



May-June 2023

## A Rainy May— Water Management for a Hot Summer

What a deluge May has brought this year! As of May 29, Colorado Springs had received a total of 7.63 inches of precipitation, and 5.22 inches of that water arrived in May. Please be aware that the berms across the east-west aisles play an important role in slowing the flow of water from the west end of the garden to the east. Thank you to everyone who has built berms up after the flooding we recently experienced. Please keep maintaining them throughout the garden season.

Gardeners are reminded that the Watering Rule that limits watering to the hours before 10:00 a.m. and after 4:00 p.m. has been suspended again this year. Until further notice, you may water at any time of day. However, please keep in mind that water is BCGA's biggest expense. Watering in the cooler morning and evening hours is more effective and reduces the water bill.

After a rainy May, things may change as forecasters are predicting another hot, dry summer. In our climate, gardeners must work to use water as intelligently as possible. Here's some advice from local Master Gardener Scott Wilson:

—Amend your soil each year with compost and manure to add organic matter, which opens air spaces and retains water.

—Water deeply to encourage plant roots to go deep.

—Water in the cool times of the day (before 9 a.m. and after 6 p.m.)

—Don't spray water all over the place, on the leaves of the plants. This wastes water and can result in leaf damage to some plants, including tomatoes, on a bright, sunny day.

—Hold the hose nozzle close to the soil and put the water at the roots of the plants.

—Maintain a thick layer of straw mulch around plants to keep moisture from evaporating. Mulch helps keep soil temperature steady and cooler soil retains more moisture. Don't let the



Todd Hegert waving at that pesky photographer. The garden is awash in Walls of Water protecting newly planted tomatoes. (Photo by Candice Hall) More of her photos can be found on the BCGA Facebook page.

sun bake your soil. Water through the mulch rather than sprinkling it.

—Plants set close together will shade the soil and use less water than fewer plants spaced wide apart.

—Weeds compete with vegetables for water. Pull weeds when they first appear, before they start sucking up water, and add them to the straw mulch. Till mulch under in the fall.

## Plots Available?

The "Plots Available" banner at the corner of 21<sup>st</sup> Street and Rio Grande will be taken down after Memorial Day weekend. Nearly all of the plots were rented by the end of May.

However, there is always some turnover, and more space could open up in the month of June. If you are interested in renting more space this year if/when it is available, email Todd at [hello@bearcreekgardens.org](mailto:hello@bearcreekgardens.org)

## Notes for New Gardeners

There are forty-four new plot owners at the garden this year, many of whom have one or two helpers. All of them have been added to the BCGA email contacts list and will be receiving garden email regularly. Please watch for these email messages to stay tuned in to what is happening in your community garden! Add BCGA to your contacts.

Lock Your Car. Always lock your car before you go into the garden. This is a public park, and gardeners have lost valuable items when cars were left unlocked, even for a short time.

Keep Your Garden Key With You. Always have your garden key with you inside the garden so that you do not get locked in.

Locking the Gates. During early planting season, from Opening Day to June 15, it is OK to leave a gate unlocked when gardeners using it are working nearby on their plots. Please do not leave a gate swinging wide open! If you are the last person to leave your area of the garden, be sure that you lock the gate behind you.

Starting on June 15, the gates must be kept locked at all times. We lost a valuable garden cart to theft last year, so we all need to work on keeping the garden secure.

Visitors. Gardeners are always welcome to bring visitors to the garden, but (for liability reasons) visitors may not engage in any garden activity. Only plot owners and their helpers who have registered with BCGA may work in the garden. The garden is a Members Only space. Members of the public are not welcome to wander around inside the garden. If a gardener decides to show someone around, that's OK.

Disconnect Your Hose. Always shut off the water and disconnect your hose before leaving the garden. A positive shutoff device at the nozzle end makes it easy to forget that the water pressure is still on when you lay the nozzle down

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### Garden Calendar

**June 15 Garden Workday** — 8:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m.

**June 15 Lock Gates** — Garden gates must be locked at all times starting on June 15.

**August 13 Summer Potluck** — Gold Hill Mesa— 12:30 p.m. -Save the Date.

### Notes for New Gardeners

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and turn to another chore. If left unattended, this can result in a hose rupture and major water damage.

**Weeds.** Cooperate with your neighbors to keep aisles and paths between plots clear of weeds. Scatter them on the plot as mulch or bag them and take them home for disposal. Don't put them in the aisles or throw them over the garden fence.

**New Helpers.** All plot owners are reminded that any new helpers they acquire must register with BCGA before doing any gardening work. Contact Todd by email to arrange registration.

#### BCGA has a new email address:

[hello@bearcreekgardens.org](mailto:hello@bearcreekgardens.org)

This is the best way for our total of 308 gardeners and helpers to communicate with Todd and other board members.

### Water Line Project

A water line project is underway just northwest of the garden. The County Parks Department has engaged a contractor to install a pipe to bring non-potable water to be used for landscaping purposes to the area near its building and up along the entrance road.

This new line has nothing to do with water in the garden. The water that comes out of the BCGA garden faucets is the same city water that we have at home, brought to the garden by a pipe running from the Parks building. There is a meter on this garden supply line, checked monthly by Bill Harmon and a

#### How Much Did it Rain at the Garden?

The Weather Underground has a weather station near the garden which reports recent rainfall and provides local forecasts. Here is the link: <https://bit.ly/3wHdxjA>.

Scroll down to the list of "Nearby Weather Stations" and choose Crown Hill Mesa.

### Plant a Row (or more) for The Zoo and Silver Key

Gardener Kay Gray has managed our Garden-to-Zoo donation program with the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo for many years. She has posted signs by the two north side garden gates encouraging gardeners to plant extra vegetables for the Zoo and providing information about what the animals



Lion Cubs With Squash

enjoy. Kay makes the deliveries to the Zoo herself, starting in early July, and when the volume increases the Zoo truck will start coming once a week.

Silver Key Senior Services also picks up produce at the garden on a weekly basis, starting in July. Board member Rose Bergles manages this relationship and will let gardeners know when pickups will begin.

Now is the time to plant extra vegetables to share with the community.

### Using Straw (It's Not Hay)

The use of straw mulch is strongly recommended but it is not required. Thank you to everyone who has ordered straw. In early June 110 bales will be delivered to the garden by Bartlett Hay & Feed of Falcon, CO.

What we refer to as "straw" are the stems of plants cut during a second pass with the mower after the seed heads (barley, oats) on the plants have been harvested in the first run of the mower. "Hay" refers to entire plants with their tops and seeds which are harvested, baled and sold as animal feed.

The straw used at the community garden is from barley plants and, inevitably, does contain some barley seeds. Barley sprouts may come up here and there, looking very much like grass. Just pull them up and lay them on the plot to serve as more mulch.

All of this will be tilled under in the fall, enriching and softening the soil.



### A Garden Experience

"A Garden Experience" is a 28 minute film about the Charmaine Nymann Community Garden created as a gift to the gardeners by Nancy Bentley and John Atkinson with original music composed by George Ulrich. The film was released in 2018.

From spring tilling, planting, potlucks, wildlife sightings and harvesting to fall closing and community outreach, the filmmakers put together a story of how the gardeners love the garden.

For the past five years, the film has been for sale on Amazon. The distributor has now given permission for the Parks Department to post it online. Go to: <https://bit.ly/43vQLf6> to watch it.

Once again, thank you to Nancy and John, who spent countless hours over two years, shooting film and then reluctantly, painstakingly pruning all that lovely footage into a swiftly paced community garden story.

#### Discover Liquid Mode!

Liquid Mode is a relatively new feature of Adobe Acrobat Reader that enables this newsletter to be read in simple column format on android phones.

Learn more at: <https://bit.ly/3WL178H>

### Help Raise Funds for the Goats—King Soopers Card

If you have a King Soopers loyalty (discount) card, you can link it to the Bear Creek Garden Association to help raise funds for our goat grazing project, and it costs you nothing. Here's how:

(If you don't already have one, get a discount card from the service desk.) Go online to [www.kingsoopers.com](http://www.kingsoopers.com) and set up your personal account.

Go to "King Soopers Community Rewards" at the very bottom of the page and link your card to Bear Creek Garden Association (organization number TI 166). Every time you use your card for discounts at the checkout, it counts toward the quarterly checks that BCGA receives from King Soopers.

What an easy way this is to support our Goat Grazing Fund ongoingly! Please help us raise funds for the next goat grazing visit.