

## IS IT SPRING YET?

It has been too long since February 2 when the groundhog saw his shadow. Not only are people longing for spring, but it seems that the plants are also. The forsythia, daffodils, daphne and helleborus are blooming in spite of the cold damp weather.

While it is way too early to start planting seeds for the usual summer flowering plants and vegetables, there are some cool weather vegetables that can be planted now and contribute not only food for the table, but color in the garden. Why not think about a nice spring salad for the dinner table and nice color in the garden. Tuck a veggie plant or two in the ground or scatter a few veggie seeds in a sunny spot in the flowerbed. You can have something growing in the yard and look forward to a delicious salad in about 6 weeks. By the time you are ready to plant summer flowers, you will have enjoyed more than one of your homegrown delicacies.

Vegetables that can be planted now and are available in the garden stores are parsley, chives, leaf lettuce and onion sets. Seeds that can be planted now and that should sprout in one to two weeks are radishes, leaf lettuce, spinach, chard, onions and peas, both green peas and edible-pod peas. All of these are cool weather crops, and will bolt (produce seeds and turn bitter) in hot weather. When it is time for planting summer flowers, the remains of these plants should be pulled up and put in the compost bin.

You don't have to plant a 40-foot row to enjoy the best of the cool weather crops. Think small numbers, three or four plants, just for the enjoyment of a spring salad.

For more information on Spring Vegetable Gardening or answers to your gardening questions contact the Virginia Cooperative Extension Chesapeake Master Gardeners Answerline at 382-6348 or e-mail them at [gardener@agri.city.chesapeake.va](mailto:gardener@agri.city.chesapeake.va).