

Charlotte

JUNE/JULY 2020

HOMIE

DESIGN & DECOR®

IN LIVING
Color

PLUS:
SHOWHOUSE
SHOWDOWN

COLOR CRUSH:
MELON DRAMA



SIMPLE BLESSINGS

By Jim Noble

Photography by The Plaid Penguin

Much has been written lately about the challenges we are facing, which are many and hard. Without diminishing the heartbreak, I want to share my thoughts about the blessings that can still be found even in the toughest of times.

Such blessings tend to come in very simple forms. So simple, we might even miss them. A kind word from an old friend. A warm hug. A summer sunset. A home-cooked meal with people you love.

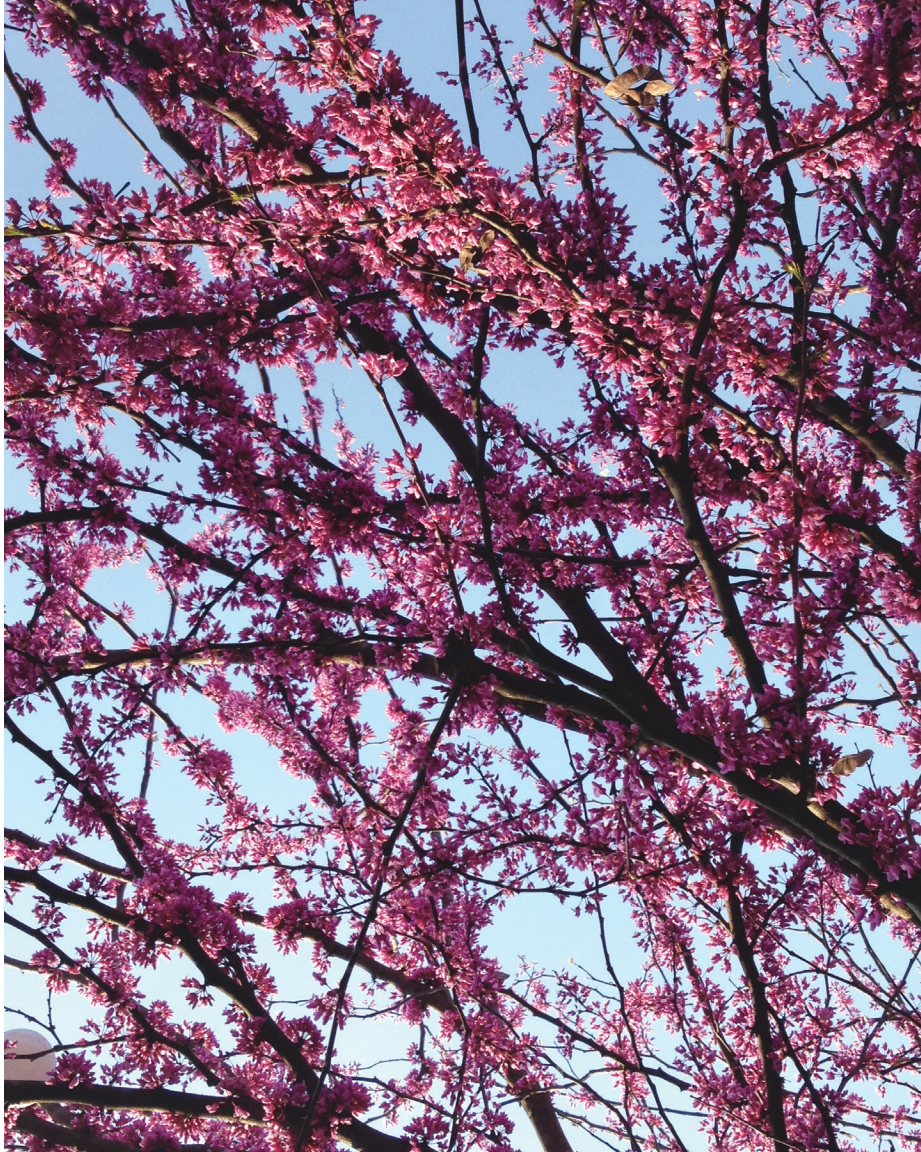
With no place to go and our cars parked, a lot of us rediscovered the outdoors this past spring: the Carolina blue sky, the blooming dogwoods and azaleas. Color was erupting everywhere, and this time, rather than zipping past, people were there for it.

Spring is my favorite time of year. I look forward to watching the plants bloom in sequence: redbuds, Bradford pears, cherry trees, purple buds, dogwoods, and then the dramatic wisteria followed by the azaleas.

As I looked out of my office window one day, though, I realized that my Japanese maple had gone into full leaf without me seeing the process. For five weeks, my management team and I had been heads-down trying to help Noble Food & Pursuits weather this crisis, help my staff earn a living, and help those in need. I had missed the show.

The thought saddened me a little, but it also brought back memories of another





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place full of living color: my grandfather’s garden. We visited there virtually every week as a kid. We ate around picnic tables under big oak trees, and my love of vegetables is a reflection of the many, many hours I spent there.

By high summer, the tomato vines were heavy with red German Johnsons as big as a fighting man’s fists, and yellow crookneck squashes were peeking out from under canopies of fuzzy green leaves. Butter beans, corn, okra, beets, cucumbers, and green beans were everywhere. Potato plants bloomed white and yellow flowers to signal the end of their growing season. Lime-colored scuppernong grapes hung from trellises that granddaddy built in the backyard, and his beehives hummed with bees making their return trips from the flowerbeds.

Color was everywhere in that garden. The fruits and vegetables—some still warm from a day in the sun—would adorn our plates and then fill our bellies. We sliced wedges of red watermelon and orange cantaloupe and sat on the porch, shelling pastel-colored peas and beans until sunset.

As a kid, I loved all of that delicious food, and I developed an appreciation for the garden—and precious time spent with loved ones. Especially now. I think we’ve all been given the gift of better eyesight. It makes it easier to spot the blessings. We just have to remember to use it. ♦



Chef **JIM NOBLE** is the executive chef and owner of **NOBLE FOOD & PURSUITS**. For more information, visit **NOBLEFOODANDPURSUITS.COM**.