

The Artist's Almanac

April 2005

April days are the most used up of all the year.

April renews our youth, and we, like young lovers, full of passionate promises, lay off huge gardens we shall later abandon to weeds in August's heat. The lawn is shaggy and cries to be cut. Chickweed smothers the larkspur and must be pulled by hand. It is time to prune and fertilize roses and to lop fruit trees that don't bloom. We sleep well April nights.

We plan vacations to photogenic climes, while all around us the most astounding miracles unfold. Winter's umber woods haze green as Redbuds rise slowly to our attention. An old orchard of pear trees in their white bridesmaid dresses proceeds down the hill to their rendezvous with spring.



The cattle find the succulent grass more to their liking than last year's hay, while in the next pasture two new kids gambol after their nanny. Downtown office workers take their lunch breaks in the streets and notice each other.

April is a time of renewal for the artist – a time to abandon winter's stale studio references and still lifes and to find new inspiration under April's mild skies. Time is limited; materials are few; distractions are many. Choose well and choose once. However bad the work there is always an urgency which lends excitement to an outdoor sketch which is missing from any studio work. Never mind the rain – a cloudy sky or shroud of drizzle makes the greens the greener by contrast.



20 Minute Sketch of Old Carriage House completed live before tv cameras last week

Artist, gardener or office worker, we all need April. She comes to us now like a little girl, her hair wet from a shower, bearing in her arms tulips, irises, peonies, violets, hyacinths, and lilacs, asking, *Will you come out and play?*

In the event you missed the special on Channel 4 news last week, you may still be able to watch the above sketch being done by copying the following link and pasting into the address line on your web browser

<http://www.wsmv.com/Global/SearchResults.asp?qu=puryear&x=12&y=11>