

## Cynthia Brian's Gardening Guide for March

# March on and spring forward!

By Cynthia Brian

*"Truth is rarely written in ink. It lives in nature." – Martin H. Fischer*



*Pear blossoms fall from the trees like snowflakes.*

It all started with a box of toothpicks.

My siblings and I finally had the heart and the stamina to begin cleaning out our mother's farmhouse that was built before 1900. We made the mandatory four piles—garbage, donation, share, and keep as we meticulously emptied and cleaned each drawer and cabinet. When we came upon several brand new boxes of toothpicks, we kept a few and shared the rest.

When I returned home, I opened my drawer where I kept my toothpicks to discover that I already had six boxes of 500 picks. Horrified, I emptied that drawer; created four piles, and what began as a simple task of putting away a small box of toothpicks resulted in a full day of purging and organizing.

Which gets me to our garden marching orders for the month. It is time to clean out the potting shack, clear the storage sheds, organize the garage, and tidy up our cluttered gardens. Prune the hedges, edge the lawn, sharpen tools, wash the lawn mower blades, and pull the sprouting weeds.

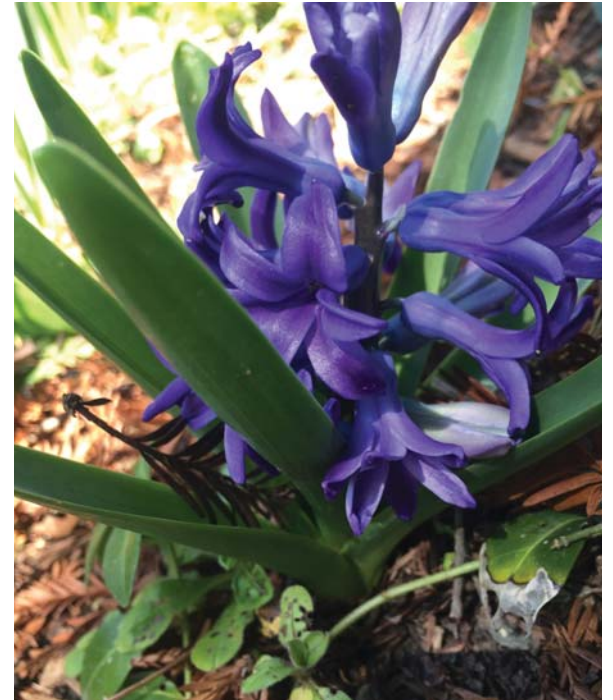
Spring forward by cleaning our houses and removing the debris from our gardens.

There is something about the pre-spring season that revs up our systems and begs us to dust off the old to make way for the new. We yearn to get rid of the mess that has been gathering. My storage area was filled with odd pieces of wire, broken light fixtures, string lights, patio pads, tiki torches, oil, glass, lawn seed, fertilizer, soil mixes, Christmas tree stands, old toys from kids long gone, punctured hoses, and a multitude of under utilized machines and gadgets geared to make gardening simpler but in reality were just too burdensome. It took me a full seven days to bring order to the chaos.

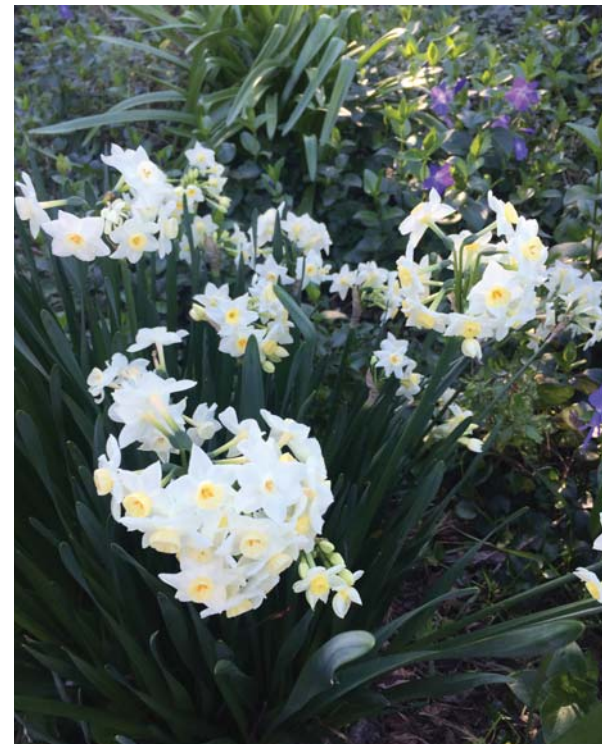
As overwhelming as this project sounds, the best way to start is to just start!

Don't be paralyzed by the enormity of the task. Do it bit by bit but take everything out of the spaces you are going to clean. Don't try to "wipe" around anything. Everything out! Once the space is empty, sweep it, mop it, brush out the cobwebs, and disinfect it. Next, designate four areas for decluttering: Keep, Donate, Trash, Recycle/Sell. You will be amazed at how much junk you have. Anything you are keeping, donating, giving away, or selling must be cleaned.

... continued on page D14



*Hyacinths are pushing through the soil to announce the arrival of spring.*



*White narcissi and blue vinca minor are excellent bedmates.*