

The Artist's Almanac

April 2004

April, at last, and suddenly it's uncomfortable to be inside. Try as we may, we cannot remember winter.

Growth everywhere, carpets of magenta wildflowers, red buds bursting green, and weeds getting a head start. The lawn threatens to hide the house and the mower won't start. Roses must be uncovered and pruned hard. We are already behind on Spring plowing and planting. April's are the most used up days of the year.

Asparagus tips are up and delicious, cut fresh and served on salads. It is the only perennial vegetable, except for rhubarb, which can't survive Tennessee's summer. But the legendary Tennessee tomatoes thrive in it, and they must be planted now if we are to have bragging rights on the Fourth of July.

The Artist's studio is suddenly darker and challenges the painter to be abroad, capturing the moods of spring's skies. Sketches are seeds, most of which waste away or die aborning. A few may mature to paintings, and a few of those survive.

Tax time clears the last of last year's obligations, and short of cash, but replete with plans, we begin the ancient cycle of planning, plowing, planting, tending, and harvest.

For painter, planter and planner, April is the season of hope. She comes to us now, bearing Easter and promise, as a season of renewal. Like a young girl, wide eyed and fresh from the garden, her hair moist with rain, in her hand a clutch of the rainbow blooming abroad, she offers us the best she has, asking, *what will you make of these?*