



**Plots are Available
For 2018**

For information, call
John Poyzer 576-2664 or
Karen Stith 634-4433

January-February 2018

It's that Time of Year — Start Thinking About Seeds



**BCGA Welcomes Back
Our Returning Gardeners**

Registration packets are sent out on January 15th to gardeners who can sign up to keep the plot(s) they gardened last year. Returning gardeners can request more, or less, space, and must send their registration forms and fees to the BCGA Post Office Box by February 28th to keep their plots.

Plots will be assigned to new gardeners starting on March 1.

The Parks Department will till the entire garden in mid-April when soil conditions permit. Garden volunteers will then stake out the plots in time for the scheduled Opening Day, April 21.

Winter Potluck at Gold Hill Mesa

Gardeners and their families are invited to get together for a Winter Potluck on Sunday, February 18, starting at 12:00 noon at the Gold Hill Mesa Community Room, located at 142 South Raven Mine Drive.

Please bring a main dish serving 6-9 people plus a salad, vegetable or dessert to share. BCGA will provide plates, utensils, napkins, cups, coffee and lemonade. If you plan to attend, please RSVP by e-mail to bearcreekgardens@yahoo.com

The BCGA Spring Class

“Organic Vegetable Gardening—Tips for Success” will be held on Saturday, March 17 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the Bear Creek Nature Center, 245 Bear Creek Road. We are again part of the Nature Center's sustainability program, so the Nature Center will charge \$4 per person for the class. You are welcome to attend. More information and a signup opportunity will be available soon on the Bear Creek Nature Center website: <http://bit.ly/1jzhwq1>

If you ordered seeds by mail last year, you probably have already received one of those colorful catalogues bursting with colorful photos of an impossibly large number of vegetable varieties.

Seed company websites provide an abundance of information online as well. The choices of beans, for example, are overwhelming—bush beans, pole beans, green, yellow, purple beans, beans for drying, slender French beans, fat Romano beans, all fun to consider.

This is the perfect time of year to order seeds, for the tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, leeks, onions and others that must be started indoors, as well as those seeds that will go right into the garden in April and May.

Vegetable gardening is increasingly popular. By late spring, suppliers (including garden centers) will be running low on the popular varieties of seeds.

Pick a Carrot is a unique site that helps gardeners find particular varieties they seek. It is run by Jason Grauer and Mark Cerritelli. Jason works at Stone Barns Center in Pocantico Hills, NY, as Field Crop Manager and Variety Trial Coordinator. Mark, a Carnegie Mellon graduate, is the software engineer, site builder and architect for Pick a Carrot.

Jason and Mark have built a database that includes vegetable varieties sold by over 60 seed companies. Here's what they have to say about it:

“Pick a Carrot is a customized search engine dedicated to improving your seed buying experience. Our simple search tool helps you easily find varieties and compare dozens of catalogues at one time.

“Pick a Carrot is a free service for users -- we don't add any fees, we simply help you buy directly from the seed company offering you the best option and the best deal for your needs.”

The site is easy to search, and provides a list of the seed houses and direct links to their websites.

Dave's Favorite Seed Catalogues

David Ridnour is one of our most adventurous gardeners, trying out new vegetable varieties each year in his plots. These are some of the seed companies he recommends:

E & R, a Mennonite group located in Indiana (816) 510-3337. E & R does not have a website. Call to request a catalogue, then order seed by mail or by phone. Many good varieties, low prices. Dave's current favorite!

Fedco Seeds, a seed cooperative located in Maine.

www.fedcoseeds.com
Farm Direct Organic Seed, from

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Calendar

Jan 15 — Registration packets are e-mailed to returning gardeners.

Feb. 18—Winter Potluck—12:00 noon Gold Hill Mesa Community Center. See p. 1.

Feb. 28 — Deadline for returning gardeners to sign up for their plots.

Mar. 1 — New gardener plot assignment begins.

Mar. 17 — “Organic Vegetable Gardening—Tips for Success”—class taught by BCGA gardeners at Bear Creek Nature Center 10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m. 245 Bear Creek Road.

Apr. 14 — New Gardener Orientation, 10:00—12:00 a.m. and 2-4 p.m. at the Parks Department Building adjacent to the garden.

Apr. 21 — Opening Day

Note: You can CLICK on the links in this newsletter to open the websites mentioned in the articles.

Bear Creek Garden Association

BCGA runs the Charmaine Nyman Community Garden located in Bear Creek Park East, Colorado Springs, Colorado. It is a Colorado 501(c)(3) tax exempt nonprofit corporation.

Members of the public can rent plots to grow organic vegetables for personal use and for donation to friends and charities.

The gardeners grow and donate thousands of pounds of produce to the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo, the Springs Rescue Mission and Colorado Springs Food Rescue each year.

Contact us: John Poyzer 576-2664
Karen Stith 634-4433

E-mail:
bearcreekgardens@yahoo.com

Website: www.bearcreekgardens.org

Facebook:

[Bear Creek Garden Association](https://www.facebook.com/BearCreekGardenAssociation)

Dave's Favorites (cont.)

(Continued from page 1)

Hobbs Family Farm east of Pueblo, CO. Provides certified organic, open pollinated and non-GMO seed grown in Southern Colorado and Northern New Mexico. Rick's Garden Center carries these seeds. www.farmdirectseed.com

Seed Savers Exchange, Decorah, Iowa. Provides heirloom, untreated, non-hybrid, non-GMO seeds. SSE identifies varieties that are not commonly available to the public and makes every effort to offer these varieties in its catalog or through its Exchange. Anyone can purchase seeds; if you become a member of this nonprofit group more information about the Exchange is available. www.seedsaversexchange.org

Kitazawa Seed Company, Oakland, CA. America's oldest seed company, specializing in Asian vegetable seeds since 1917. Kitazawa closed during world War II when family members were sent to internment camps. After the war the company re-opened and remains one of the best seed houses in the country. <http://www.kitazawaseed.com>

Other good sources include:

Johnny's Selected Seeds (Maine) www.johnnyseeds.com

Territorial Seed Company (Oregon) www.territorialseed.com

Vermont Bean Seed Company www.vermontbean.com

These companies send out free catalogues which can be requested online (except E & R - you must call them). Their colorful websites offer abundant information and gardening advice. Dave cautions gardeners to think about where the company is located - New England or California seed houses will not necessarily provide advice that is pertinent to our Colorado high desert climate.

Gardener's Supply Company
Char Nyman's favorite company for tools/supplies. Great catalogue! <https://www.gardeners.com/>

Join the King Soopers Gift Card Program to Help Bring Back the Goats

BCGA has started a new fundraising program for its Goat Fund using King Soopers Gift Cards. We raise about \$10,000 each year to bring the weed-eating goat herd to Bear Creek Park.

Here's how it works. Send an e-mail to: bearcreekgardens@yahoo.com or or call or text Bonnie MacLachlan at 720-276-5151 to ask that she send you a gift card that is registered with BCGA. You will receive the gift card and a detailed information sheet in the mail. The gift card will already have \$2.50 loaded on it.

Before you check out with your groceries, you add to the value of the gift card by using your credit card. Then you pay for groceries, gas and prescriptions using the BCGA gift card. King Soopers will send five percent (5%) of the amount you spend to BCGA for the Goat Fund.

When the card runs low, it is easy to reload it using your credit card. You get your miles on the credit card as usual.

What a powerful fundraising tool these cards are! Many organizations in Colorado Springs have used them for years.



As of January 7, three gardeners are using the cards. Please join them by calling Bonnie and making a commitment to bring the goats back in 2018

You don't have to be a gardener to get a card. Anyone in the community who shops at King Soopers can help to bring back the goats by using a BCGA Gift Card. Just call Bonnie MacLachlan and ask her to send you one.

All King Soopers Gift Card card users will become Friends of the Goats and will receive occasional updates about the activities of our goats and their herders.

Spring Vegetable Gardening Classes Sprout in the Pikes Peak Region

When it's cold and (hopefully, in 2018) snowy, and those garden catalogues have resulted in intense spring fever, gardeners can indulge in a variety of local garden classes to improve their skills.

BCGA provides one class, "Organic Vegetable Gardening—Tips for Success" which is scheduled for March 17th (see p. 1)

At the time this newsletter was put together, local garden centers and other organizations have not yet finalized plans for their classes. Call them or look at their websites later in January for updated information. Here's what we know so far:

*Pikes Peak Urban Gardens (Larry Stebbins)
www.ppugardens.org

January 25— Vegetable Gardening 101—For the very new beginning gardener. 6:00—7:30 p.m.. At the Sustainability Center, 704 East Boulder Street (corner of North El Paso and East Boulder) Cost is \$10, participants limited to 25. Sign up now online to reserve a space

February 24 — Planning Your Garden — Includes soil preparation, choosing which varieties to plant and when, season extending techniques. Horace Mann Middle School, 1001 East Van Buren. Cost \$10. Reserve online, pay at the door. Doors open at 9:00 a.m. so participants can talk to vendors. Class 10:00—11:30 a.m.

March 24 and April 28 — Vegetable Gardening Classes—Cool season/ Warm season. Horace Mann Middle School. See website for details.

*Rick's Garden Center—(719) 632-8491
www.ricksgarden.com

*Phelan Gardens — (719) 574-8058
www.phelangardens.com

*Good Earth Garden Center — (719) 473-3399
www.goodearthgardencenter.com

*Spencer's Gardens— (719) 632-2788
www.spencersgardens.com

Note: Spencer's classes are usually held at its Fountain location: 4720 Center Valley Drive in Fountain, CO

*Colorado State University Extension (710) 520-7690
<http://bit.ly/2CPbZvV>

Register for classes online or by calling the office.

February (late)— Seed Starting Workshop—date/time TBD. Taught by Master Gardeners. Small fee.

March 15— "Vegetable Gardening" 9 a.m.—4 p.m., 17 North Spruce Street. Cost: \$65.

March 31 — Warm Season Vegetable Crops. — details TBD. Taught by Master Gardeners. Small fee.

Photos From 2017



John, Chuck and David —Arrival of 90 Bales of Straw —June



John Atkinson Filming at the Garden— June



Courtney picking up produce for the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo— August



Garden helper— July

Explosion of Painted Lady butterflies on Flowering Broccoli — Early October



Volunteer Opportunities

Flower Bed Need someone to manage the small flowerbed at the east end of the island in the parking lot throughout the season. Jim and Jannette Swanson manage the larger one at the west end.

Website Need someone to help keep the website updated;

Facebook Page Ditto, preferably someone who likes to take photos of the garden.

Marking out Plots and Aisles After the County tills the garden in April, a crew of gardeners will mark out the plots and dig in the aisles under the supervision of Don Brooks.

Send an e-mail to BCGA or call John or Karen if you would like to help.