



 * "There are no gardening mistakes, *
 * only experiments" *
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 * - Janet Kilburn Phillips *

March-April 2023

Harbinger of Spring— Parks Department Tills the Garden

Notes for New Gardeners



This photo was taken by a drone flying over the garden during spring tilling in March 2018. The El Paso County Parks Department will till the entire two-acre garden soon, after which volunteers will stake out the plots and define the aisles between them in preparation for Opening Day on April 15th.

See live action shots by the drone and conversations with gardeners in the 30-minute documentary film about the garden titled "A Garden Experience" made by Nancy Bentley and John Atkinson. It's available on Amazon (free for Prime members) at <https://amzn.to/34G7nHL>

We welcome all of our new plot owners and their helpers. Please plan to attend the New Gardener Orientation on Saturday, April 1 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Bear Creek Nature Center.

Here are a few notes to help you get underway smoothly.

As we say every year, the early bird rarely gets the worm at the Charmaine Nymann Community Garden! Be careful with early planting. Watch the veteran gardeners

Planting out cool weather seedlings such as broccoli, brussels sprouts, cabbage and kale purchased in a garden shop is OK in the last part of April, but they need to be covered with a plastic milk jug or other protection until they start to grow vigorously. Get jugs by asking at coffee shops. Cut off the bottom and a little of the top and stake down in the garden so they don't blow around. Don't use clear plastic containers — they heat up too much on a sunny day.

Sun, wind and cold spring nights will take a heavy toll on greenhouse-raised plants that are not provided with this protection. Don't leave tender plants struggling in the wind. Protect them.

Experienced gardeners don't hurry into planting tender tomato, eggplant and pepper plants in May when freezing temperatures are still likely in our area. These tender plants should be planted around the first of June. Use Walls of Water or other protection.

Likewise, hold off on planting seeds for beans, squash and corn until the soil has a chance to warm up. Chilling can permanently damage these vegetables. They may survive, but they probably will not produce well.

The BCGA Garden Handbook can be found through a link on the first page of the BCGA website www.bearcreekgardens.org. It was developed over the years by CNCG gardeners to offer helpful advice for gardening in our climate.

New Online Registration is Rolling Along

Returning gardeners are wrapping up their registrations quickly, and plots are already being assigned to new gardeners.

The new online system facilitates payment of plot fees by credit card or PayPal, and allows plot owners and their helpers to acknowledge the mandatory Unconditional Release with the click of a button.

No more need for the paper release that had to be signed before a notary public and mailed to the BCGA post office box!

The new system will also streamline the garden email and simplify BCGA record keeping.

Thank you to Winn Jewett and his team at Oxbow Labs for setting up the new system, and to Todd Hegert and Bill Harmon, who have spent many hours learning to use it.

Plots Are Now Available

Plots are available for this year. Call Todd Hegert (719) 329-8873 to get registration information. Plots often open up in May and June when gardeners' plans change, so every person who wanted a plot was able to get one by mid-June in recent years.

Plot sizes and fees are:
 20 feet x 20 feet \$75.00
 20 feet x 40 feet \$120.00

The plot fee includes water and spring and fall tilling. First year gardeners pay a \$25.00 cleanup deposit which is returned if the plot is properly cleared off at the end of the season.

Water

The water system might not be on when the garden opens, depending on the weather. The water at the garden is city water—the same drinkable water we have in our homes.

Spring Garden Class
March 11



“Organic Gardening – Tips for Success” will be presented by six experienced BCGA gardeners plus Dan Hopper of Rick’s Garden Center on Saturday, March 11 from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the Bear Creek Nature Center, 245 Bear Creek Road.

Please register on the County website at: <https://bit.ly/3I79hmd>

The cost is \$4.00 (discounted to \$3.00 for members of Friends of the Nature Center and current BCGA gardeners). To get the discount, call (719) 520-6387 and a staff member will help with the registration process and apply the discount.

Topics include Starting Seeds Indoors, Organic Pest Control and Fertilizers, Plant Protection, Favorite Tools and Square Foot Gardening.

N.B. the March 11 class is for the general public and any CNCG gardeners who would like to attend. The in-person orientation for new gardeners, which covers material specific to the community garden, will take place on April 1.

Plant and Tool Sale

On Saturday morning, May 27, we’ll have a Plant and Tool Sale at the garden just for BCGA gardeners. If you are starting seedlings at home, please start extras to donate to the sale.

Do a little spring cleaning in your garden shed or garage. If you have garden tools and equipment that you no longer need, please consider donating them to the sale.

Prices are low, gardeners get tools and plants they love and the proceeds go to the Goat Fund.

Bear Creek Garden Association

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

Individuals can rent plots to grow vegetables for personal use and for donation to friends and charities.

Contact: Todd Hegert (719) 329-8873

Email: bearcreekgardenscs@gmail.com

Website: www.bearcreekgardens.org

Facebook:

Bear Creek Garden Association

Goats Here for Spring Grazing



John Poyzer and Lani Malmberg

After many hours on the road, traveling from Silt, Colorado, 580 cashmere goats arrived on February 19 for ten days of grazing around the community garden. They were accompanied by highly competent herder Kaiti Singley and two border collies.

Lani Malmberg injured her leg in a fall as they were leaving Silt and went to Ft. Collins to recuperate. Her son, Donny Benz, took the other half of the herd to a property in Castle Rock.

The goats were particularly beautiful, with their full winter coats after many months in the mountains.

Dog owners were exceptionally considerate this year, and we even saw a couple of park users urging dog owners to put their dogs on leash. What a change this is from the wild situations Lani Malmberg encountered in the past when dogs were often out of control!

Lani did come to help Kaiti and Donny load up the goats for departure and, even on crutches, she was giving directions to the dogs and managing electric fencing. She says hello to all of the friends that she did not get to see this year. Kaiti, Donny and Lani are now managing the full 1,000-goat herd near Castle Rock.

Thank you to the Parks staff members who brought water to the herd and checked in regularly with Kaiti.

Some gardeners helped by walking the trails and talking to visitors. Thanks to Bob Spaete, Lou Ann Mayes, Scott and Marcia Sage and Dennice Soderberg.

The County Parks staff relies on gardeners to support the herder when we have so many animals in this busy park. We need more gardeners to volunteer to walk trails and talk to visitors when the goats are here. This does count as “volunteer work” which can be reported to BCGA by email.



Spencer's Produce, Lawn,
& Garden Centers

Celebrate spring by coming to Spencer’s 27th Annual Garden Success Show on March 10-11 and 12 at its Fountain store, 4720 Center Valley Drive in Fountain, Colorado.

Visit the greenhouse, peruse the many garden products and check out the classes that will be offered. Of particular interest to CNCG gardeners would be the Seed Starting class offered March 11 at 3:30 p.m. and a Seed Starting class for kids at 3:00 p.m. on March 12. Call (719) 392-2726 to reserve places in a class.

Spencer’s has been a family owned and operated business in Colorado Springs since 1934. Check out its website at www.spencersgardens.com.

Special Note for New Gardeners

Paths Between Plots. When the garden opens, the 4-foot wide main aisles will already be in place. Where your plot touches a main aisle there is nothing more to be done.

HOWEVER, where your plot touches another plot, you must give up one foot along the edge of your plot and raise a berm inside that line along your plot. Your neighbor will do the same.

This creates a two foot path between adjoining plots for easier access. Do this first, before starting to work on the plot. Please don’t plant vegetables into your paths.

Path layout will be demonstrated when new gardeners participate in an important orientation inside the garden on opening day (afternoon).



Very fluffy cashmere goats tackling brush near the garden in February.

— Photo by Candice Hall

Garden Calendar

March 11—BCGA Spring Garden Class— Bear Creek Nature Center 10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.

April 1 — New Gardener Orientation — Bear Creek Nature Center, 245 Bear Creek Road, 10:00 — 11:00 a.m. For new plot owners and their helpers.

April 15 — Garden Opens (weather permitting) Returning gardeners come in the morning, new gardeners come in the afternoon. Gardeners will receive details by email in April.

May 27 — Plant and Tool Sale at the garden 9:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. This is Saturday morning on Memorial Day Weekend.



Spring Plant Sale in May

The Horticultural Art Society's Spring Plant Sale will once again span two weekends: May 12-13 and May 19-20, starting at 9 a.m. The sale takes place in Monument Valley Park at the cottage near the HAS Demonstration Garden, 224 Mesa Road.

Flowers, vegetable starts, herbs and a wide range of perennial shrubs and even trees from some of Colorado's best greenhouses will be available at reasonable prices. The stock is resupplied for the second weekend.

Come early, as this is a very popular sale. Many experienced HAS members will be on hand with advice. HAS welcomes new members—see its website: www.hasgardens.org

A Gardeners' Favorite - Sunset Greenhouse

Sunset Greenhouse, located at 1023 Sunset Road in Colorado Springs, was Char's favorite place to go to purchase tomato and pepper seedlings. They carry a wide range of quality plants in a quaint atmosphere. Many of the plants are raised onsite, varieties not available elsewhere.

Sunset is a local, family-owned business which has been located in a downtown neighborhood for over 70 years. It is open only in the spring.

Check out its Facebook page, or, to read about its history, go to the website: <https://sunsetgh.com>



The CNCG Garden Badges and keys change each year.

Keys and badges will be sold to new and returning gardeners at the garden on Opening Day. Please be sure to bring cash or a check for this.

The 2023 badge, (Three Sisters") designed by Heather Moser, can be shown from April to April at these three stores for a discount:

Good Earth Garden Center, 1330 North Walnut Street, 10% discount.

Rick's Garden Center, 1827 West Uintah Street, 10% discount.

ACE Hardware, Uintah Gardens Shopping Center, 1830 West Uintah Street. 15% discount on purchases, 50% discount on tool sharpening.

The badge must be shown at the cash register to receive these discounts. Please do not expect them to remember that you had a badge last time you came in if you forgot to bring it with you today!

New Helpers Must Register

Plot owners are reminded that every adult person who engages in garden activity at the community garden must register online to acknowledge the Unconditional Release before doing any work in the garden. This is a requirement of our landlord, El Paso County.

A new helper can get a link to register online by sending an email to bearcreekgardenscs@gmail.com.

Gardeners are always welcome to bring visitors to the garden, but visitors may not engage in gardening if they have not registered with BCGA.

Please Read Email

BCGA depends on email to communicate with all our gardeners. Check your junk mailbox too!

New Certified Gardener Program Offered by C.S.U.

Colorado State University, which runs the statewide Master Gardener Program and the County Extension Office in Colorado Springs, has established a new Certified Gardener Program this spring. It is based on the Colorado Master Gardener Program and provides a wide range of horticulture classes.

No application is necessary. There is no set curriculum: students can take courses individually, register for a "bundle" of courses on related topics or complete the full program and earn a mastery badge.

No matter if you are a backyard gardener interested in learning more about landscaping, pruning and home composting, or are a green industry professional, these online classes can be tailored to help you meet your own goals.

For more information, go to:

<http://bit.ly/3T8V6B1>

How About... Some Seed Swapping?

Early spring is the **time** to go through that box of seeds to see which varieties we have too little of and, sometimes, too much. Many gardeners save seed from their plants for the next year and it is easy to squirrel away more than you can use.

Seed Swaps and Seed Libraries offer gardeners a chance to share what they will not use and try new varieties inexpensively. Both saved seed and store bought seed packs are welcome.

These local swaps are coming up: March 11, 3:00—4:30 p.m., Food to Power Hillside Hub, 1090 South Institute Street. Donation. Register at: <http://bit.ly/3T9thbW>

March 29, 5-7 p.m. SEE (Sustainable Educational Experience) Seed & Plant Swap—Garden Planning event, East Library, 5550 N. Union Blvd. \$5 suggested donation <http://bit.ly/3mMirfx>

April 1, 1-3 p.m. during Pikes Peak Herb Fest, Colorado Springs City Auditorium, 221 East Kiowa Street. Free event. See: <http://bit.ly/3ytOzY3>

Another great place to swap seeds is a local seed library. The best one in our area is in the Manitou branch of the Pikes Peak Library District, currently located inside of the Manitou Art Center, 515 Manitou Ave. Seed packets are displayed in the drawers of an old library card catalogue.