

Other than an occasional opportunity to move snow, February offers little outdoor gardening activity. Although I'm anxious for the arrival of spring, I deeply appreciate the time away from physical toil in the landscape.

Of late, most of my leisure time is spent sitting in my big chair basking in the warmth of our fireplace. While there, I take advantage of three R's — relaxing, reflecting, reading —and one S.

Comfortably nestled by the fire, one can often find me scrutinizing the assortment of new seed catalogs that seemingly arrive in our mailbox on a daily basis. Leafing through the brightly colored pages, I often find myself dreaming of what's to be. Such activity also causes me to reflect on what has been. Although a good share of my gardening experiences have resulted in successes, I hate to admit it, but some failures have occurred. Such an opportunity to reflect causes me to take mental notes on what I want to do and what I wish not to do when spring arrives. Learning from mistakes is always good.



During this time of year, I also enjoy reading various gardening articles. This is another great way to learn. Over the years I've subscribed to an assortment of great gardening magazines. Although there have been many, one particular magazine stands out, heads above the rest.

This past week, my March/April issue of the magazine *Fine Gardening* arrived in the mail. Although I do not wish for this article to sound like a sales pitch, it probably will.

If one is passionate about gardening, I highly recommend this periodical. A bi-monthly publication, published by the Taunton Press, *Fine Gardening* provides authentic, reliable information written by practicing experts in the field.

Past issues have featured several articles written by John Fech, a UNL horticulture expert and Extension Educator from Omaha, Nebraska. Many of you might recognize his name. John has been featured many times as one of the panel of experts on Nebraska ETV's *Backyard Farmer*. He also has served as its host.

I've discovered this magazine's articles are filled with in-depth information and creative ideas. The information presented is not overly technical, making it exceptionally informative and entertaining. Furthermore, almost all the articles are accompanied by

stunning, colorful photos. So inspiring are the articles that often I find myself re-reading articles from back issues of this magazine. This is one magazine I've never thrown away.

If you already subscribe to this magazine, I'm sure you will agree with me. If not, I'd encourage you to visit their website www.finegardening.com While there, one can access an assortment of articles and videos featuring popular gardening topics. One can also sign up for their free gardening email newsletter as well as subscribe to or renew one's subscription to *Fine Gardening*.

Boldly printed on the cover of the current issue of my *Fine Gardening* magazine is the headline: ***Planting ideas for a spectacular spring***. I just finished reading it. What a great article. I must admit, now I'm even more excited for the arrival of spring.

In closing, I'd like to remind you that it's still February. Perhaps there will be future snows to address, but, for now, I encourage you to take advantage of the three R's — Relaxing, Reflecting and Reading.

Oh, and by the way, if you've been wondering about the one S that I referred to at the beginning of this article, it's now time that I take advantage of that activity. Back to my big chair I go. The S stands for snoozing. Ah, I love the warmth of my fireplace z-z-z-z-z-z!