

The Many Faces of Spring

In the Spring, I have counted 136 different kinds of weather inside of 24 hours. Mark Twain

As I watch the effects of snow storms, nor'easters and bomb cyclones in other parts of the country, I am grateful to live in an area with a more mild winter. Though I do miss the stillness and peace a new fallen snow brings, I remember not liking the variations in weather between winter and spring.

Here at Bella Terra, we are just now noticing the changes that spring brings. Our morning temperatures are out of the 30s and into the 40s. Duck dating has arrived at our pool.



Last week there were 6 gorgeous mallards vying for the lone female's attention. She appears to have settled on the last two. Who will be the lucky guy? Her suitor will stay by her side for the next few months. Soon she will bring her little ones, teaching them how to swim here.

When I walked into our living room yesterday morning, I noticed how the eastern light has changed. Bathed in softness, the subtle difference is a reminder that spring is on its way.





There is evidence of spring in the yard. Stretching along the eastern side of our property, we planted Lady Banks Roses, *R. Banksiae Lutea*. These roses can vigorously grow to a height of 25 feet and produces pale to deep yellow flowers. It is not strongly perfumed and the wood is almost thornless. This makes the perfect privacy fence.

Just this week, we are seeing the very first of its blossoms. These roses only bloom once a year, but shortly will provide a

stunning wall of yellow.



In the orchard, it is nearly time to glean all the citrus fruit from the tree. We are prodded to do so when we start seeing the early blossoms for the next cycle of fruit.



The apple and apricot trees are budding and even though I am tempted to cut these gorgeous branches to display inside, I leave them alone and let nature takes its course.

Due to our extreme summer heat, I have only had success in growing Anna apples, which will be ready to pick in June.



The apricot tree is in its 3rd year of production, so I am hoping for a great yield this year. Look at how delicate these blooms are!



One of our peach trees is just starting to show spring growth, due to its "less sun" placement in the yard.



Even the chickens are sensing the change in season. Our Araucanas have started laying their blue-green eggs again. Chickens need 14 hours of daylight in order to have egg production. Some chicken breeds lay more than eggs others.



In front of the guest cottage, the first jonquil has shown its beautiful trumpet. A member of the daffodil family, the jonquil has six outer petals and slender, hollow foliage.



The flower beds in the front of the house are just starting to come to life. Here the lavender flowers are showing off.



March 20th is the official start of Spring, only 2 weeks away. I am looking forward to a spring of hope and renewal, and more time to enjoy the great outdoors.



Mary