

## SOME SPRING MUSINGS

By Ronnie Brancazio

Spring has finally arrived for real, and my first impulse is to be delighted. My second impulse, however, is to panic at the amount of work that needs to be done! Having spent the whole winter PLANNING my spring projects, which involves mostly sitting, looking at catalogs, and jotting down ideas, the moment of truth has come when those ideas need to be acted on. And that means WORK! Yikes!

Fortunately I can buy a little more time by doing the following important tasks:

- 1) Standing outside and looking at the potential work sites.
- 2) Standing outside and taking photos of the potential work sites.
- 3) Making lists which prioritizes the potential projects.
- 4) Making shopping lists of plants and supplies and placing orders - *personal favorite!*
- 5) Writing this article about what I need to do!

I can keep this up for just so long, however, before I have to get DOWN AND DIRTY, so here's what's on my TO DO List.

### NATIVE PLANT/POLLINATOR GARDEN ALONG DRIVEWAY

I do get a slight reprieve here while I wait for all the daffodils and tulips to finish blooming in this long, narrow border along my driveway, but I must make my decisions now about what to order and how to arrange the plantings. I am presently researching whether I must only plant Native Species or whether I can get some "Nativars" (Native Hybrids/Cultivars), which may have a longer,

more colorful bloom period while still attracting pollinators. Any help and/or advice would be much appreciated, via our Facebook Group Page or the LIHS Website/Contact the President.



I should mention right now that my one definite "bad behavior" is to let the Lesser Celandine" stay. I hope many of you saw the Exhibition Table display at our last meeting about the "Pros and Cons of Lesser Celandine" - and there are plenty of opinions on both sides. I have come down on the "PRO" side mainly because I have to admit defeat: for many years I tried to dig out the tubers but they kept coming back stronger and more numerous than ever and having a good laugh at my expense! And I am certainly not

using a herbicide in my garden or anywhere else, so I now play "live and let live" and enjoy their beauty, and they will be covering my so-called "Native Plant Garden" each spring!

## A BRIDGE TOO FAR

You have probably heard about my dog Riva (How could you not!), and all the expensive and labor-intensive changes I've made to my yard to accommodate her - the latest being a sweet wooden bridge that I placed to cover the area where she had worn a water-collecting trench in the yard by running back and forth to the fence. I give myself credit for good problem-solving with that, but there is still a wet pocket after the bridge, requiring another solution. I just bought a bag of smooth river rocks (so that her little paws don't get

hurt!) to fill up that area, and we'll see if that works. And of course I have to plant something on either side of the bridge to make it look more "natural" and I'm thinking daylilies would be perfect. More shopping!



## PATIO POTS AND PLANTERS

This area has been developing over several years so there isn't much to do except keep the successful ideas and eliminate the duds. I did try over-wintering a lot of the potted plants on my enclosed but unheated porch, and it looks like a mixed bag of success and failure. Potted perennials like Coreopsis and Echinacea are fine, and about half of my mini roses (needed for pressing) seem ok. Of the Tropicals, I think Mandevilla will survive, but I don't see any new growth on the Bougainvillea or Braided Hibiscus. Maybe they need a little more time, says the optimist! I fear that my Bay



Laurel took a bad hit in that brief but severe cold spell we had in January and I am not sure about my Fig. Losing either - or both! - would be very sad for me.

I did get one clever idea (if I say so myself!) which solves a couple of problems while repurposing rather than disposing of a lot of wood! I have two long wooden window boxes under my porch windows which are a main design feature for my patio area. The bottoms of both have rotted out over the years and need to be replaced. Meanwhile, a small in-ground garden next to the patio has become "unplantable" because my neighbor's arborvitae roots have filled that garden with a dense mass that I can't penetrate even with a knife. Can you believe, the two rotted out window boxes are EXACTLY the right length, end to end, to place in that garden! I can then fill the boxes with loose soil and treat them as a raised bed - at least until the arborvitae roots grow into them too! Maybe I can use some sort of liner to prevent that.

So that's what I'm up to. I hope that all of you are having a good spring and that you are keeping your pleasure to work ratio in balance!

