

Spring Fever: If You Catch It, Enjoy It

SPRING fever is becoming epidemic. If you will slow down a little, perhaps you can catch it. If you are successful, enjoy it.

Evidence of spring is all around us. Redbud and forsythia have added their colorful beauty to the buds of trees, and jonquils have popped up all around town.

Kites are flying and fishermen are trying their luck. Golfers are hitting the ball and baseballers are wondering why they can't. Homemakers are planning and gardeners are planting, aware that they may set out more to do than they will want to take care of.

Oklahomans have enjoyed another mild winter, but spring is welcome nevertheless. While Northern states that have been snowbound for months are combatting floods brought on by spring thaws, we have slipped into spring as naturally as changing shirts.

Even so, we are aware that the first day of spring does not necessarily mean the last day of winter. Sometimes we experience a freeze or frost after leaves are out and flowers are blooming.

My wife has a firm conviction, perhaps handed down from her ancestors, that there always will be a cold spell on or near Easter, which comes on April 11. That forecast should not be disputed, lest she be in position to say "I told you so!" again.

Mark Twain declared in a speech that in the spring he had counted 136 different kinds of weather in New England within 24 hours. He said that in 1876 before Oklahoma became a state and was not considered to be an important area of weather variability.

Those who have lived in Oklahoma for any long period have seen spring days that brought forth sunshine, wind, rain, hail, sleet, snow and maybe a dust storm between sunup and sundown. The interruptions of idyllic weather usually are brief, and we quickly resume our springtime listlessness or whirl of activity, as we prefer.

We have a few tornadoes, too. While weather statisticians claim that Oklahoma has more tornadoes per square mile than any other state, the odds of being hit by a tor-

nado are pretty small compared to being covered by layers of snow in a Minnesota blizzard or being blown inland by an Atlantic coast hurricane. Other states have monotonous weather and few places equal Oklahoma year-round.

One of the beauties of Oklahoma springtime is that while we are planting crops, gardens and flowers for a new season, farmers are harvesting grain that grew during the winter. By the Fourth of July practically all of our main crop, wheat, is in the bin, and cattle are harvesting millions of acres of grass. Unfortunately, air-conditioned houses keep us from hearing the love song of birds.

Spring came on slowly where James Russell Lowell lived when he wrote "The Vision of Sir Launfal." I think he had lived here he might have written: "And what is so rare as a day in March, April, May and June? Then, if ever, come perfect days."

Catch spring fever and enjoy it if you can. It doesn't get very cold in our Sooner summers, and spring never lasts forever.