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—  
She wore her yellow sun-bonnet,  
She wore her greenest gown;  
She turned to the south wind  
And curtsied up and down.  
She turned to the sunlight  
And shook her yellow head,  
And whispered to her neighbour:  
'Winter is dead.'

DAFFODOWNDILLY  
BY A A MILNE

—  
**A**s 'The Guru' and I were running around Hagley Park recently, we couldn't help but notice the daffodils in bloom. We weren't setting a cracking pace – we never do – so we had plenty of time to admire the growth; it felt as though the blooms were colourfully smiling at us. Alongside the daffodils, snowdrops were poking their little white heads above the longer green grass. It seemed as though we were all enjoying the warm, sunny winter's day.

It was only a week or so earlier that we were commenting on what we perceived to be a rancid onion/garlic smell in South Hagley Park. Rightly or wrongly I suggested this was associated with the yet-to-bloom spring flowers. To some, daffodils smell like cat urine, which is possibly a little unfair to the yellow flower. The daffodil is given a greater level of respect by the poet A A Milne who, in his poem Daffodowndilly, delightfully sums up the beauty associated with the emergence of the princess of spring flowers.

# Spring has sprung

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT TONY MILNE  
CELEBRATES THE ARRIVAL OF SPRING

I spent my formative years on the Canterbury Plains and during weekends in winter I earned pocket money working for a local farmer sorting potatoes from the frozen clods of soil. While cradling a thermos cup of hot black tea during morning smoko, I wishfully sought the telltale signs of the nor'west arch above the Southern Alps.

I enjoy the seasonality associated with living in Christchurch. The waning of winter frosts, burgeoning spring bulbs and blossom, the bleating of newborn lambs, along with the arrival of the nor'wester, are for me the harbingers of the arrival of spring.

While these are quite obvious visual signs, do take time to notice the finer details. You'll notice the emergence of bumblebees, butterflies and many other pollinators from their winter rest, all in search of pollen and nectar for energy. Keep an eye out for those honeybees as well. After spending winter taking care of their Queen, they now seek the nectar of the spring flowers.

Spring is great; throw open the windows and let the warmth, smells, sights and sounds pervade your soul. As your body's circadian clock shakes off the winter blues and your serotonin

levels respond to the increased sunlight, nature is reminding us that every day is worth living.

As the spring sun warms the soil of our gardens we turn our attention to planning our summer harvest. As the spring sun warms the air we look to sweep the dust off our outdoor furniture. Some bring their swimming pools back to life while others spruce up the barbeque. As the days increase in length we are ready to embrace them, ready to share and entertain. As the late Robin Williams once said, "Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's party!'"

We seem to have a current predilection to extend the architectural form of our houses. Too often these so-called 'outdoor rooms' carry with them the chattels of an indoor room. I say bring back the conservatory, let's see a return of the garden terrace framed by a well-proportioned pergola dripping with wisteria, clematis or grapevine and humming with life.

Take time to smell the flowers and blossom and to roll in the long grass of Little North Hagley Park. Open your house to spring, let in the sun and nature, and celebrate this change of season.

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