



The Third Place

Our community garden can be that "third place" for many of us. Home and work are usually Place No. 1 and Place No. 2. For some the third place can be church—or the corner bar.

But for many of us the community garden is a little like the TV show, "Cheers". It's where everybody knows your name and why you're always glad you came.

September-October 2024

Clearing Plots - Garden Closes at 4:00 p.m. October 19

The closing date for the garden has been extended by one week to Saturday, October 19th to give gardeners more time to enjoy the good harvest that the garden is providing after the grasshopper plague faded out in late August.

Gardeners are responsible for removing all garden equipment, stakes, fencing, hail cloth and hoses from the garden by **4:00 p.m.** on Closing Day. Please be particularly careful to pick up all the metal pins used to stake down Remay and other ground cloth.

All plants growing on plots must be pulled up by their roots. Cornstalks and other heavy-stemmed plants like cabbage and broccoli must go into the dumpsters along with their roots. All vines such as squash, tomatoes, pole beans and morning glories go into the dumpsters, along with any other plant material that is diseased. Vines left behind will tangle in the tiller.

All weeds must be cleared from plots, aisles, areas around water posts and fence lines. All vines growing on the garden fence must be cleaned off. Remember that BCGA has an obligation to leave the garden looking clean over the winter months.



Randy Rickey, age 87 and a gardener with BCGA since 1987, is dwarfed by squash vines he is hauling to the dumpster.

It is OK to leave straw mulch, horse manure and other soil amendments on plots to be tilled in after the garden closes.

Making Plot Requests for 2025 – Registration for Next Year

Requests. Gardeners who plan to return to the garden in 2025 are welcome to make requests in the fall with regard to plot assignments.

Gardeners in good standing at the end of the season are entitled to keep the same plot in 2024. They do not need to make a request in order to keep their plot (or plots).

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

Please send requests by email to BCGA. Don't just tell a board member and expect that person to remember to put your request on the 2025 Requests List.

The board 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 you have a general request for more space near your current plot, you can also put in that kind of request by email now.

Registration. An invitation to register for 2025 will be sent out to all current gardeners in good standing in the latter part of January, and returning gardeners will have until the last day of February to claim their plots. After that time, the plots may be assigned to other gardeners.

New Gardeners who would like to rent a plot can get on the new Gardener list for 2025 at any time by calling Todd Hegert at (719) 329-8873 or sending an email to hello@bearcreekgardens.org. Registration information will be sent to these individuals in early February and plot assignments will begin in March. The garden will open in mid-April.

Garden Mix – Order By October 11 - Tilling

BCGA recommends that gardeners amend their plots in the fall by placing orders with BCGA for Garden Mix, a compost/manure blend put together by Don's Garden Shop. 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 online at the garden website by clicking this link:

<https://bit.ly/4ePz5Rj>

. It may be purchased in half-yard increments. The deadline to place an order is Friday, October 11.

As explained in the email sent to all gardeners on September 16, we are trying something new this year.

The garden will be locked and closed to all gardeners at 4 p.m. on Saturday, October 19 (Closing Day).

Don's Garden Shop will wait until the week after the garden closes to bring the huge order of Garden Mix to the garden, and will unload it inside the Truck Gate for security.

Garden Plot Map

A link to the current map of the garden was included in the email sent to all gardeners on September 16. It's very handy for identifying one's garden neighbors and it's very helpful when making requests for next year. Here's the link to the map: <https://bit.ly/4evqPg2>

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Garden Mix—Tilling

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The Garden Mix will then be moved to the plots of gardeners who ordered it by a county employee using an El Paso County Parks Department skid loader. Thanks to Mark Slater for coming up with the idea of doing this after all plots have been cleared.

Gardeners who have ordered Garden Mix can use their keys to come back into the garden from Thursday through Saturday, October 24-26 to spread out the Garden Mix on their plots.

The following week the county will till the entire garden and winter locks will be put back on all of the gates.

Keys

Gardeners can throw away their keys at the end of the garden season because the keys for 2025 will be different.

Water System—On or Off?

As the autumn nights get colder, it may become necessary to shut down the watering system at the garden and drain the pipes to protect them. Ideally this happens after the garden closes but with our October 19th Closing date it could happen earlier. Please be aware that the water could be off briefly and back on again, or it might not even come on again if the cold persists or we are close to Closing.

It is a good idea to keep plants that are still producing well watered, and to moisten your plot to make it easier to pull weeds. Moistening straw mulch is a good idea too, to encourage some decomposition and keep it settled on your plot when the tiller comes through after closing.

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 Page:

Bear Creek Garden Association

Gardeners Survived the Grasshopper-pocalypse



Garden manager Todd Hegert describes the various measures gardeners were employing in early July to combat the unprecedented grasshopper invasion. He was talking with *Gazette* reporter Stephanie Earls. (Gazette photo)

Gazette reporter Stephanie Earls visited the Charmaine Nymann Community Garden in early July before writing a well-researched article about the explosion of grasshoppers that gardeners all over El Paso County battled this year.

The article was titled "Hopper-pocalypse: Colorado Farmers Say This Year's Grasshopper Infestation the Worst in Generations".

Earls provided an historical perspective on grasshopper damage in this community and reviewed some of the possible reasons for this year's infestation as well as the methods used by community gardeners to combat the insects.

She wrote: "The serenity of Joy Miller's morning ritual at the garden, and her smile, were briefly interrupted by queries about the air-and ground borne attack she and her neighbors are battling. 'Around here,' said Miller, 'grasshopper' is a curse word!"

Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of members of the Bear Creek Garden Association (BCGA) will be held in the meeting room at the Cheyenne Mountain Library, 1785 South 8th Street, on Saturday, October 26 at 2:00 p.m.

Individuals who rented plots at the garden in 2024 and are in good standing because they followed the garden rules, did volunteer work and cleared their plots are current members of BCGA.

This will be a short meeting with annual reports, election of board members and discussion.

HOWEVER.

By early August, with the advent of some monsoon rains, the grasshopper population dropped dramatically, the garden rebounded and plants that had barely been surviving burst out with new growth.

Gardeners who had put in new plantings under row covers were well rewarded with abundant lettuce, cucumbers and bush beans.

Plants with furry leaves (tomatoes, squash and strawberries) came through the grasshopper invasion with little damage and have also produced very well.

Our gardeners are resilient.

Garden Friendships Go On

If a gardener wants to get in touch with another gardener, it is always OK to send a request email to BCGA (hello@bearcreekgardens.org) and ask that it be forwarded to that person.

We want to help you continue those new summer garden friendships over the winter season.

BCGA usually schedules a Winter Potluck at Gold Hill Mesa after the first of the year and notifies current gardeners by email. If your email address changes, please notify BCGA.

Seed Saving 101

Gardeners love to save seeds. Here's a detailed discussion of seed saving provided by the Seed Savers Exchange:

<https://seedsavers.org/learn/seed-saving/>

Garden Calendar

NOTE: September-October dates have changed because the Closing Date was extended to October 19.

September 21 — Workday 7:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m.

October 12 — Workday — 8:00 a.m.—12:00 Noon and longer if necessary.

October 13— Workday — 8:00 a.m.—12:00 Noon and longer if necessary

October 19— Workday—All Day as Needed —Garden Closes at 4:00 p.m.

October 26— BCGA Annual Meeting of Members — Cheyenne Mountain Library, 1785 South 8th Street, 2:00 p.m.



Love Those Dumpsters!

Let's get our money's worth out of those dumpsters now by filling them up for the pickups that happen on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. There will be competition for dumpster space the last week before closing, and it will be worse if we have had some chilly or wet weather so ...

Pull Out All Weeds and Plants That Aren't Going to Produce ASAP

Never pile any trash around the dumpsters.

If the dumpsters are full, please pile vegetation on your plot and move it to the dumpster when room opens up. Or just bag it and take it home for disposal.

Please don't park too close to dumpsters on pickup days before the pickup has happened. Those big trucks need room to maneuver.

The dumpsters will remain in place until the garden closes.

And...

Do you know about the Chicken Man? A member of the west side community who has chickens comes by regularly to pull some plant material out of the dumpsters to take home to his chickens.

Donate Some Pumpkins for Ft. Carson Children

Two of our new gardeners this year, Joe Botthof and Robert Watt, are Fort Carson soldiers who help to put on a Trunk or Treat Halloween celebration at the base for the benefit of the children.

Our gardeners are encouraged to donate pumpkins and dry cornstalks for this event by bringing them to Joe's plot B-13 where a sign is posted.



Joe Botthof - Leading the Trunk or Treat Project at Ft. Carson

Mac and Kay Gray have already donated five huge pumpkins. Joe and Robert will keep taking the pumpkins and cornstalks to the base for safe, dry storage until Trunk or Treat on October 28th.



Thank you to Joe and Robert for providing BCGA gardeners a chance to support the Ft. Carson community.

Sandy's Horse Manure

For many years, BCGA has encouraged gardeners to use the free horse manure provided by Sandy Matthews.

Sandy piles it along her driveway (the first one on the left when going south from the corner of Rio Grande and 21st Street).

She uses no chemicals in her barn. It is best to apply the manure in the fall.

Last Call to Donate Produce:

Zoo — October 10

Silver Key—October 12 and 19

BCGA gardeners take pride in regularly donating produce to the Cheyenne Mountain Zoo and Silver Key. Please don't let vegetables linger on plots until they are no good. Please pick them and donate them!

The final pickup of produce for the Zoo will be at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, October 10 at the Truck Gate. Come and meet Commissary Manager Hunter Turner, who shows up with the zoo truck on Thursdays. Kay Gray and her helpers are happy to have donations left the night before, and are always there to organize produce and help load the truck.



L to R: Gardeners Carl Krosi and Kay Gray and Zoo Commissary Manager Hunter Turner

Silver Key will pick up vegetables on Saturday, October 12 and Saturday, October 19 at the main garden gate. Come and meet the volunteer who picks up the produce. Rose Bergles appreciates help in gathering and organizing produce each week before the volunteer arrives.

ACE, Rick's Discounts Continue

Get tools sharpened at ACE Hardware in Uintah Gardens for fall cleanup. Our gardeners get 50% off the regular price of sharpening when they show their current garden badge at that store location.

Hold on to your 2024 garden badge and remember that you can use it for discounts at ACE Hardware in Uintah Gardens, ACE Hardware on 8th Street and Rick's Garden Center right through the winter and early spring months until the new badges come out when the garden opens next April.