Spring brings beautiful things, flowers and bees and a bird that sings. Gardeners are busier than bees, blooming in their exuberance and humming right along with mother nature's display. We've added necessary minerals, gently tilled the soil, and livened things up with plenty of compost and biodynamic preparations. Let's go!

If the ground is damp enough to make a ball in your fist that doesn't shatter when you drop it, we stay out of the field. Compost piles are made for next year. Dandelions need to be picked for preparation. Horns are filled with ground quartz and buried. Tomato cages get made, chickweed is pulled from around the berries, seeds are inventoried and garden plans jotted down.

On April 1, I got the cold frames ready to grow the tomato, pepper and eggplants for transplanting later. Sifted compost, sand and soil makes up the top few inches, ontop of the same mixture (unsifted) to a depth of eight inches or so. A little phosphate, lime and kelp are mixed in, too. I make rows with a stick, three inches apart, and carefully drop seeds an inch apart in the rows. After firming them in with the side of my hand, I rake with my fingers to cover them up.

As soon as the ground is dry enough, onions and leeks go in. Plants are sorted, and the small ones are healed in temporarily to get bigger. The plants are set six inches apart, and two can be planted together. Onion sets, for green onions, are sown and covered up, but in a different garden, to avoid disease.

Potatoes are cut up so each piece is the size of an egg and has a couple of eyes on it. notice the stem end and don't confuse it for an eye. They are dropped a foot apart in the furrow with the eye up, and then stepped on before being covered.

After two weeks, a harrow is pulled over the rows to disturb sprouting weeds. This does not bother the potatoes sprouting below where the harrow reaches. A tine harrow or rotary how actually goes over young plants without doing too much damage and greatly reduces weed pressure.

A narrow furrow is made for lettuce, parsley and swiss chard. The lettuce will be dug up and transplanted into beds, at a foot apart, in about six weeks, leaving that row for planting a summer crop. The chard, parsley, and celery go next to each other because they will stay there all year, even over the winter if protected.

For carrots, beets and radish, we make a wide-bottomed furrow and thinly sprinkle the seed. It is easy to get them too thick. I roll the seed through my fingers and watch as it falls, but not at the ground. I want a few inches between the plants. All seeds are pushed in with the back of a rake, stepped on, or rolled over with a wheelbarrow to firm them in. then they are covered with dry soil by raking.

A few warm days around April fool's day don't fool me. Every row of the spring crops will get the soil raked away as soon as the sprouts appear. Then they'll be hoed and cultivated before any weeds are visible. I have x ray vision and can see weeds sprouting underground. It is so much easier to weed them before they appear to ordinary vision.

We tend what we've planted before planting more. Warm weather crops like warm weather, so I don't push my luck. I sacrifice the honor of having the first bean or tomato, and don't take chances on a late frost nipping tender plants. Enjoy the flowers, and the birds and the bees, and spend spring with the spring crops. In May, when the ground has thoroughly warmed up, you'll be glad the spring things are well taken care of.