



Nearby Weather Station
 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.

July—August 2023

Gardeners Celebrate Summer with Potluck Picnic

On Sunday, August 13, gardeners, their families and their helpers are invited to a Potluck Picnic at the Gold Hill Mesa Community Center, 142 South Raven Mine Drive, near the garden. The Potluck will begin at 12:30 p.m. This is a great opportunity to meet other gardeners and show off your summer vegetables in the potluck dishes.

Please bring a main dish AND a salad or dessert to share. BCGA will provide plates, cups, utensils, napkins and lemonade. (Alcohol is not permitted at this event.)

Tables will be set up under an awning for protection from August thunderstorms. Families with children may want to bring a blanket or camp chairs to use on the lawn. No pets, please.



Please RSVP by email to hello@bearcreekgardens.org if you plan to attend the picnic. RSVPs must be received by Wednesday, August 9 so that organizers know how many people will be coming.

Notes for Gardeners

The Deadline to Spread Straw is July 31. Please make sure that all straw is spread out on your plot by July 31 so that it has time to start breaking down before it is tilled under after the garden closes. Bales of straw not spread out by August 1 must be removed from the garden.

Thank you to all the gardeners who are using straw to conserve water and provide good organic matter for their plots. Straw mulch keeps the soil surface cooler on hot days, supporting healthy growth of plants. In natural settings, plants grow close together and shade the soil. Vegetable plants growing in bare dirt are subjected to a high level of radiant heat on the hot days we have been experiencing.

Zoo, Silver Key Donations

It's a little tricky to remember that the Zoo picks up on Thursday morning and Silver Key picks up on Saturday. Thank you to everyone who is starting to get into the weekly swing of donating extra produce! In the heat of summer, it's best if you can gather your veggies in the morning, shortly before the 9:00 a.m. pickup time, so that they are fresh.

Please get acquainted with Kay Gray, who has posted signs on the fence about produce for the Zoo. Kay has been a Zoo docent for many years and keeps BCGA closely connected to the Commissary at the Zoo. (Please be aware that you can't personally deliver produce to the Zoo.)

Rose Bergles has been managing the Silver Key pickup for several years. A representative from Silver Key comes by car every Saturday and takes the produce up to the huge coolers at Silver Key. It is sorted and cleaned and offered to clients at a Monday morning market. Some of it goes into the kitchen to be used in the Meals on Wheels program.

If you have questions for either Kay or Rose, just email them to BCGA and they will be passed along.

GRRRR...asshoppers!



Wow. Those grasshoppers are really frustrating! It has been quite a few years since the last grasshopper explosion at the garden! New gardeners can rest assured that this is not a typical year. They are rampant in the park as well as in the garden, but there has generally been less damage from them than one would expect, given their numbers. Lettuce, carrots, beans, sweet corn and onions are some crops that are favored, while squash, peas, and tomatoes tend to be avoided. In fact, many are gathering on the dill, borage and common weeds such as lamb's quarters and kochia rather than on vegetable plants.

A few years ago, BCGA put out Nolo bait in an effort to reduce the

Lightning. When gardeners hear thunder, they should get out of the garden right away until the storm passes. Lightning can strike out of what looks like a harmless cloud. In the past, gardeners have seen lightning arcing along the garden fence! Be safe.

Leaping Weeds. Gardeners must clear the weeds from the aisles and paths around their plots, which is no small task in a year when we have had plenty of rain. Contact BCGA if there are problem areas that need to be addressed in your part of the garden.

Never throw any weeds over the garden fence into the area maintained by the Parks workers. Either lay the weeds down on your plot as mulch or bag them and take them home for disposal. Do your neighbors a favor by not letting weeds go to seed on your plot.

Gardeners with plots along the fence must keep the fence line clear of weeds and must also clear weeds down to bare dirt for one foot outside the fence line. Beyond that point, the Parks Department mower will take care of weeds. In addition to special re-

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued on page 2)

Garden Calendar

August 13 - Summer Potluck — Gold Hill Mesa Community Center, 12:30 p.m.

August 19 - Workday 7:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. (Early start because of heat)

October 14 - Garden Closes at 5:00 p.m.

October 21 - BCGA Annual Meeting of Members at Cheyenne Branch Library 11:00 a.m.

GRRRR...asshoppers!

(Continued from page 1)

grasshopper population, but this product is not readily available now. We hope that the current grasshopper boom will wane in August.

Plants that are struggling because of infrequent watering or because they are getting older are often targeted by insect pests. Pull out ageing plants and plant fall greens (lettuce, arugula, kale) that will thrive in the cooler days of September and provide a second modest harvest.

“Give nature a chance to work. A plant sends out chemical signals once it is attacked by a pest. These signals attract the insects that prey on the pests. By waiting a bit, you give the beneficial insects a chance to show up, eat their fill and slow the pest cycle!”

- Forks in the Dirt
Minnesota Community Garden

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: hello@bearcreekgardens.org

Website: www.bearcreekgardens.org

Facebook:

Bear Creek Garden Association

Zoo Earns Recognition



The giraffes love our leafy greens.

Once again this year, *USA Today* has ranked the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo among the ten best zoos in North America, awarding it fourth place. The acclaimed Rocky Mountain Wild Exhibit at the zoo was also recognized, earning its spot as the second-best zoo exhibit in North America. This is the fifth year that the exhibit has been put in the national spotlight.

Marketing Director Jenny Koch commented: “The mountainside is a really special place, and it’s an unusual venue for a zoo. We really strive to allow people to get closer to the animals than you do in other places, and people remark that they made close connections with our animals during their visit.”

Three of our BCGA gardeners, Kay Gray, Gloria Wiersema and Marie Poyzer, have been docents at the zoo. Two baby Amur Leopards, born at the zoo in May and constituting two percent of the only 100 critically endangered Amur Leopards in the world, can now be seen at the zoo.

Have you been up to visit the zoo lately?

**Facebook Page
Colorado Springs Gardeners**

For a freewheeling dip into the world of home gardening in the Pikes Peak region, take a look at the Facebook Page for Colorado Springs Gardeners. Lots of photos, questions and opinions, from experts to novices.

BCGA’s new email address:
hello@bearcreekgardens.org

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

Notes for Gardeners

(Continued from page 1)

sponsibilities, the fence plots come with privileges. Gardeners can plant right up to the fence and may plant perennials such as rhubarb that die back in winter along the fence where the tiller will not disturb them, They can also train climbing plants up the fence in the summer.

Vacant Plots. Turnover in the garden has been low this year. At this time, there are four vacant half plots, B-4(e), B-5(e and w) and F-11(w), now being maintained by volunteers.

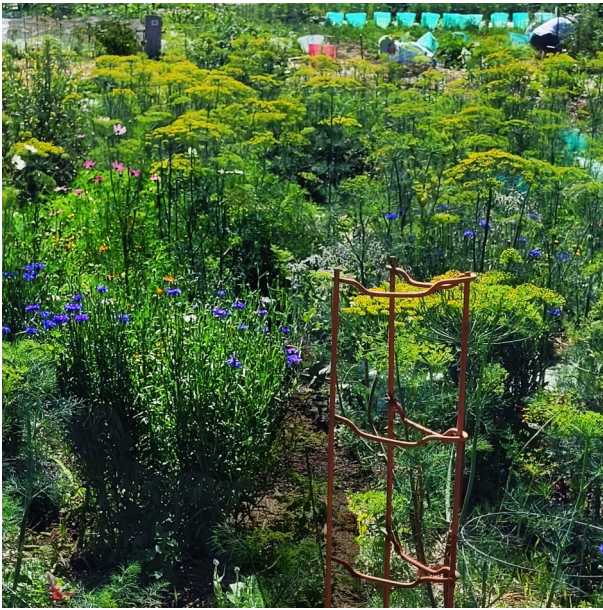
Lock the Gates. Please be diligent about locking the gate behind you immediately when you go in or out from now until the garden closes. Do not let non-gardeners into the garden. Protect your vegetables and those grown by your neighbors from theft. Please report any missing produce to BCGA.

Soil Amendment in the Fall. For many years, BCGA has encouraged gardeners to amend their soil in the fall with Don’s Garden Mix, a mixture of compost and manure that BCGA purchases in bulk from Don’s Garden Shop. While use of Garden Mix is encouraged, it is not required. Gardeners will have an opportunity to place orders and pay for Garden Mix in September and it will be delivered shortly before the garden closes in October. In recent years, the Parks Department has used a skid loader to move the Garden Mix to the plots of those who have ordered it.

Dumpsters. Two large dumpsters will be placed by the garden gates in the north parking lot Labor Day weekend and they will remain in place until the garden closes on October 14. They are emptied two to three times a week as they fill up with garden refuse.



Remember to link your King Soopers Discount Card to BCGA.



This plot, gardened by Martha Alvarez, is heaven for bees, butterflies and caterpillars

Caterpillars— and Snakes

Have you seen the fat black and green striped caterpillars munching on dill plants in the garden? Please don't disturb them. They will soon transform themselves into beautiful black swallowtail butterflies.

There is a great benefit in accepting some damage to our plants by leaving all kinds of caterpillars alone. Birds depend on soft squishy caterpillars to feed their babies while they are in the nest, and they need lots and lots of healthy (not poisoned!) caterpillars. Let nature work in this beautiful garden.

The bull snakes that we see in the garden are valuable too! Please read the bull snake article posted by the gardeners and be kind to them.

The Thoughtful Art of Seed Saving

Letting some plants go to seed and saving that seed for next year can be a very interesting garden experiment.

Gather the seed when it is mature and make sure it is completely dry before storing in a cool place.

Seeds of hybrid plants will not produce a plant with the same characteristics because the plant in your garden is a cross between two different varieties. This cross was the work of a plant breeder. The seed hybrid plants produce in your garden will usually revert to characteristics of one of the parents and produce inferior plants the next year.

However, seeds from most open pollinated plants, including heirlooms, should produce the same plants the next year. There are exceptions. Squashes, pumpkins and cucumbers happily cross-pollinate in the garden. Gardener Doug Green enjoys saving squash and pumpkin seeds to see what they will produce the following year. The results are interesting, but not always tasty!

For more information on saving seeds, see: "How to Save Seeds" published by Seed Savers Exchange <https://bit.ly/2GoUpST> and "Saving Seed" published by Colorado State University Extension Service – <https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/garden/07602.pdf>

A New Xeriscape Garden on the Island



Board member Rose Bergles has recently designed and planted a xeriscape garden at the east end of the island in the main parking lot.

BCGA provided funds for plants and Rose purchased the gravel. The Parks Department has made sure that the watering system is reaching this area adequately. Among the varieties Rose has planted are hedgehog cactus, red yucca, agave, ice plant, sedum and cat mint.

She plans to put name tags on the plants to help gardeners learn more about xeric planting.

The xeriscape garden is a nice complement to the lovely flower garden at the west end of the island, developed in 2010 and maintained by gardeners Jannette and Jim Swanson before they moved to Idaho in 2021.

Candice Hall is taking the lead in managing the flower garden now. Thank you to both Rose and Candice for all the work they have done to enhance the island, and also to Rose for planting a new rose bush and other flowers under the green BCGA garden sign.

History of the Island: When the community garden was built in 1976, there were several large trees and plenty of weeds on the island.

When the gardeners took over the management of the garden from the Parks Department in 1985, they also took over the job of keeping weeds under control on and around the island.

In the fall of 2015, the Parks Department removed all the trees and allowed a local senior Boy Scout to create a landscape design as his Eagle Scout project. On planting day, the Boy Scout group and parents planted all of the trees and bushes that are now growing in the area where the trees had been.

To support the new plantings, the Parks Department installed a sprinkler system fed by a water line that runs under the main gate of the garden and across the parking lot to the island. Each year, the Parks Department bills BCGA for water used in the garden, discounted by the value of the water that is routed to the island.