

Autumn glory, 31 October

I'm trying to stay positive and cheerful as the news gets relentlessly worse – but it gets increasingly difficult. In old-speak I have 'put my affairs in order'. Not that I have any intention of going anywhere but you never know, given where we are with this wretched virus, when the grim reaper might come a'hovering. Given my age and – I have to admit – my family genes which predispose to being somewhat larger than is regarded as healthy, I have to be counted as vulnerable.

I've often thought, is this it? Pundits are now saying it could be two years before we are 'back to normal' – there's a thought as one approaches 80.

And on the last day of the month we got the news no one wanted: a month's lockdown, with the exception of essential shops, 'support bubbles', schools and universities. Little reaction yet as I write this – that's for next month.

We're fortunate to be in a caring, supportive community and our Covid Response team posted the message that 'we don't know the future, but we are resilient, creative and responsive'. We have much to be thankful for.

Meanwhile, I'm looking forward to the spring: I've planted crocus, dwarf daffodils and grape hyacinth bulbs in abundance – no frosts yet, so it's not cold enough to plant tulips. The garden is put to bed, but the autumn colours just seem to get better and better. My garden is tiny, but a precious spot has the hues of a purple acer, a stainless-steel water feature, an acid-green-turning-pink acer and a rowan tree defiantly firing off each other.

Memo to self - keep thinking and planning ahead ...

Mary Robinson