

By Kylee Baumle

The long-awaited truly spring weather arrived last week and with it a venue for releasing some of our pent-up energy. The garden began waking up long before we could detect it, even though it seemed like overnight it turned green and burst into bloom.

The problem, of course, is that we try to expend that energy all at once and weary bodies and sore muscles are the consequences of our winter inactivity.

Last year's drought, among other things, prevented us from doing some intended major redesigning of the main gardens here at Our Little Acre. So this spring has us scrambling to get most of it done before a garden club visits at the beginning of June.

As far as garden design goes, I've always said that I'm not very good at it. My garden will never be featured on the pages of major home and garden publications. I don't have the self-discipline to rein in my desire to grow this, that, and the other thing, so I have a collector's and experimental garden that can tend to look somewhat cluttered.

Occasionally someone will ask me if I could please help them design their garden or a part of their landscape. I get a little twitchy, because I can't rely on my artistic abilities when presented with a blank canvas. Oh, I can tell you if something can grow there or not, but just because it can doesn't mean it should.

You'd think with all the beautiful gardens that I've had the good fortune to visit and photograph, that some of the design talent I've seen would be acquired by osmosis. One of those gardens belongs to my own mother, who doesn't know how to make a garden look anything but attractive. But, we've all got our strengths and weaknesses, don't we?

So I soldier on, scheming and planning and I dig up plants and relocate them to a different spot so that the garden hopefully not only looks better, but the plants will be happier too. Because part of having a nice garden is learning what plants need to thrive and not merely survive.

I think about color and texture and height and spread and when what goes dormant and which thing blooms when. It's a lot to consider. But that's part of the fun and challenge of gardening. There's always something new to learn and a garden never looks the same two years in a row.

Every now and then I have moments of brilliance and whether on purpose or by chance, something turns out well and the aesthetics of it pleases me. Maybe I actually have learned a thing or two over the years.

As I began working on this season's version of the gardens, something occurred to me. For as hard as I try to get things just right, yet nearly always falling short, my gardens are inevitably transformed into a tapestry of lush shades of green, accented by rainbow colors of bloom. Not by me, mind you, but by the One who created it all in the first place, The Master Designer, and it's "just right" after all.

Read Kylee's blog, Our Little Acre, at www.ourlittleacre.com and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/OurLittleAcre. Contact her at PauldingProgressGardener@gmail.com.