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the allotment in april

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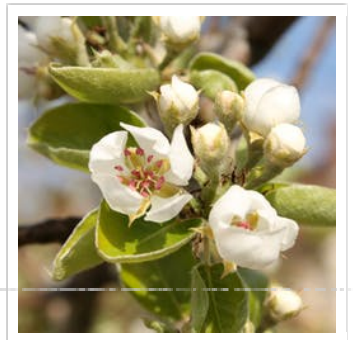


Guest blogger Claire Jones has been enjoying spring on her plot and preparing for the busy planting season ahead.

INSPIRE ME

Down at the allotment there are subtle signs of spring, despite the chill in the air. The birds in the tree that overhangs my plot are singing at the tops of their voices and finishing off their nest building. The robin that usually stays close at hand while I dig the earth in the hope of a few easy worms is busy elsewhere. And slowly, slowly the trees

are awakening, dusted with tiny vibrant green leaves.



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The soil is mostly bare, with just a few leeks left to harvest from last year and rows of onions and garlic that I planted at the end of last year starting to grow away. The beds have been prepared for the planting that will start in earnest next month. In the meantime I've sown a couple of rows of broad beans as well as some radishes, always one of the first things I put in and one of the most satisfying as they grow so fast and are always one of the earliest harvests.



The fruit trees are the stars of the show at the moment. The plum tree is young and still establishing, but down one side it has a good sprinkling of delicate white blossom. And the buds on the pear trees are just breaking. The apple blossom will be a little later, although the deep pink tips are just showing in one or two places.



If you look closely you can see tiny flowers all over the gooseberry bushes. They might be small, but the bees have noticed them and on balmy days they're busy visiting each and every bloom. Gooseberries are self-fertile, so the bees aren't necessary for fruit production, but it's always good to see them.



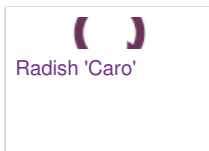
Back at home I have windowsills and a greenhouse filled with seedlings, waiting for a warmer spell before they go outside. At this time of year it's good to take a breath and enjoy the unfurling season before the busy time of planting out and nurturing begins.

Thanks for reading!

Claire

Claire Jones lives in a small market town in the southwest of England where she grows her own fruit and vegetables, both in the garden and on her allotment. She always believes that this will be the year of bumper harvests.

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