

March Gardening Guide

Go Gaelic green in the garden

By Cynthia Brian

“May the road rise up to meet you, may the wind be ever at your back. May the sun shine warm upon your face, and the rain fall softly on your fields.” — Irish Blessing



The bright white blossoms of a flowering pear tree.

Photos Cynthia Brian



A close up of the Peace Lily.



Red-veined dock, part of the Rumex genus, is an edible lemony-tasting sorrel.

Although I don't have an ounce of Irish in me, every March I get excited to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. Besides the fact that the beloved rebirth of nature is officially only days away, my adoration of the Emerald Isle is deep-rooted. My good fortune as a child was to be taught for eight full years by dedicated, intelligent Irish nuns, and to be mentored by Irish priests who had my best interests at heart. I danced throughout California in an Irish dance troop and one of my best friends in the world is my Irish pen pal, whom I met through letters crossing the Atlantic at the age of eight. My Irish first-grade teacher and I are still in constant correspondence. She always told me she kept a leprechaun in her pocket just in case she needed a trick or two. Fortunately I've been blessed to spend many weeks with these friends in their very green country where I've been officially christened an "honorary Irish woman."

With the propensity of rain that we've enjoyed this past winter, our countryside is looking very much like the verdant island. As I look at the cattle grazing on the hill, I am reminded of my friend's dairy farm in Limerick where the rich milk goes to produce Bailey's Irish Cream. I milked those cows when I visited and was rewarded by a shower of hot manure on my hair. That was many years ago, but I'll never forget the smell... and the laughter.

Since that time, I have always grown shamrocks, which here in America we call oxalis, a noxious weed. Nevertheless, I have a major fondness for the bright yellow or pink flowers of these shamrocks as I seek the rare four-leaf clover pattern. For each petal on the shamrock a wish of good health, good luck, and eternal happiness are bestowed. I'll take all of the blessings and positive thoughts offered! If you are not a fan of shamrocks, plant baby tears in a shaded garden. They, too, are reminiscent of the Celtic spirit.

The good news is that spring is coming and with it an abundance of flowers and beauty. All you have to do is look around to witness the beautiful blossoms on pear and peach trees. My plums have already finished blooming and are leafing out. Rose bushes are budding. My calla lilies, daffodils, crocosimias, hyacinths and tulips are abloom, spreading their joy and fragrance throughout the landscape.

It's time to pull the weeds, prepare the soil, and get ready for a wonderful season of seeding and sowing.

May the luck of the Irish be with you!