

Spring has sprung

Well I took a picture of our first winter flower and here is our first spring flower.



Those who know me know that I suffer quite badly from what is apparently called S.A.D. or seasonal affective disorder. I'm not one for labeling but it means that I can get quite down, lethargic, sad, and generally feel like there's no point during the winter months when there isn't much light and outdoor time is limited.

Funnily enough the one time I get a boost over winter is Christmas, when the outdoors comes indoors with green trees, red holly berries and white mistletoe.

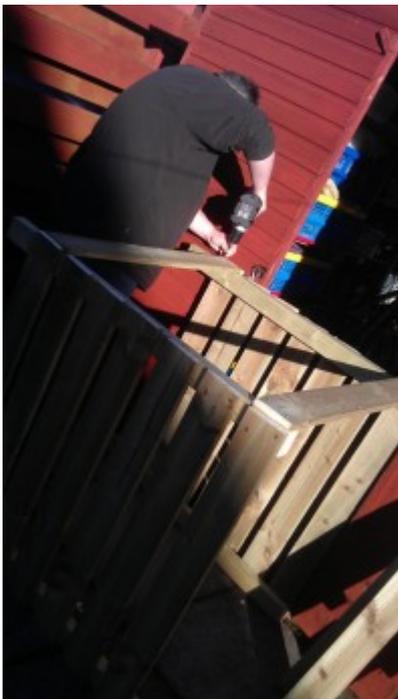
Now Kate has been putting up with me for a few years now and she knows that when the spring flowers start to arrive my mood jumps massively. It being the promise of better things. She's seen the absolute glee that accompanies a crocus and trusts me the reaction I have to a tiny flower like that is quite something ☺ So she did an amazing, special thing and the picture here says it all. She has gone round randomly planting

crocuses and snow drops all over our gardens without me knowing where. So I'm finding out about it when the little plants are breaking through the soil... and the recent snow.

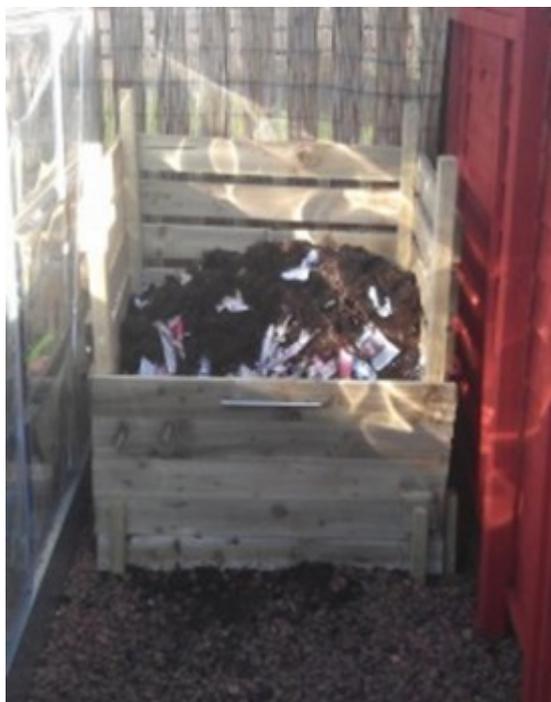
I wanted to share this little flower with you because it's so much more than its tiny size. This is nature's promise to me of all the good things to come and it really does put a huge smile on my face.

Well this little snow drop and its cheery promises has had us out in the garden this weekend getting ready for the rest of the year and again it seems to be Kate doing the hard work. (I'm amazed we're out there working today considering we were at a real ale festival last night)

We've already begin to lift the chuckies (small stones) and create more flower beds, but this weekend Kate was also hard at work with the drill and saw, making me a new composter. We have a big plastic one just now (which looks like a Dalek), but it wasn't doing the job so I decided I wanted an open wooden pen type one. Kate to the rescue.



She got some bits of wood from B and Q and put together this fabulous thing! It fits perfectly in the space that the old plastic one sat, but is wider as the other one narrowed as it rose. This one just looks better in the garden too as it's not shiny black.



I gave the contents a good turn with the fork and unfortunately evicted the little family of mice that were living in there. I feel so guilty about this but there are plenty of places around here where they can go live.

I also did a bit of work in the greenhouse today, (I can hear Kate's dad – Bay Leaf) but I am better in there than trying to do big heavy things, cause I'm only little

Today I got the first of our veggie planting done. Broccoli, sprouts and tomatoes planted and of course... courgettes.

There's going to be more to come, but these were the ones I could get planted and started off just now.

Lesson learned from last year though, I didn't plant loads of each. Just a couple.



I also have some tatties chitting getting ready to go out when the frosts are over.

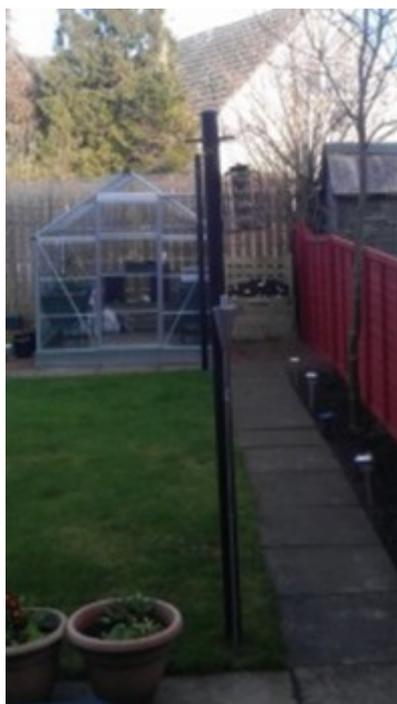
There is some more on order but I'm still waiting on them arriving, and the garlic. I'm a bit miffed about that as I had wanted to get the garlic started off early this year but oh well, guess I'll just have to be patient.



Next weekend we'll maybe get out to Pentland Plants, our local nursery and garden centre and spend some of those amazing vouchers we got for christmas. I want one of our beds to be

all different colours of heather which will look amazing, and have the double advantage that I can make beer from it.

Kate's looking forward to upping the amount of colourful flowers we put in the big bed along the fence as we can see this one from the living room and it'll be nice to be able to look out the french doors and see all that colour.



Well that's us for today, we've finished early today as it's Kate's birthday tomorrow and as a treat we're heading out to our favourite restaurant tonight, [Calistoga](#).

A taste of California in Edinburgh

As much as we both absolutely love cooking at home, we are both keen on dining out and love trying new restaurants.

For our anniversary treat, Kathryn took us out to try a fantastic little restaurant tucked away in one of Edinburgh's trendy little streets. It's a Californian restaurant, specialising in wines from the Napa Valley region and for the food and wine buffs of Edinburgh, this is a great little hideaway.

We enjoyed a night of wine tasting, with a five course menu accompanied by suitable wines for each course. Fantastic!

This was more of a treat for me, as being an avid real ale fan, wine is something I've only come to love recently, and so this was my chance to dip my toes into a bit of a tasting session but in a comfortable and relaxed atmosphere.

[Calistoga](#), is now one of our favourite restaurants, the service is exemplary, the food is to die for and their range of wines is amazing. I would recommend all you steak fans out there give them a try and try their flat iron steak. I am a lover of rare steak, and I get annoyed as I am usually served either medium steak or steak which has a higher fat content which doesn't melt down when you cook a steak rare and so leaves you with a lot of chewy bits which you end up leaving. Not so at Calistoga, firstly the steak was rare, exactly as I

asked and secondly, the flat iron steak doesn't have a lot of fat and so is perfect for cooking rare. I loved it.

The waiter who served us (and I have since found out is actually the owner) had a great knowledge of the wines we were drinking and took time to talk to us about each one and regaled us with funny stories from his own experiences – apparently working in a Napa vineyard.

A truly fantastic night was had and we would thoroughly recommend Calistoga to anyone wanting a fantastic meal and some nice wines to enjoy with it. It's tucked away off Rose Street, so go exploring...

Calistoga Restaurant & Sideways Wines

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