

Springtime

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Image: Finally got our greenhouse out of the box.

Ah ... spring is here at last ... sort of. In between deluges of rain, we've been working on a variety of projects in the yard.



Image: Our old greenhouse where it used to sit on our deck in Prince Rupert.

For the last two years, our greenhouse has been sitting in a big green plastic box, waiting to be reassembled. It's not large, or fancy, just a 6' x 8' polycarbonate kit, good enough to start plants and grow some winter greens. But it has history. It used to sit on the deck of our house in Prince Rupert, where we used it as a sun room, breakfast nook, and a place to grow some of the sweetest cherry tomatoes. When we decided to go wild, we spent a day carefully disassembling a kit that was never meant to be taken apart again, repacking it in its shipping crate, and ultimately, hauling it in the herring skiff to our new home. It's been waiting patiently ever since. Felt good to get it up, and even put a few plants in it.

We've been cleaning up the yard, re-organizing it for the summer (hoping for a cessation of rain) to come. This involved moving all our 55 gallon blue barrels that we use for water storage, locating them further uphill from the gardens (gravity is our friend) and closer to the roof/water collection system. With the creek still running, and the new dam in place, we can easily fill them with water from a hose. While the dam is full, we'll also have water to irrigate the garden with, if necessary.

Talking about spring ... is it ever late this year! Beltane, or Mayday as it is sometimes called (May 1st), just passed, and the first blossoms on our plum tree outside the window opened. Looking back to last year, the blossoms were out on March 30th, a month earlier. However, the yard is now full of pink bleeding hearts and a contrasting blue patch of forget-me-nots that showed up last year, and the hillside is a mass of blossoms, white elder flowers and pink salmonberry. A reminder that I must get some elder flower cordial brewed up!!



Image: Rufous hummingbird (*Selasphorus rufus*) on a Saskatoon bush.

Even before the salmonberry flowers opened, the rufous hummingbirds arrived *en masse*. I used to wonder what they were eating when there were no flowers to gather nectar from, but I've since then watched them agilely capture small insects. Apparently this is enough to keep them going until the flowers catch up. Another odd thing they do is drink sap from the holes that the sapsuckers have drilled.



Image: Red-breasted sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus ruber*) working on an alder tree.

Ken and I have been working at improving and expanding our gardens. Lot's of mattock work and

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digging, and we just keep pulling up roots, but hopefully, by the end of it all, we will have doubled the amount of land that we have in garden. I'm hoping to get some raspberries in this year, a patch of trial grains (hull-less oats, barley, rye, and wheat), and some sunchokes. Nothing planted yet, but soon ...