

Sunday Snacks with Sam and Ellie - we did it backwards today. It happens! But good morning. We're here. And we are talking about **Thinking Spring**.

Sam: I know I recently just had mushroom soil delivered. So I'm thinking spring, another way of living Time to limber up those muscles. Especially my right shoulder. But we've definitely been experiencing some crazy weather here in Maryland. We go from 60 degree days one day down to 24 - yeah. Very weird. And then I'm cold and I'm warm the day before. I'm like outside working and then I'm like...brrrr. Then everything's frosty. Punxsutawney Phil and your six more weeks of winter. I mean, come on!

I know that it doesn't matter. There's six more weeks, no matter what, come on, Groundhog. I needed to be warm, but as we're moving forward into the spring season, I know evidently mushroom soil gets delivered at my house. My neighbors think it's hilarious because like, oh, it's farm, farm Groff kicks in.

Ellie: So that's how your neighbors know spring is coming!

Sam: My neighbors know spring's coming when mushroom soil gets delivered. 'Cause they're like, Ooh, there you go. Like the first few warm days and now you're already are in the yard. It's comical because - like my chickens this morning woke us up. Oh, I don't even know six, seven something like that. They were squawking and somebody laid an egg. The animals are obviously ready for spring.

Yep. But then it's cold still. So they still have their Christmas tree in there that they can huddle behind when it's like windy, like crazy.

Ellie: Yeah. I've noticed. I don't do much gardening to speak of. I have my little flower garden out front, but I've noticed that all of my plants in my living room with south facing windows - all of my plants are very happy with the morning sunshine because they're getting more of the sun hitting directly on the plants. They're all showing they're ready, you know, which is kind of fun.

Sam: Ready for spring plus this has been one of those weird winters that just, I love winter. Honestly. I used to love it. It's still one of my favorite seasons of the year. It's downtime and it's warm, more wholesome food, and the smells of your house and the holidays and all that. But then this winter has been so dreary. I like snow in winter and we just have not had it. It's been wet and cold and rainy and then wet and cold...

Ellie: Actually, we've had a lot of nice sunny days too, but It's been cold. Yeah. Well even that though we haven't had that much cold. I only had two evenings where I had to let my water drip in the sink. So it hasn't been that bad.

Sam: It's just one of those things I think, as I get older that I'm not, I, I miss the snow because I love to shovel snow like through the winter. I can't get in my garden, so I can't get that physical exercise that I get spring, summer, and fall. The winter is always like the relaxing time, but I do like a good shoveling the driveway from time to time. My husband loves that I love to shovel the driveway and he does not like to shovel the driveway. But he's the first one out. And he's like, oh, I guess we got to get out there. And I'm like, okay.

Ellie: I like the four seasons, but I do look - there's something really wonderful about spring, about new growth, the birds before long will be really perking up their songs. I know I'm seeing that the geese couples arriving.

Sam: I saw Bluebirds the other day, I jumped on it and I'm like, I saw bluebirds so early in the season for them. So, they know, they know something's coming. We don't always know. The animals know before we do.

Ellie: Absolutely. Although they can be fooled, too. Mother nature can fool them.

Sam: Oh everybody. But yeah, we were talking earlier about the idea of springing forward. That is one of the things I absolutely hate about spring. I hate the changing of the clock. I wish we just kept the clock the same. I know that a lot of people like it because they wait, is it the hour of sleep? Is this the time when they get the hour sleep, where they lose the hours? Ugh. Fall back is when you get it, which is good. Cause that's when you're getting ready to hibernate, I'm getting an hour asleep, but I hate losing it. If we just stay on a constant clock, it's no problem.

Ellie: I guess people who work in offices like it because the evening is longer.

Sam: Yeah. Coming along, coming home in the dark is just drudgery, But I think going to work in the dark is too. So yeah.

Ellie: I'm like you, I think they should just leave it be. We don't live that way anymore.

Sam: We're not an agrarian society anymore. Let's be real. And like you said, farm tractors have lights. So, they work at night anyway.

I love to go to tractor supply in the spring and my husband has to worry. He's like - I'm going with you. Not just plants and seeds, but peeps! I'm worse than the kids. Not the little yellow, goofy things that are marshmallow. I hate those. Frankly, I like to blow them up in the campfire because they're fun to watch explode all about.

Ellie: You're talking about peeps. Because people heard peeps and think you're going to kill their peeps.

Sam: No, no. I love the peeps. I love the butts. I love the fuzzy butts and I always want more chickens, even though they wake me up at the crack of dawn.

Ellie: And I think, I think just getting your hands dirty out in the soil. Even what little I do in my little garden patch out front, when I come in after half hour - 45 minutes, which is exercise for me you know, the one who sits in front of her computer all day working or at my table painting, sitting! When I'm working 45 minutes out in my garden, it is a lot of exercise. But it's a different kind of tired. Such a good tired! Refreshing.

Yes. It's such a good tired, satisfying. I think that's the other thing is it's very satisfying because you see a beginning and an end. I mean, you can take a before and after picture and say, I did that. You know I think spring brings that kind of energy out.

Sam: Well, it definitely does. Along with our change in 2022, definitely we want to nurture those kinds of good feelings more. And one of the things I learned in reference to nurturing and springtime and stuff that I didn't know, and because mind you, there are times I just try stuff to try stuff. I'm not actually looking to see if it's actually gonna work long-term. I sometimes just try it just because I want to!

I realized that one of the things that I was always so afraid of doing to my rose bushes and my raspberry bushes and my vine - my grapevines, is there something I need to do, including my blueberry bushes. I'm always so hesitant to trim them and to really prune them hard.

Well, this is the time of year when I've got to put on my heavy, heavy denim jacket, Carhartt and put on thick gloves and go out there and trim every living bush and stuff in my yard because then they come back so much healthier.

Ellie: That should all be done before now.

Sam: No, actually you're supposed to do it January through February

Ellie: We did it in the fall.

***Danger! Danger! My memory is not exactly accurate. In western NY State Spring comes later than Maryland and usually fast. Most of the farms had acres of grapes and fruit trees. That's why they often started trimming and pruning earlier.* * *

Sam: No, actually what I learned ... see, we have such different ... YouTube has lied to me according to her. So I gotta like go back and find these books again, because most of what I read and watched on YouTube, no lie, definitely did all that, was that you do the trimming on January through February. So see, this is the crazy part.

Ellie: The bad thing about that in Maryland though, is your spring come soon. So, if you wait too long, your spring growth is already starting and that's what you're cutting back.

Sam: I mean, this is the interesting part. You always tell me about the stories about the acres of tomatoes you grow. And I freak out.

Ellie: Five acres and 50,000,

Sam: No, oh God, I can't even handle five plants in a small square of a garden, no Plant more. And don't fuss. I highly recommend that more don't fuss. You'll be fine. I don't fuss over them as it is. It looks like a jungle by the end of the summer. But really it's like, there's so many differing opinions on gardening and springtime.

So, for me, I know that not everyone goes by this, but I think whatever works for you in your garden is actually the best thing. Because I mean, I can watch watch Migardener Epic Gardner. I mean, and Migardener is up in Michigan, Epic Gardener's out in San Diego, California.

And then, we've got Melissa K. Norris up in, I forget where she is. She's like Washington or Oregon. They all tell you to check your zones. But then if they're also the first people to say, and I admire these people, please get, don't get me wrong. I admire them hands down.

They're also like *what works for you works for you*. And that is one of the things that I've had to learn because frankly I'm a book follower. I've learned that not everyone always has the right answer. It has to be for me what the right answer.

Ellie: Well, and, and farming, like so many things gardening is all your soil, your weather, you know, there are basics and then the rest is fine tuning what you're already doing.

Sam: Yeah. And that's where we're at. Like for me, that's where our family is at. We are always, we have a basic understanding of a lot of things and we're fine tuning it and implement it like this year. My daughter's super excited. We got the seed catalogs and she has been pouring through them. (**Ellie:** And now that's addictive for me.)

Sam: That is like, I have to literally hand, I have to hand the entire list over to someone else to let them order, or I will buy all of them, Just one of them before or not. You need the whole block. Like my neighborhood would be slightly overrun with flowers if my daughter and I had anything to do with it.

But I'm excited because she has found that she actually found a lot of tea flowers that are interesting, that we've never heard of that we want to try this year. So, that's the fun part about gardening with my kids and the springtime, because they have a new sense of energy.

And what I appreciate the most with the homeschool aspect is that they can actually tend to it, see to it, grow it from start to finish, and actually utilize it. Not just for school, but they also have this deeper, personal satisfaction with it. Yeah. That's honestly surprised me because I know how much I love it, but it was always, "mom, this is your hobby."

Ellie: What else makes it feel like spring?

Sam: Hm, that's a good question for me. It's like I said, it's like going to Tractor Supply and seeing all the peeps and the baby chicks and all the other animals and the warm days. The new plants, the new sounds we hear.

Ellie: I never can wait until the - what are the little peepers? (**Sam:** Oh, the little Frogs.) Yes. I love hearing those. But being an apartment dweller, I also love those warm days when your house warms up from the sun and you can open the door and let fresh air. And I do that even sometimes, even if it's cold out again, because I have faced south facing windows. But even if it's cold out, if it's real

sunny, I'll open the door for an hour and turn my heat down and let that air come in. And I think I became more conscious of that during COVID of just wanting fresh air.

Sam: I don't think of that as spring. But that is literally what we just do, instinctively!

Ellie: You know, the crazy weather we've had. Every one of those days that it's been 50 and above, I've opened the door at least for an hour or so, and let fresh air in. And I look forward to that after a cold and dreary Winter.

Sam: Yes. And is it, has I know you and I disagree on how the winter was – dreary and cold.

Ellie: But I still very much like being able to open a door.

Sam: Yeah. So my question to all of you, and I know this is where we're wrapping this up with you. What is the thing that you think of when you think of spring? What else would you like to ask them?

Ellie: I forgot. Oh...Whether you're a gardener or not, what gets you in that mood of looking forward?

Sam: What gets you looking forward? And that's the beauty of it. So, until next time, we'll see you later. Bye! Think Spring!