

Avoiding A Spring Freeze

We whine and pine for Winter to be over, and then Spring arrives and we... freeze.

We don't know what to do first. There is so much to do! Digging, planting, sowing, pruning, mowing! What to do first? You don't know. You run around in circles, skitter around from one part of the garden to the other.

You might even have a genuine fear of getting started after all those months of thinking about and planning for the perfect garden.

But the quest for perfection isn't what gardening is all about. We all know that--well all of us except some of those rose growers and other flower show exhibitors.

A garden is going to be full of imperfections, full of life, full of fun.

So let's just calm down and get started with these five tips on how to be ready in the spring to start gardening just as soon as we have one of those glorious "teaser" days when the sun shines and the high temperature is in the 60's.

1. Review your garden journal to remember when things really happen. When you realize when plants bloom and sprout and when you first planted and sowed and mowed in past years, you'll remind yourself that everything in the

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garden doesn't happen at once. Spring isn't a day, it's a season, and it takes time for the garden to wake up and for you to garden.

2. Write down the major projects you want to accomplish in the garden this year and the first thing you need to get each one started. Then if you are on a roll, write down everything else you need to do for each project, when you think you can do it, what you need to buy, etc. Now you have at least the start of a plan so that



you can stop running around in circles wondering what to do first.

3. Straighten up the garage or garden shed, or wherever you keep your gardening tools, hoes, and supplies. Make a list of supplies you keep on hand that you need more of so you can buy those on your next trip to the garden center. Sharpen tools, inspect hoses, etc. so that when you are ready to use them, they are ready to be used. Do this when the weather isn't good enough to actually garden, if you can.

4. Start slow, give yourself time to get back in shape, back into rhythm. Give yourself time to get each task done. Gardening isn't enjoyable if you work yourself to exhaustion on that first day, or risk injury by over doing it. Start off with easier projects like planting some containers with violas and pansies as soon as you see some for sale. Then you can work up to digging, heavy pruning, etc.

5. Breathe, relax. We garden for fun, for enjoyment, because we love to garden. It will all get done. If it all seems like too much, reduce the size of your garden, simplify it. Don't try to keep up with the neighbors. Garden for yourself, plant what you like. You'll be much happier with the result.

Now I'm personally hoping for a little sunshine and temperatures above freezing this weekend, so I can get started on getting ready for Spring. How about you?

Recipe

GREEK PENNE & CHICKEN

- 1 (16 ounce) package penne pasta
- 1 1/2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 cup red onions, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 lb skinless boneless chicken breast halves, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 (14 ounce) can water-packed artichoke hearts
- 1 tomato, chopped
- 1/2 cup feta cheese, crumbled
- 3 tablespoons fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- salt
- ground black pepper

Directions

1. In a large pot bring salted water to a boil. Add penne pasta and cook until al dente, drain and set aside.
2. Using a large skillet and over medium-high heat melt butter. Add onion and garlic to melted butter and cook for 2 minutes. Stirring occasionally, add chicken and continue cooking until golden brown, approximately 5-6 minutes.
3. Reduce heat to medium-low, begin adding drained and chopped artichoke hearts, chopped tomato, feta cheese, fresh parsley, lemon juice, dried oregano, and drained penne pasta to the chicken. Cook until heated through, approximately 2-3 minutes. Season with salt and ground black pepper to taste, serve warm.

HOMEOWNER UPDATE

with *Cathy Dodd*

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LISTED:
\$529,000

SOLD:
\$525,000
IN 11 DAYS!

Walking distance to downtown and the River Run Centre, this 3,080 square foot, 3 storey home has had myriad upgrades. Most of the interior has been redecorated, new carpet, energy efficient fireplace insert and lovely finishing touches, interior and exterior as well as a new antique stone driveway. Spacious front porch. The lovely 72 x 110 foot lot has extensive



LISTED:
\$309,900

SOLD:
\$298,000
IN 12 DAYS!

Situated in a great neighbourhood and just steps to downtown with shopping, cafes, and entertainment. Beautifully renovated 1700 sq ft. on a wonderful property; beautifully landscaped with perennial gardens. Renovated kitchen with built in appliances, beautiful hardwood and ceramic tile flooring. Two full updated

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