

Diane's Blog  
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## Anticipating Spring

This is always a hard time of year for me. I'm tired of all the rain, I'm waiting for the trees to start flowering, ready to take after-dinner walks, and, foremost, waiting for the re-opening of the Portland Farmers Market. That will happen on March 20<sup>th</sup>.

I've seen some glimmerings of early spring produce on restaurant menus – sorrel pesto with pan-roasted halibut, green garlic with braised lamb, panna cotta with rhubarb compote, stinging nettle risotto, and roast chicken with baby carrots and dill. It all makes me hungry in a lighter sort of way. It's the buds, the shoots, and tender greens – all delicate and fresh – ready to wake up the palate for spring flavors.

Stepping out the kitchen door to check my container garden, I see it still in a barren state with a few hearty survivors. The rosemary, thyme, and chives are managing to grow without any attention on my part. But, shockingly, there were three-inch tall shoots of tarragon – the one herb I was told was a wimp at wintering over.

I don't want to get too over eager, I know we will have more cold nights and more drenching rains, but I'm motivated to buy seeds and plant starts. Maybe some early arugula, parsley, and radishes would work. Without a cold frame or green house it is hard to do more and, besides, I'm a better cook than gardener.

However, this coming week, I have the pleasure of cooking from a large organic garden in Tecate, Mexico. I'll be the guest chef at Rancho la Puerta, teaching three, healthy cooking classes while fully taking advantage of all the fitness regimens. I'll do my best to inspire the students and get inspired. I'm told the large garden is full of vegetables and fruits, ready for spur-of-the moment menu changes. I'll pluck, pick, and snip to fill my garden basket and dream about warm, sunny days and the anticipation of spring...up north.