

FROM THE EDITOR

At last, Spring is upon us! Of course, by the time you receive this, capricious as the British weather is, you could be gazing out onto a glittering March snowscape. But that dynamic process of growth and regeneration is underway, whatever the weather. I welcome it more each year as I get older, despite the fact that it results in carpets of bittercress and speedwell, and the inevitable plethora of unwanted Spanish bluebells.



In my garden here on Exmoor, 2018 is going to be a year of renovation and redesign. Old, overgrown shrubs are being given their marching orders, to be replaced by grasses and perennials, visually linking the garden to the meadow beyond the garden. I'm excited about the trees we planted this winter: *Parrotia persica* 'Vanessa', a small-growing ironwood with flaky grey bark, witch hazel-like red flowers in spring, and foliage which turns every colour from orange to deep purple in the autumn; and *Cercidiphyllum japonicum* 'Herkenrode Dwarf', a small, dainty, multi-stemmed tree with leaves that smell of toffee apples when they fall in autumn. Also a quince, *Cydonia oblonga* 'Serbian Gold', for the fruity-floral aroma of the fruit, which should fill the garden with scent on warm days.

Progress on the makeover may be slow, however, as I am in line for a hip replacement this spring. Luckily, I have taken on a cheerful assistant, Chris, who treats his hours with me in the garden as tutorials, bombarding me with horticultural questions as he wields the mattock. It's like GQT, but without a chance to do my homework first!

When it comes to daffodils, I confess I'm not a big fan of the larger varieties, partly because of the unsightly foliage which has to be retained until June. On the other hand, I find cheeky little *Narcissus* 'Minnow' and elegant 'Thalia' rather more genteel in their habits. This issue of *Cornucopia* kicks off with Rob Cole's recommendations for more of these cheerful emissaries of spring.

I'm enchanted by Gill Wragg's nostalgic recollections of her childhood days in Rutland (p.18). It reminds me of Laurie Lee's writing, and conjures a world we've long left behind. Quite magical.

Marion Jay