

# There Is Hope In Flowers

By Perri DeJarnette, Pearlstone Perennials Manager



Week 1 of social distancing: I'm taking the time to observe without judgement. Observe the world around me, the reactions of others, and most importantly my own reactions: my own thoughts, and my own body.

This morning, I was too anxious to leave the house. If I left the house, I would need to get gas to make it to work. Today that feels like too much to manage. I managed to leave the house yesterday, I woke up at 6:30 am like I do every day, including weekends because after 7 years of farming and waking up at a time that is reality isn't that early my body cannot rest when it senses the smallest sliver of sunlight peering over the eastern horizon. Or perhaps it's that my cat won't let me oversleep. I fed her; I dressed for the day outside, checked on and watered my house plants, made breakfast, and drove 25 minutes to work with no traffic! I hadn't been to work since last week. Monday and Tuesday, I stayed home with that funny kinda sore feeling you get in your throat and ears just before you get sick. Staying home was hard for me. If there wasn't so much fear and unknown about this virus I would have gone to work because the maybe sick feeling wouldn't normally be enough to prevent me from getting the work done. I'm a farmer and therefore harder than most people. It was a struggle to take the time to rest when I felt such an urgency and still do feel that urgency for the work that comes with spring. The trees are waking up which means we will have

flowers, and with flowers comes the possibility of fruit but it's a long and dangerous road from flower to fruit. There is drastically changing weather from day to day. There could be snow and ice unexpectedly that could freeze and damage blossoms or even rain to wash away all the pollen. There is so much unknown in this way too early spring. As the trees wake up with warmer weather so do the microbes. From the time the buds swell, I go on the offense: watching the progression of growth daily, covering the trees in liquids of beneficial bacteria and food for microbes. My focus is to colonize bark, bud, and leaf surfaces with beneficial microbes to out compete any pathogenic microbes.

That's the reason I left the house yesterday, I had to apply a spray for those beneficial microbes. It's urgent because there is only a small window to get those beneficial microbes on and multiplying before the pathogens do. I perceive so much urgency in this early spring. Urgency to start the season on the right track and at the right time. Urgency to distance oneself, urgency to slow the spread of a virus through our communities. Urgency to stay away from as many people as you can. And an urgency to remain productive throughout this time even when our normal patterns are disrupted. I'm sure most people feel a sense of urgency. Things are changing so quickly that we can't look back at the recent past to give us guidance for the future because things are different now and the future while always unpredictable feels so much more unpredictable. But it just feels like there was once a time when the future was somewhat predictable. Oh well.

It seems like now is a time when have some space in our lives to sit with this worry, the fear, the unknown and to sit with ourselves and notice what is going on in our world of the self and the world outside our self.

Right now, I will take my guidance from the ever-growing natural landscape around me. While we've been advised not to commune with others, I will commune with myself and nature. The sun that's shining, the winds blowing, the rains falling, the birds singing, and the growing blooms. I've heard a saying

that "to plant a garden is to have hope". So just like all the other springs that have come before I will put my hope in the new blossoms on the apple trees.