

The fickle vicissitudes of spring

Kathy Hedberg/Lewiston Tribune

You wake up in the morning, drink your coffee, brush your teeth and get dressed.

You put on your underwear, your shorts, your tank top, your jeans, your pullover, your fleece, your boots and your coat. Because, in the course of this one day, you're going to need them all.

It's spring.

You go outside to work in the garden. The birds are singing and the sun is shining. You dig through the compost pile and spread the soft dirt on the ground. You toss out a few hardy seeds and pat them down tenderly, like tucking a baby into its crib.

Then the wind starts to blow and you head back into the house and within minutes 3 inches of snow covers the ground. Goodbye seeds.

It's spring.

You're going on a trip, so you get the snow tires taken off your car, pack a few belongings and a snack and head on down the road. Twenty miles out, a blizzard hits and you slide off the road into the ditch. Good thing you brought your cellphone so you can call a wrecker and listen to him chew you out for having switched your snow tires too soon.

It's spring.

Vicissitude. There's a word for you. I used to think it was a vinegary kind of dressing you put on your salad, but then I developed my vocabulary and learned it describes the wicked changeability of weather in early spring.

The vicissitudes of spring can make it hard to know what to do on a weekend. You can't decide whether to go on a picnic down at the beach or plan a ski trip. It can ruin a party, particularly when your driveway gets packed shut with snow and your guests can't buck the drifts.

It can make you wonder whether you're coming or going, but the good thing about the vicissitudes of spring is that it reminds us that life is always changing, and in order to survive we need to be prepared for about anything.

It pushes you out of your comfort zone and makes you marvel that, as smart as we human beings think we are, we don't have control over everything.

In fact, not that much.

So it keeps you humble.

And it also keeps you on your toes, so when the more consistently warm days of summer arrive you won't take them for granted.

Hedberg may be contacted at kathyhedberg@gmail.com or (208) 983-2326.