

## Looking for Spring in All the Wrong Places

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Every year we humans perform the same ritualistic search for signs of spring. Tired of our winter boots, knitted hats and cold hands, we desperately start searching for those signs. And every year, we look in all the wrong places. We look to human-created signs of the spring that comes every year, without our intervention.

Now that most of my neighbors have removed their desiccated brown wreaths from their front doors and their holiday lights (at last!) or simply put their Valentine decorations over them, I feel guilty keeping my candles lit in my windows, but I do so to remind myself that the winter is not yet over. It is still acceptable to light the fireplace, wear fur-trimmed clothing and waterproof footwear.

And every year, we foolishly perpetuate the myth that a small furry woodchuck can predict the arrival of spring, when we really know that it takes the same amount of time every year. Rather, let's look for signs of spring in nature—the swelling of the velvety buds of pussy willow, the tentative appearance of green tips that herald the growth of narcissi, crocus and tulips, the yellowing tips of forsythia branches, the lightening of the sky earlier in the morning and the later arrival of dusk.

And even though, as I write this article, I am listening to the icy pellets hit my window on this snowy day commemorating Abraham Lincoln's birth, I, for one, am enjoying the winter that is still here with us because, for people like me, it hasn't even been winter yet! Other than the surprise snowstorm of early November, (technically still fall), we have not had enough snow for me to want spring to arrive. I like the distinctness of every season, and winter is one made special by snow. So, I will wait for spring to arrive when it is ready! But I will expect to find daffodils in stores very soon to tempt me into my own anticipation of the spring that is to come. And I will not be seduced into looking for spring in all the wrong places!