31 March. This morning I sent an email to Coe faculty and staff, announcing the garden was now open for the spring term. I included a paragraph on the spring issue of the *Garden Quarto* (perhaps our best issue to date), said a few things about the garden, commented on the website and slideshows and MMGR's, and mentioned that I had a few free plants (garlic, strawberries, geraniums, Moses-in-the-cradle) that were available for free. Had a huge response, demand far exceeding supply. I'll be busy tomorrow getting plants sorted and ready for pickup. [*Over the next two weeks, I gave away over 400 strawberry plants.*]

This afternoon I went to Wickiup. Finished cleaning up the strawberry bed next to the compost bins and then added fertilizer, compost, and miscanthus mulch. Next job was tackling the SW corner with the big blackberry bushes. I had already covered some of the bed with miscanthus, but the quack grass was unimpressed (as I should have known) so I started digging around the bushes, trying to remove as much of the grass and roots as possible. I then covered the bed with newspapers, followed by more miscanthus. Did the same with the raspberry bed in the SE corner, trying to remove the stubborn quack grass in the area between the raspberries and the fence.

MVM came out to the garden about 3:30 and we spent an hour laying out weed control fabric between the melon/squash/potato rows in the west field. We completed two 100' rows. The wind was gusty and it was a challenge getting the fabric laid out and secured. To hold the fabric in place, we used small logs from Marty's wood pile, spacing a log on each side about every five feet—which

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meant we needed 40 logs for each row. Later we'll put the grass/straw mulch over the fabric so the surface does not get so hot in July and August.

. . . tonight I'm madly impatient for the growing season to begin, and the garden, which is a different Eden for every gardener, to reinvent itself as a renewable paradise, if not a permanent one. I don't believe in garden gods, but I do believe in the power of invocation to stir the spirit. Garden of growth, garden of green blood, garden where dappled light and water mix in the trees, crow garden, beetle garden, garden of dreams, garden on the oasis of a life-drenched planet, garden where desire finds form, garden of floral architecture and speckled fawns, garden where wonder is incised on a pebble millions of years old, garden visibly and invisibly teeming, garden of beds and seed parlors, garden of dew and overdue, garden where we plight our troth and ply our trade, garden that tilts the mind into the sacred, fleeting garden, memorial garden, garden abuzz and atwitter, garden where toxins and tonics both thrive, pool garden, cloud garden, garden that's an urn for the soul, garden of roll calls and lists where life tests different recipes, garden where rain falls like manna, garden whose perennial borders are infinite, garden whose customs and taboos make mischief in the mind, garden of snow, mind garden, garden of quartz crystal and siren light. ~Diane Ackerman