

Yard and Garden – 04-11-09 – Ted Griess / Extension Horticulture Assistant

If I am asked what state I live in, my normal response is Nebraska, but lately it has been far from normal. Since spring arrived three weeks ago, I have actually been living in the state of *Confusion*. As a matter of fact, most anyone residing in central Nebraska must certainly feel the same.

To prove my point, one evening, Rita and I made a short drive to our local grocery store. As we returned home and pulled the car into our driveway, I activated the automatic garage door opener. As the door was lifting, I abruptly stopped the car and burst out laughing. For a brief moment I'm sure Rita thought I was losing it, but then I said, "Look," as I pointed to the front of our garage. "How's that for an accurate depiction of living in Nebraska in the spring of the year?" Rita, too, began to laugh. There we sat, staring into our garage and chuckling.

What was so darn funny?

Over the course of the past few weeks, I had haphazardly assembled an assortment of tools and other items and parked them in front of my Corvette. There, neatly aligned, ready for action, stood the snow shovels and snow thrower. Next were the leaf rakes and the leaf blower. Alongside those were the golf clubs and lawn mower.

Believe it or not, over the last three weeks, I have used each of the items.



Three weekends ago, on Saturday, my younger brother, who lives in Minnesota, paid us an overnight visit. On that particular day, because the weather was warm, we decided to head to the local golf course and play nine holes. Playing in shirtsleeves, we enjoyed the balmy afternoon. I was entertained listening to my brother praise the sunny, warm Nebraska spring weather. He was pleased that he was far away from the freezing Great White North, what we jokingly call Minnesota.

Somewhere between that day and the present, I awoke to temperatures in the teens. The ground was covered with ice and snow. It was time to fire up the snow thrower and get out the snow shovels. That early frigid morning, there I was, snugly wrapped in layers of winter clothing, clearing our drive and walks of the freshly fallen snow.

Just a few days ago, I got out the leaf blower and attempted to remove a heavy layer of dust that had accumulated on our deck and walks. I then proceeded to grab the leaf rake and clean some of the flower borders. About then, the wind started picking up. Each time I raked the remnants of last autumn's leaves and dead vegetation into a neat pile, a whirling, powerful gust of wind would zip through the yard and redistribute the heap.

With the mess scattered all over the lawn, I fired up the lawn mower in hopes of picking up the stragglers. With a degree of determination, some perspiration and a lot of frustration, finally I was able to transfer those piles of debris to the trailer destined for the landfill. Then it began to rain. With my spirits dampened, I headed for the house.

Today, as I write this article, the forecast is for more rain with the possibility of snow, maybe several inches. Now, do you understand my state of confusion? And who says living in Nebraska is boring?