



Lightning

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

May-June 2024

Summer Garden Class—July 13th in the Nearby Park Pavilion

Board member Rose Bergles will lead a summer garden class at the picnic pavilion near the garden on Saturday, July 13th from 9:00 – 10:30 a.m. for BCGA gardeners.

The class will cover summer planting of crops that mature quickly during late summer/ early fall, tips on insect control and making pickles.

Take a look at the Garden Handbook on the BCGA website to see which vegetables are well suited for planting later in the garden season. Click on this link to see the Handbook: <https://bit.ly/4bdbUOH>. In the Table of Contents, click on Planting Times for Vegetables (Page 20).

If you are already a pickle-maker, she asks that you bring a recipe to share with the group.



Rose's beautiful lettuces on June 13th, ready to harvest.
Photo by Candice Hall

Planning for Your Vacation

It is important to make arrangements for keeping your plot watered if you plan to be away from home on vacation this summer.

Please make these arrangements well in advance of your departure, and do not expect the board members to find someone to water for you!

Gardeners often help each other with watering, and it is also OK to give your badge and key to a friend, but you must make sure that they know where your plot is and how important it is to water deeply.

Make sure the friend understands that they must disconnect the hose when they are finished and must keep the garden gates locked at all times. If a friend will be coming into the garden to water for you while you are away, please send their name and contact information, plus the dates you will be away, to the BCGA garden email address (hello@bearcreekgardens.org) before you leave town.

Grasshoppers and Heat Challenge Gardeners



The explosion of grasshoppers in the garden in June has been simply extraordinary! They are voracious and dreadful, targeting a wide range of plants and destroying them.

This is by far the worst grasshopper invasion we have seen in many years. The CSU Extension website provides a good overview of these insects at: <http://bit.ly/2bRUdJD>

Repellants. The Garden Handbook (click the link on the first page of the BCGA website) suggests a variety of repellants to counteract them: Neem oil, Diatomaceous Earth, Garlic and Pepper Sprays. Neem is a sticky,

smelly repellant that is applied using a spray bottle or garden sprayer device.

This comment is from BCGA board member Justin Zabor, who is using a commercial garlic product:

"Garlic Shield is a 30% garlic solution that is mixed according to package directions, one part to nine parts water in whatever container you have. I then put that solution in my Hudson Liquid fertilizer hose and sprayer and sprayed every plant and earth surface on my plots, including the fence and outside the fence."

"Pyganic" is another organic product made from Pyrethrum. Remember that gardeners are not permitted to spray any chemical pesticides in our organic garden.

Diatomaceous Earth. This amazing product is made of tiny, fossilized diatoms (plankton) that accumulated over millennia in fresh water lakes. When it is ground to a fine powder and sprinkled on plants, it works to

(Continued on page 2)

Beneficial Snakes

Gardeners frequently see bull snakes in the garden, which can grow to be more than three feet long. They are beneficial to gardeners because they help to keep the mouse/bunny/ground-squirrel population under control.

They are neither aggressive nor poisonous, and are actually quite shy.

Please be kind to them and watch for them in the road and parking lot to avoid running over them.

We have no history of any rattlesnakes showing up in the garden.

More information about bull snakes is posted by the two main gates and is also available in the Garden Handbook on the BCGA website.

Lock the Gate

Please be diligent about locking the gate behind you immediately when you go in or out of the garden until the garden closes. Do not let non-gardeners into the garden except as your guests.. Protect our vegetables and equipment from theft.

Garden Calendar

June 15 — Workday — 7:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. Bring tools for weeding.

July 13 — Rose's Garden Class — 9:00—10:30 a.m. at the Picnic Pavilion next to the garden. See details p. 1

July 20 — Workday — 7:00 a.m.—11:00 a.m. Bring tools for weeding.

July 20 — First Weekly Silver Key Produce Pickup at the Garden.

August 11 — Summer Potluck at Gold Hill Mesa Community Center 12:30—3:30 p.m.

The Watering Rule is Currently Suspended

The BCGA Garden Rules say that gardeners may not water with a hose between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

This watering rule was suspended in 2020, and it remains suspended at this time. Rain and judicious watering have kept the water cost manageable.

The garden board has decided to keep this water-saving rule in the Rules in case a hot, dry season might require that it be activated again.

It is always best to water in the morning and evening when the air is cool and water evaporates more slowly. It's better for you, better for the plants and also better for our water bill.

The water at the garden is the same city water we use at home. It is delivered by an underground pipe that comes from the Parks Department building near the garden. There is a meter on this line, and the Parks Department bills BCGA every fall for water used during the growing season. Water is BCGA's biggest expense.

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

Grasshoppers and Heat

(Continued from page 1)

disable both soft-bodied creatures like caterpillars and hard-bodied insects such as grasshoppers.

For more information, see the National Pesticide Information Center fact sheet at: <https://bit.ly/4cvDB6a>

Nolo Bait. In the summer of 2016, BCGA purchased Nolo bait, a product produced in a factory in Durango. The Nolo bait was delivered to that year's grasshoppers in short 8" white plastic sections of PVC pipe that were placed on many of the plots. (The pipes protected the bait from getting wet.)

It appeared to be successful in interrupting the reproductive cycle of the grasshoppers and reducing their numbers after a few weeks.

Unfortunately, Nolo bait has been difficult or impossible to find this summer.

Praying Mantises. A number of gardeners purchased praying mantis egg cases and placed them in the garden in mid-June. Praying mantises are beneficial predators that attack grasshoppers and other insects.

They can grow to be 3-4 inches long. Please watch for them and do what you can to support their survival in the garden. Avoid crushing them or dousing them with Neem or Diatomaceous Earth. Enjoy watching them, and point them out to others if you see them..



Praying Mantis (adult)

Praying mantises have an otherworldly look and posture that is interesting. (Their name comes from their habit of folding their forelegs in front of them, as if praying. In fact, "preying" would also make perfect sense.)

Heat. This has been a remarkably hot June so far. Please water your plants deeply and often to help them through this period.

Water in the cool hours of the day, and make a decision to use mulch to help your plot along. Straw is available at garden centers or use the (free) weeds pulled from your plot and aisles.

Please do not bring lawn clippings or any other vegetable matter or compost to the garden from home, because we can not be sure that it is free of garden sprays and chemicals.

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 on all sorts of garden topics and strong opinions from experts to ... novices.

Liquid Mode

Liquid Mode is a free app that is used to display a .pdf document set up in newspaper-style columns in an easy-to-read single column format.

Gardeners who read the BCGA newsletter on a phone can download the Liquid Mode app to make reading much easier. Information about the app is at: <https://bit.ly/3WL178H>



Save the Date— Summer Potluck August 11

BCGA gardeners and their families will gather for a summer potluck picnic at the Gold Hill Mesa Community Room, 142 Raven Mine Drive, at 12:30 p.m., on Sunday, August 11. Please save the date and plan to come.

Think about what summer dishes you would like to bring, perhaps involving produce from the garden!

Agapostemon Coloradinius —Native Bees in the Garden

Gardener Mary Smithey sent this email to BCGA on June 1:

"I'm so pleased to see that the native sweat bees are active at the garden again this year.

"I believe the species is *Agapostemon Coloradinius*. They are beneficial to the garden and not aggressive. If a sweat bee lands on you it just wants a taste of your sweat.

"I've included a picture of the bees. They really are that green! The photo has not been enhanced in any way. I hope people will be kind to them. They are near me on the aisle."

(N.B. They are on the plot belonging to Scott and Marcia Sage).



Agapostemon Coloradinius
— Photo by Brian Smithey

See additional Information online:
<https://www.greatsunflower.org/Agapostemon>

Description: Agapostemon are brightly colored metallic green or blue bees. They are medium sized ranging from 0.3 to 0.6 inches (7 to 14.5 mm) long. Most species have a bright metallic green head and thorax, and a black-and-yellow striped abdomen; some females are entirely bright green or blue.

Food sources: Agapostemon are generalists. Like other members of the family Halictidae, they are short-tongued and thus have difficulty extracting nectar from deep flowers.

Nests: Agapostemon dig deep vertical burrows in flat or sloping soil. Most species are solitary, but some species nest communally.

Colorado Gardener Suspends Print Publication, Dramatically Expands its Website

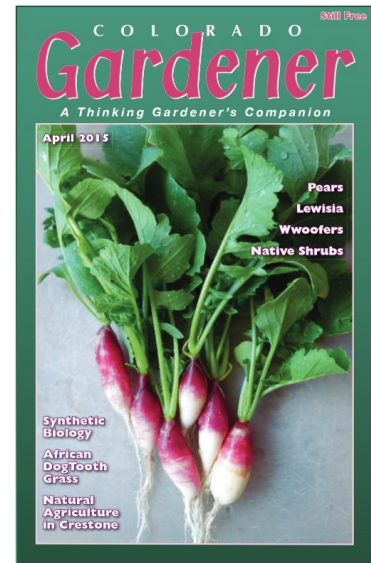
As many BCGA gardeners know, *Colorado Gardener*, a free newsmagazine published several times a year, has been regularly available for the past 28 years in our local Colorado Spings garden shops.

Starting in 2024, the publisher has changed to an all-electronic format. *Colorado Gardener* is online at <https://www.coloradogardener.com/>.

A library of all the past issues is available on the website.

Editor and Publisher Jane Shellenberger, who founded and passionately manages the publication, is continuing to provide new articles on a wide range of garden topics, written by prominent Colorado horticulturists and award-winning garden writers.

Her editorials and feature articles provide interesting insights into the world of Colorado plantspeople, from the horticulturists at the Denver Botanic Gardens to the plant researchers at Colorado State University in Greeley to such outstanding nursery



experts as Eve and Mikl Brawner of Harlequin Gardens in Boulder.

Gardeners can subscribe at the website to get *Colorado Gardener* by email each month.

Thank You for Using Straw Mulch on Your Plot

Thank you to every gardener who is using straw mulch to cool the soil surface, reduce weeds, and keep water from evaporating quickly in this hot June. The soil surface is getting quite hot in plots where gardeners are using no mulch or have put down black landscape fabric that absorbs much heat from the sun. Plants in these plots are under a lot of stress.

Look at the park. In natural settings, plants grow close together and help each other by shading the soil. Mother Nature will always work to cover the soil.

BCGA gardeners are using a record 125 bales of straw this year, all of which will soften and enrich plots when the straw is tilled into the soil at the end of the season. The organic matter in a plot helps the soil absorb and hold water, provides food for beneficial worms and micro-organisms and makes the soil much easier to work.

Please remember to get all of your straw spread out on your plot no later than July 31. This gives it time to break down a bit in the sun and rain before it is tilled into the soil in October. After you have spread it, water it for a couple of days to encourage it to settle down rather than blowing around when the wind comes up.

Bales of straw not spread out by August 1 must be removed from the garden.



Straw Notes:

BCGA always orders straw from Bartlett Hay and Feed Company in Falcon, Colorado. This year it is a variety of barley straw which was grown especially for Coors Brewing Company of Golden, Colorado. The barley seed heads are harvested first, and then a second pass of mowing captures the stalks that are baled and sold.

Inevitably, some seed comes with the straw, so little barley shoots may come up here and there. Pull 'them and add to the mulch.