

Visit BCGA Gardener Dianne Reitan's new Dahlia Farm! (see p. 2)

September—October 2023

Dumpsters Have Arrived—The Big Cleanup is Underway

Clearing Plots

Gardeners are responsible for removing all garden equipment, stakes, fencing, hail cloth and hoses from the garden by closing day, October 14. Please be particularly careful to pick up all the metal pins used to stake down Remy and other ground cloth.

It is OK to leave straw, Garden Mix and light, dry vegetable matter on the plot to be tilled in to improve the soil, but all cornstalks and other heavy-stemmed plants like cabbage and broccoli must go into the dumpster, roots and all. Fibrous vines, including pumpkins, squash and cucumbers, and tomato plants, eggplant and pepper plants and their roots and any vegetable matter that is diseased or bug-infested must go into the dumpster.

County Tilling

Once again, the El Paso County Parks Department will till the entire garden after it is closed.

Dumpster Etiquette

BCGA rents dumpsters for cleanup, which arrive around Labor Day. There is a huge amount of vegetation to be cleared out of the garden this year, so gardeners are encouraged to start using the dumpsters right away to begin the cleanup. Don't wait until the last minute when the dumpsters will be overflowing!

If possible, try to fill the back of the dumpster first, since that space can easily be left vacant. If a dumpster is full, please do not get inside to stomp down the vegetation to make more room. Dumpster packing overloads the dumpsters and makes it harder for the trash company to empty them. The company is serious about this.

If dumpsters are full, please keep refuse on your plot until there is room. Do not ever pile it on the ground around the dumpsters.

BCGA has asked that the dumpsters be emptied on Monday, Wednesday,

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Kate Keeley wheelbarrowing out armloads of beautiful marigolds.

Making Requests for 2024

Gardeners who plan to return to the garden in 2024 are welcome to start making requests now with regard to plot assignments.

Responsible gardeners who followed the rules including clearing their plots at the end of the season are entitled to keep the same plot in 2024. They do not need to make a request to do that.

However, some people will want a little more space, or less, or maybe a different location in the garden.

Please email requests to BCGA. Don't just tell a board member in the garden and expect that person to remember to put your request on the Requests List!

We won't know for sure until spring which plots will be available, but if there is a plot you would like to have next year if it becomes available, please ask for it now. If two gardeners ask for the same plot then the first request prevails.

Garden Mix—BCGA Recommends Fall Soil Amendment

It's time for gardeners to place their orders with BCGA for Garden Mix, a compost/manure blend put together by Don's Garden Shop and used for many years in the garden. Gardeners are not required to order Garden Mix.

However, plots where straw and Garden Mix have been added regularly over the years are noticeably softer and richer than those in which the soil has not been as well amended.

The price for Garden Mix this year is \$60.00 per cubic yard. A half yard is \$30.00. These figures reflect the good discount that Don's gives BCGA. While the recommended amount is one cubic yard for a full plot and a half yard for a half plot, some gardeners use twice that amount.

Garden Mix can be ordered by the gardeners online after ordering opens on the garden website in early September.

The deadline for orders to be placed is September 22.

The Garden Mix will arrive in the first week of October and will be dumped inside the fence by the truck gate. Please do not measure or move what you have ordered. The Parks Department brings in a skid loader to deliver it to the appropriate plots soon after it arrives. Be sure to clear a space on your plot next to the aisle where it can be dumped.

Everyone must clear the way for the skid loader. All gardeners are asked to harvest produce and clear out garden equipment such as stakes, tomato cages and fencing along their aisles by the first week of October.

We need a two foot clean area along the edge of plots to facilitate the work of the skid loader that will deliver

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Garden Calendar

Sept. 16—Workday 7:00-11:00 a.m.
Sept. 24 —Dianne’s Dahlia Farm Tour Meet at 10:00 a.m. 225 North Gate Boulevard.
Oct. 7 and 8—Workdays 8 am—noon
Oct. 14 - Closing Day. Garden Closes at 5:00 p.m.
Oct. 21 - BCGA Annual Meeting of Members 11:00 a.m. at Cheyenne Branch Library 1785 South 8th Street.

Garden Mix—Fall Soil Amendment

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Garden Mix. The skid loader machine is a little wider than our four-foot aisles. Gardeners will be notified of the exact date when the skid loader will arrive. Be sure to move hoses away from the edges of plots so that they are not damaged. Please make it easy for the skid loader operator to do his work!

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of members of the Bear Creek Garden Association (BCGA) will be held at the meeting room in the Cheyenne Mountain Library, 1785 South 8th Street, on Saturday, October 21 at 11:00 a.m. Individuals who rented plots at the garden in 2023 and finished the season in good standing by following rules and clearing their plots are current members of BCGA. This will be a short meeting with annual reports, election of board members and conversation.

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



We love Michelle Cole’s rainbow umbrella hat! Photo by Candice Hall

Dumpster Etiquette

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day and Saturday. The dumpsters will remain in place until the garden closes. Please don’t park too close to the dumpsters on pickup days before the pickup has happened. Those big trucks need room to maneuver.

Dianne’s Dahlias—Tour

Dianne Reitan, who discovered a passion for dahlias when she grew a few on her plot at the Charmaine Nymann Community Garden, has started her own flower farm, “Dianne’s Dahlias” located at the Western Museum of Mining and Industry, 225 North Gate Boulevard. She has invited our gardeners for a tour of the hoop houses where she is now growing hundreds of dahlias on September 24 at 10:00 a.m.

Last year she sold dahlias from her plot and became a Super Friend of the Goats by raising \$500 for the goat grazing project. See photos of her dahlias on the website: <https://diannedahlias.com/>. Please RSVP by using the QR Code on Dianne’s flyer or email her: Dianne@diannedahlias.com.

“A Garden Experience—Growing Organic” is a 30 minute film about the Charmaine Nymann Community Garden made by local filmmakers Nancy Bentley and John Atkinson, with original music composed by local musician George Ulrich. The film can be watched for free online at <https://bit.ly/43vQLf6>.

The Good Earth Garden Center Is Closing

BCGA gardeners were saddened to hear that Good Earth Garden Center, located at 1330 North Walnut Street, is closing this fall after 49 years in business. Good Earth was famous among gardeners for the astonishing variety of tomato plants it provided each year, with a three-ring binder (“The Tomato Book”) that provided thorough descriptions of so many fascinating varieties, old and new. A 25% off sale commenced in late August. BCGA gardeners have received a 10% discount when they showed their current badges, but this additional discount is no longer available during the closing sale. The Bear Creek Garden Association thanks Good Earth for its many contributions to the garden community over the years. The staff has been knowledgeable and helpful, and the variety and vigor of its plants has been excellent. We will sorely miss Good Earth and its owner, Wayne Fisher.



Picnic

A flurry of flowers from the garden decorated the tables at the Summer Potluck Picnic. Left to right: Rose Bergles, Karen Stith and Todd Hegert. Twenty-six gardeners gathered at Gold Hill Mesa on August 13 for the Picnic. Our gardeners are good cooks! Special guest Jayme Holligan from Silver Key talked about the support Silver Key provides for seniors in our community and explained how donations of produce from the garden are used in the hot meal delivery program and the public pantry. Silver Key picks up donated produce at the BCGA plot at the garden on Saturday mornings at 10:00 a.m.



Milkweed Seed Pods on the Island

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. Seed produced by hybrid plants in your garden will 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!

See: "How to Save Seeds" by Seed Savers Exchange <https://bit.ly/2GoUpST> and "Saving Seed" by the staff at Colorado State University Extension: <https://bit.ly/31SRdai>

BCGA Seeks Donations to Bring Weed-Eating Goats Back to the Park

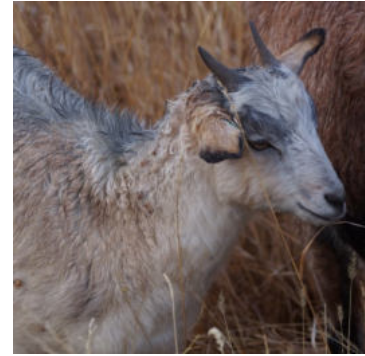
BCGA is asking for donations to help bring Lani Malmberg's herd of 400-800 weed-eating cashmere goats back to Bear Creek Park later this fall.

The Friends of the Goats is the group of current gardeners, former gardeners and goat lovers in the community whose donations make the annual grazing possible.

Lani is a professional herder whose goats travel continually in the mountain west region

El Paso County and the Bear Creek Garden Association have signed a Weed Management Agreement which permits BCGA to bring the goats to the park to graze on the 20 acres surrounding the community garden. They control noxious weeds so that the County can refrain from spraying herbicide anywhere near the vegetable garden.

The goats prefer broad leaved plants and brush, so their grazing also provides wildfire mitigation in the park. In addition, they fertilize the land with their manure and loosen it with their hooves.



Become a Friend of the Goats!

Fill out the form on this page and send it to BCGA. Alternatively, watch for the link to be added soon to the BCGA website (www.bearcreekgardens.org) for donating using a credit card.

BCGA thanks the El Paso County Parks Department for its generous, ongoing support in allowing the herd to come into the park, fencing some trees and shrubs to protect them and occasionally hauling water to the herd while the goats are here.

Sandy's Free Horse Manure

Sandy Matthews has several horses at her barn on the south edge of Bear Creek Park.

Since Sandy does not use chemicals around her animals, BCGA has always encouraged gardeners to bring the horse manure she piles along her driveway to the garden as an acceptable (and free) soil amendment.

Sandy's driveway is the first driveway on the left as you drive south on 21st Street from the light at Rio Grande Street. It's better to apply the manure in the fall rather than in the spring so it can break down over the winter.

Community Garden Leaders Meet

On August 23, the Colorado State University (CSU) Extension Office hosted an "End of Season Celebration" for local community gardens by inviting representatives from a dozen of the gardens to meet at the CSU Extension office.

BCGA was represented by Todd Hegert, Don McFadden, Sharline Arellano, Carl Krosi and Karen Stith. Todd gave a brief presentation and showed a few photos of our garden.

Thank you to Alissa Linfield of CSU Extension for bringing us together.

Friends of the Goats

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phones: (home) _____

(cell) _____

E-mail address: _____

Please make checks payable to Bear Creek Garden Association

Mail to Bear Creek Garden Association, Post Office Box 38326, Colorado Springs, CO 80937

Bear Creek Garden Association is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. All donations are tax-deductible.