

Looking forward excitedly for a planned event to occur is a simple definition of the word anticipation. I am reminded of that word every time I watch a particular television commercial involving two small children: a brother and a sister. The commercial focuses on the two little kids talking late into the evening about their soon-to-be visit to Disney World. Their mother calls out to them to stop talking and go to sleep. Then, the cute little boy in his squeaky voice says, “We’re too excited to sleep!” That is a perfect example of anticipation.

I have been experiencing a similar feeling of excitement now that April has arrived. Winter was long and cold. Each year I fervently look forward to winter’s end. This year is no exception. Chances are you, too, eagerly anticipated the arrival of spring. Although, according to the calendar, winter is officially over, a gnawing question lurks in the back of my mind. Is it really gone?

Interestingly, the week before spring officially arrived, outdoor temperatures reached the seventies, a situation that certainly fueled my anticipation. Today, however, as I sit here writing this column, the forecast is for possible snow showers and evening temperatures expected to dip to the mid-twenties. That certainly does not sound like spring weather to me. Such a situation illustrates how fickle Nebraska’s weather can be. One day it can be summer-like, and the next day or even hour, winter conditions quickly return.

Although lawns are beginning to green and a number of perennials are poking out of the soil, most plant life remains dormant. Many perennial plants such as tulips and daffodils can withstand colder temperatures. I have often seen ice clinging to their foliage; yet, they survive and bloom beautifully. Rita and I have already been enjoying the bright, cheery, yellow glow of daffodils blooming on the south side of our home. There, they are growing in a protected area, a much warmer part of our landscape. Seeing these gorgeous spring flowers should not cause me to think winter has entirely disappeared. The fact remains — rarely does Mother Nature fool plants, but such is not the case for us humans.



If you are determined to head outdoors and begin working in the yard, I suggest the activity be limited. I offer a few suggested tasks. Now is a good time to cut back the old vegetation of ornamental grasses. If you had a vegetable garden last year, now is a good time to clean the garden, ridding it of any dead vegetation. It would also be an opportune time to finish pruning most deciduous trees. It is an ideal time to dig and move a dormant tree or shrub.

Although many perennials are beginning to reveal new growth, I urge you to hold off for a few more weeks before digging and dividing. Postpone raking your flower borders. Removing the winter protection exposes the new growth to fluctuating temperatures that could damage or prove fatal to some plants. Wait until weather conditions become more stable.

Anticipation can be a wonderful feeling; however, before you allow such eagerness to propel you outdoors to garden too soon, I urge a little restraint.

Like the little boy in the commercial, perhaps with such anticipation you may be too excited to sleep, but for now, hold on to that excitement. Soon you, too, will be back in your magical kingdom. I can hardly wait!