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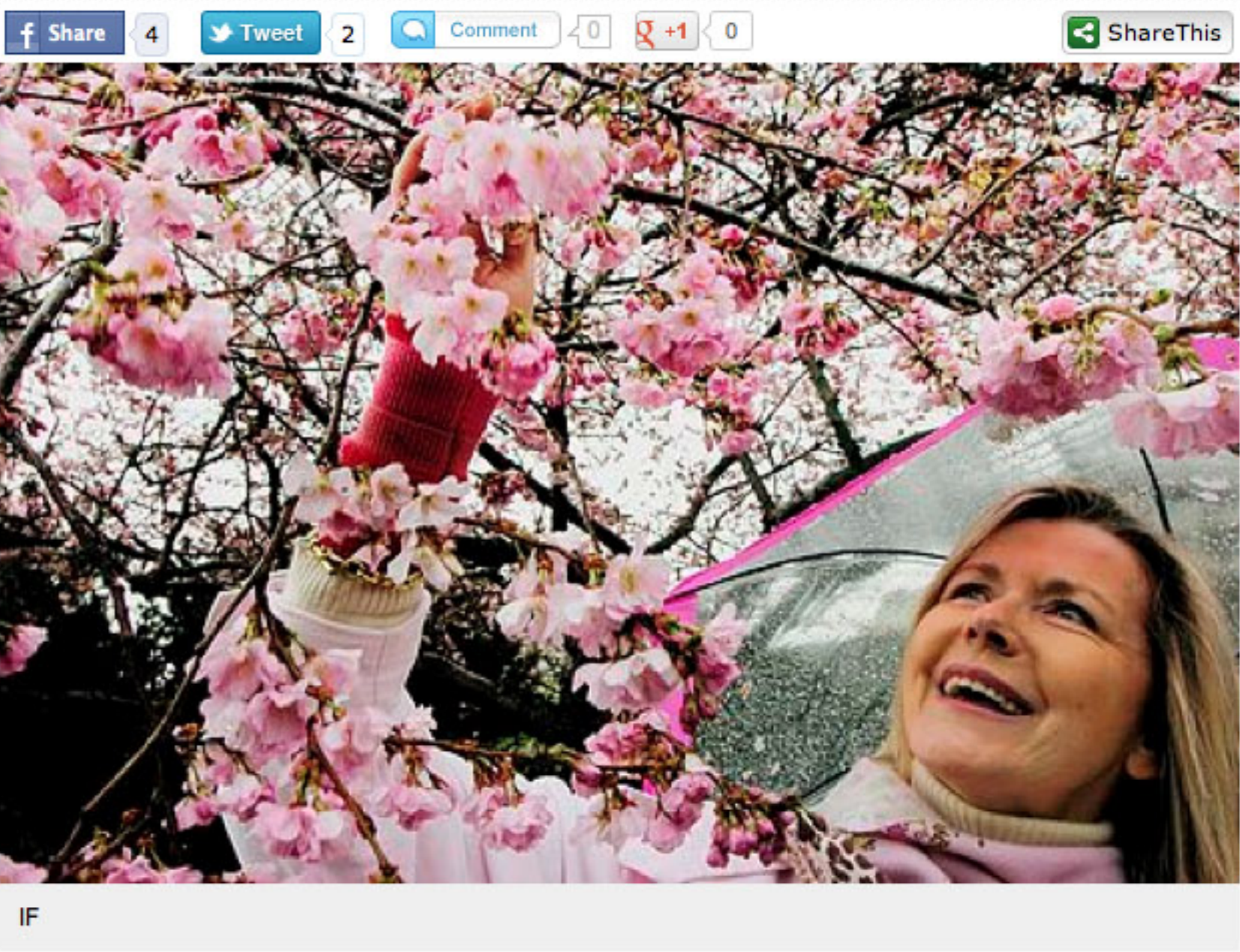
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IN THE GARDEN

What happened to spring? It's summer in Winnipeg!

March 18, 2012, 8:28 am • Section: In the Garden



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What happened to spring? Don't want to spoil your Sunday, but did you know it is 20 C in Winnipeg today and will be 22 C tomorrow? That's warmer than Rome or Milan.

Spring has not sprung here and it does not look like doing so for a while yet.

Gardens are at least two to three weeks behind, some say even a month.

Forsythia is only starting to appear and cherry blossoms are definitely behind with even the early-flowering 'Whitcomb' struggling to make an appearance.

'Accolade' trees are also far behind and are unlikely to be at their peak before the end of the month. Normally, they would be almost finished by the end of March.

The Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival, which gets under way next month, is predicting a "normal year, whatever that is" but in reality unless we get a run of warm, sunny days soon, the festival is going to be a little short of its signature pink blossoms.

One of the good effects of the cool weather is that when blooms do break out, they last a little longer because the air has a refrigerator-effect on the flowers, preserving them in their pristine state for longer. It is one reason florists keep many of their flowers in cold storage.

Crocuses and snowdrops and hellebores are blooming. They are the only cheerful sign in the garden along with some witch hazel and *cornus mas*.

Some early rhododendrons are blooming, but usually these are in the gardens of experts who pride themselves on having rhodos that bloom from January to July.

Your average home garden mostly has rhodos and azaleas that bloom in April and May.



In my garden, I often judge how early or late the season is by the flowering of my *Daphne odora*. It is late, again, this year. It does not have a single flower on it, whereas in previous years, it would be in full bloom by now. I also look for the yellow blooms on my *Edgeworthia chrysantha*. None yet. Normally, they are out by now.

I am also watching my PJM rhododendrons, as they are also one of the earliest plants to bloom. They are usually fully out by Easter, which will be earlier this year, April 6, so I am hoping to see some buds popping over the next couple of weeks.

Spring will arrive. Magnolias will be here soon enough along with all the daffodils and early tulips. And then we won't care so much that it is already summer in Winnipeg.

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