



Yeay! The closing date for the garden has been extended from October 11 to October 18!

If you have extra produce, be sure to set it out for the Zoo (Thursday mornings before 9:00 a.m.) and for Silver Key (Saturday mornings before 10:00 a.m.).

September- October 2025

Group From Imagination Celebration Tours the Garden

Deborah Thornton, Executive Director of the Imagination Celebration, brought a group of women from Afghanistan and several local Imagination Celebration volunteers to the garden for a tour on August 20.

Several Afghan and American visitors acted as interpreters.

There is an Imagination Celebration program that helps refugees adjust to their new home and connect with each other and the wider community. The Program is called "Creative Exchange" – using creative engagement to help with wellness and mental health.

These courageous and resilient women who had to leave their country with very little thoroughly enjoyed the chance to visit a large vegetable garden and to learn what kinds of plants will grow well in Colorado.

Three of the Afghan visitors spent some time talking with Lisa



Afghan women visiting the garden.

Kirwan, who was clearing mallow from her plot. The visitors recognized it immediately as a medicinal herb that is used widely in their country and were happy to take a big bouquet of mallow home with them.

Lisa explained that the weeds had grown up during the time when her garden partner, Kirsten

(Continued on page 2)

Come to Justin's Harvest Class This Saturday - September 13th

BCGA gardener, board member and creative cook Justin Zabor will provide a late-summer garden class on Saturday, September 13 beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the garden.

Justin will focus on various harvest preservation methods, including pickling and dehydrating as well as the blanching and freezing of fresh produce.

He will be sharing some of his recipes as well. This free class will be held near the main parking lot by the garden.

Please bring your own chair if you can. We will have some extras available.

Plot Requests for 2026 and Registration for Next Year

Requests. Gardeners who plan to return to the garden in 2026 are welcome to make requests in the fall with regard to future plot assignments.

Gardeners in good standing with BCGA at the end of the season are able to keep their same plots the next year. They do not need to make a request in the fall in order to keep gardening the same plots in 2026.

However, some people will want a little more space, or less, or may wish to move to a different place in the garden.

Please send requests by email to hello@bearcreekgardens.org. Don't just tell Todd Hegert or another board member and expect that person to remember to put your request on the 2026 Requests List. Some plots have been abandoned (take a look at the map posted on the inside of the fence by the BCGA Plot where wheelbarrows are stored) and others will be relinquished over the winter as gardeners' plans change.

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 does become available, please ask for it now. If you would like to have

(Continued on page 2)

Don't Miss the Fall Potluck! — September 14th — RSVP Now!



Gardeners, their families and friends are invited to a Fall Potluck gathering on Sunday, September 14 from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. at the Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church, 1102 21st Street (it is at the southwest corner of the intersection of Broadway Street and 21st Street) not far from the garden. There is ample parking at this location.

This is a great opportunity to meet other gardeners and show off your summer produce in the potluck dishes. Please provide signs to let people know

what is in your dishes if they contain allergens such as nuts or gluten.

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.

Please RSVP by sending an email to hello@bearcreekgardens.org if you plan to attend the potluck. RSVPs must be received by Friday, September 12 so that organizers know how many people will be coming.

This is a new location for our potluck. Gold Hill Mesa is not currently offering the location we have used there for some time, and the church has been gracious in sharing space with us. There are stairs at the main entrance but there is an alternative no-stairs entry that can be used if necessary. Please let us know in your RSVP if you need this accommodation.

Afghan Visitors

(Continued from page 1)

Kuhlman, was declining (see the June-July garden newsletter for a tribute to Kirsten) and the visitors reached out to her warmly across the language barrier upon hearing of her loss.

Creative Exchange is a program serving ORR (Office of Refugee Resettlement) adults and youth from Afghanistan, Ukraine, Haiti, Congo, Cuba, and other nations legally welcomed to live in the Pikes Peak region after leaving life-threatening circumstances.

Local volunteers support this program. For more information about both the Imagination Celebration and the Creative Exchange program go to:

<https://www.imaginationcelebration.org/>



Love Those Dumpsters!

BCGA hires a disposal company to bring several dumpsters to the garden for the cleanup each year. They arrived Labor Day weekend, and will be emptied on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday each week until the garden closes.

There will be competition for dumpster space as we get close to closing day in October and it will be more intense if we have wet and chilly weather so:

Please Pull Out All Weeds and Plants That Aren't Going to Produce ASAP and launch them into the dumpsters.

Never pile anything on the ground around the dumpsters and

Never climb into the dumpsters to pack down the vegetation!

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

Please don't park beside dumpsters or across the parking area from them on pickup days before the truck has arrived. Those big trucks need plenty of room to maneuver.

CSU Harvest Season Classes



The Colorado State University Extension office offers fall/winter canning and pickling classes of interest to gardeners. Safe home canning requires an understanding of science, and CSU folks are the experts! These relatively inexpensive classes are popular, so sign up early.

Sep. 18 - Fermentation Technique Class (featuring sauerkraut)

Nov. 4 - Pie Filling Workshop (includes water bath canning)

Nov 10 - Holiday Jam Workshop

Dec 19 - Pickling Technique Class (this is an online class).

Some future class descriptions and cost of the classes can be found at:

<http://bit.ly/3ITG2WT> More current classes and signup information is on Eventbrite at: <http://bit.ly/458ZhmK>

Most classes are taught in-person and are held at the CSU Extension Office, 17 North Spruce Street in Colorado Springs.

Short Notes:

Sandy's Manure

Some of the gardeners use horse manure that Sandy Matthews piles along her driveway instead of ordering Garden Mix to enrich their plots. Sandy has been providing it to BCGA for free for many years. She uses no chemicals in or around her barn. Starting at the light at Rio Grande Street, go south on 21st Street and turn in at the first driveway on the left. Her property adjoins Bear Creek Park. No need to contact Sandy, just take as much manure as you want.

Seed Saving

Letting some plants go to seed and saving that seed for next year is an interesting garden experiment. Here are two excellent resources to learn about seed saving: "How to Save Seeds" by Seed Savers Exchange <https://bit.ly/2GoUpST> and "Saving Seed" Colorado State University Extension. (type this link into your browser): <https://extension.colostate.edu/resource/saving-seed/>

Plot Requests, Registration

(Continued from page 1)

more space somewhere near your current plot you can also put in that sort of request by email now.

Registration. An invitation to register for a plot in 2026 will be sent out to all current gardeners in good standing in the latter part of January. Returning gardeners will have until the last day of February to claim their plots. After that time Todd will start assigning available plots to our new gardeners.

New Gardeners. Individuals who would like to start gardening with us can get on the New Gardener Inquiries List at any time by calling Todd at (719) 329-8873 or by sending an email to hello@bearcreekgardens.org. They will receive a registration package in early February. Plots will be available on a first come – first served basis and plot assignments for new gardeners will begin in March. The garden will open in mid-April.

Clearing Plots and Wrapping Up the Garden

Clearing out plots and closing the garden can take more time than one might have assumed. It's a good idea to do it gradually so that you are done before Closing Day if possible.

Gardeners must remove all garden equipment, stakes, fencing, hail cloth and hoses from their plots. Please be careful to pick up all metal pins used to stake down ground cloth.

All plants, including any remaining weeds in the garden, must be pulled up by the roots. Cornstalks and other heavy-stemmed plants like cabbage and broccoli must go into the dumpsters.

All vines, including squash, pumpkins, tomatoes, pole beans and morning glories must go into the dumpsters, along with any other plant material that is diseased or infested with pests. Vines left behind will tangle in the tiller.

All weeds must be cleared from plots, aisles, areas around water posts and fence lines. Any weeds that have gone to seed must go into the dumpsters. 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.

It is OK to leave straw mulch, light vegetable plant litter, Garden Mix, (see p. 3) and horse manure from Sandy Matthews on your plot to be tilled in after the garden closes.

Garden Calendar

August 29 — Dumpsters Arrive - Labor Day Weekend. Cleanup begins.

September 13— Justin's Harvest Class 9:30 a.m. at the garden, See description on page 1 of newsletter.

September 14 — BCGA Fall Potluck 5:00—7:00 p.m. Pikes Peak Metropolitan Community Church, 1102 S. 21st Street

September 20 — Garden Workday from 8 a.m.—Noon

October 4 — Garden Workday from 8 a.m.—Noon

October 11 — Garden Workday All day, starting at 8 a.m.

October 12 — Garden Workday All day, starting at 8 a.m.

October 18 — Garden Closes at 1 p.m.

October 23-26 — Garden Open Only for gardeners who ordered Garden Mix so they can spread it out on their plots before the garden is tilled.

Annual Meeting of BCGA Members
The annual meeting will take place in November.



Rainfall:

The nearest Weather Underground Station on the internet, located in Skyway about 250 feet higher than the garden, will show how much rain we have received. It's a reasonably easy site to use. Go to: <https://bit.ly/3SIGY29>

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

After the Hail-pocalypse of July 6, the Garden is Now Flourishing



Gardeners and their plants are resilient! The photo on left shows hail in the garden. The photo of Erica Zabor on the right shows the Zabors' beautiful hip-high artichoke plants in early September.

After the devastation of a heavy hailstorm in early July, gardeners replanted seeds, replaced some plants and simply gave most of the damaged vegetation some loving care. Repeated rainstorms helped plants to recover and by Labor Day the garden was producing very well.

Tomatoes and peppers have failed to thrive and produce this year, which may have more to do with temperature fluctuations than hail,



since even tomatoes that were protected from the hail are not as productive as they usually would be.

Each year is different – there are always some disappointments and some great results. We just keep coming back to see what's going to happen next time, loving the process of growing things.

- Photos provided by Justin Zabor

Order Garden Mix By October 10—Will be Delivered to Your Plot!

Each year, BCGA brings in a huge load of Garden Mix ordered by gardeners. This is a compost/manure blend that gardeners are strongly encouraged to purchase and spread on their plots to improve the soil. Plots that have regularly received this soil amendment (as well as straw mulch) are noticeably softer and more productive than those that have not.

The price for Garden Mix this year is the same as last year: \$60 per cubic yard (cu.yd.) and \$30 per half cu.yd. The recommended amount to use is one cu.yd. per full plot and one half cu.yd. per half plot, but many gardeners use twice as much. (Note: Using more than twice as much is not appropriate.)

Don's Garden Shop, our supplier for many years, is no longer selling bulk soil amendments. BCGA will place the order this year with Rocky Top Resources.

Gardeners order Garden Mix online by logging into their accounts at www.bearcreekgardens.org. The deadline for placing an order is October 10th.

Garden Mix will arrive after the garden closes. County Parks will deliver it to the plots using a skid loader and gardeners will come back to spread out the piles, after which the Garden Mix, together with light dry plant material and straw, will be tilled into the soil.

Rick's, ACE Discounts Continue



Hold on to your 2025 garden badge because it is good for discounts at Rick's Garden Center and Ace Hardware until next year's badges come out in April 2026.

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

Rick's offers a 10% discount on purchases (except on Christmas trees!), ACE on 8th Street offers a 10% discount on purchases and ACE in Uintah Gardens offers a 15% discount on purchases — all the way through the winter and into early spring. Just be sure to show your 2025 badge at the time of purchase.

Toss Your Key

Gardeners can throw away their keys at the end of the garden season because the keys for 2026 will not be the same.