

DIG IN

FALL 2023
NEWSLETTER



FRIENDS OF
THE GARDENS
ON SPRING CREEK

UPCOMING CALENDAR



October

- 19-22 Pumpkins on Parade
- 28-31 Día de Muertos Celebration

November

- 1-4 Día de Muertos Celebration continues
- 2 Garden of Lights tickets on sale
- 24 Thanksgiving Day, Gardens closed
- + Adult Education Classes
- + Read and Seed
- + Wellness Classes

December

- 1 Winter hours begin
- 5 Colorado Gives Day
- 8-23 Garden of Lights
- 24-25 Christmas holiday, Gardens closed
- 31 New Year's Eve, Gardens closed

January

- 1 New Year's Day, Gardens closed
- 9 Spring Break Camp registration opens
- 15 Martin Luther King Day, Gardens open!
- + Adult Education Classes
- + Read and Seed

February

- 19 President's Day, Gardens open!
- + Adult Education Classes
- + Read and Seed

March

- 2 High Plains Landscape Workshop
- 5 Summer Camp registration opens
- 11-15 Spring Break Camp
- + Adult Education Classes
- + Read and Seed

April

- 19 School's Out! Day Camp



Friends of The Gardens on Spring Creek is the nonprofit partner of The Gardens on Spring Creek, a City of Fort Collins cultural services facility.





While The Gardens prepares

to turn 20 in 2024, it may surprise many of you that Friends of The Gardens is currently celebrating our 35th anniversary in 2023!

Since 1988, when we formed as the Community Horticulture Center, Friends of The Gardens has led through fundraising and advocacy. This was true in 1997 when we lobbied City Council for a \$2 million appropriation to create The Gardens, in 2004 when we started raising money for the Children’s Garden, and again in 2015 when The Friends took the lead on the Planting the Seed Capital Campaign that raised \$6 million to fund The Gardens’ expansion.

Time and again over our 35 years, The Friends have asked, and you have responded. In return, we have delivered on our promise to cultivate a world-class botanic garden that is community-oriented, educational, experiential, and sustainable, and we renew that commitment each year as The Gardens continues to grow and develop.

Since the capital campaign, The Friends has raised more than \$25,000 for Gardens for All, donated \$30,000 worth of memberships to families in the Poudre and Thompson School Districts, and

contributed more than \$500,000 to Gardens operations including —critically—more than \$100,000 towards hourly staff that keep The Gardens looking their best during the busy growing season.

Look for more information later in this issue on how you can help us support The Gardens into the future. In addition to cash gifts, Friends of the Gardens is also set up to accept planned and estate gifts, non-cash assets like appreciated stock and real estate, and popular year-end gifts like Qualified Charitable Distributions from IRAs or directed contributions from Donor Advised Funds.

As we head into the holidays, we’re incredibly grateful to all of you for supporting The Gardens in your own way. The history of this wonderful organization is that of a thousand individual histories woven together in various capacities over 35 years, and we can’t wait to see what the future holds!

*Friends of The Gardens
Board President*

**MARY
ATCHISON**



THANK YOU TO OUR PROPAGATION PARTNERS

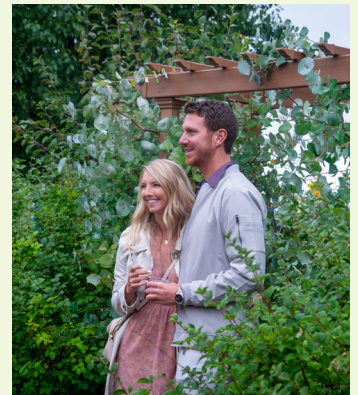


BOARD NEWS

MORE INTERACTIVE MEMBER MORNINGS!

This summer for the first time, Member Mornings featured presentations from a Gardens' horticulturalist. Many thanks to the 293 attendees who came to hear Lauren Springer talk about the Cactus Garden, learn Kelly Kellow's greenhouse propagation techniques, peruse the Prairie Garden with Bryan Fischer, and feast their eyes on fresh produce from the Garden of Eatin' with Mary Miller. Each staff member spoke for 15 minutes before taking questions from the audience. Member Mornings will return in 2024 with a new lineup plus the return of free coffee and a bite to eat!

Member Mornings are free to Members, so don't forget to keep your membership up to date. Renew your membership today, visit friendsgosc.org.



DIGITAL MEMBERSHIP CARDS: A HIT!

Since August 1, more than a third of our Members downloaded their digital membership cards! Adopting digital membership cards not only saves money, but it removes over 1,000 stamps, pieces of paper, envelopes, plastic cards, ink and that carbon footprint out of The Gardens membership program. Thank you for being a Member and for helping us promote sustainability at The Gardens!

If you missed the email with the download link or you need more information on digital cards, email us at friendsgosc@gmail.com.

GARDEN A'FARE: AN UMBRELLA STORY

On August 25, Garden a'Fare attendees made the most of some unseasonal rainy weather and helped us raise just over \$57,000! Thanks to everyone who attended and participated in the wine and whiskey pull and *plein air* silent art auction. Your support furthers our mission of cultivating a world-class botanic garden through fundraising and advocacy.



Live AT THE GARDENS SUMMER CONCERT SERIES



AN INCREDIBLE SEASON OF LIVE AT THE GARDENS

Thanks to everyone who supported the second season of Live at The Gardens! Despite this summer's crazy weather, we managed to avoid the worst of it and each of our six performances completely sold out!

Many thanks go out to our season sponsors (Mountain Valley Bank; Soukup, Bush and Associates; Fort Collins Nursery; Fossil Creek Nursery; and Poudre

Pet & Feed Supply) for their financial support, our sister organization the Lincoln Center for their help planning, executing and producing the series, and for the 150+ volunteers who lent their time to scan tickets, help people get seated, and answer questions from concertgoers.

Live at The Gardens will return for a third season in 2024 and remember: Members receive early access to tickets. Make sure your membership is up to date by visiting friendsgosc.org/membership and renew today!



HOME GARDENS ON DISPLAY AT OPEN DAYS

This summer, we were honored to partner with the The Garden Conservancy to host Larimer County's first ever Open Days garden tour event on September 9.

Open Days featured three show-shopping local gardens on a beautiful summer Saturday with garden enthusiasts from Fort Collins and beyond joining us to enjoy their spectacular garden designs. Our gratitude goes out to these hosts who opened their private gardens and shared their passion for horticulture with our community.





Fall Colors IN THE Foothills

Jessica Clarke, Horticulturalist

Colorado's Fall may not be as long lived as those of the East Coast, but it is a spectacular sight to see. Walking through a golden aspen grove, listening to the crunch of leaves under your feet, and seeing the snow-custed mountain tops, you truly get a sense that mother nature is putting on her crowning glory. The aspens and the mountaintops are not the only ones putting on a show; many other natives are decked out and showing off their grand colors before the long winter sleep. In the Foothills Garden at The Gardens on Spring Creek, you can learn what natives to look for this fall while you are out exploring nature's goodies. Let's begin with a showstopper that is prevalent throughout the state of Colorado: *Quercus*, known commonly as oaks.

Quercus gambelii, Gambel oak

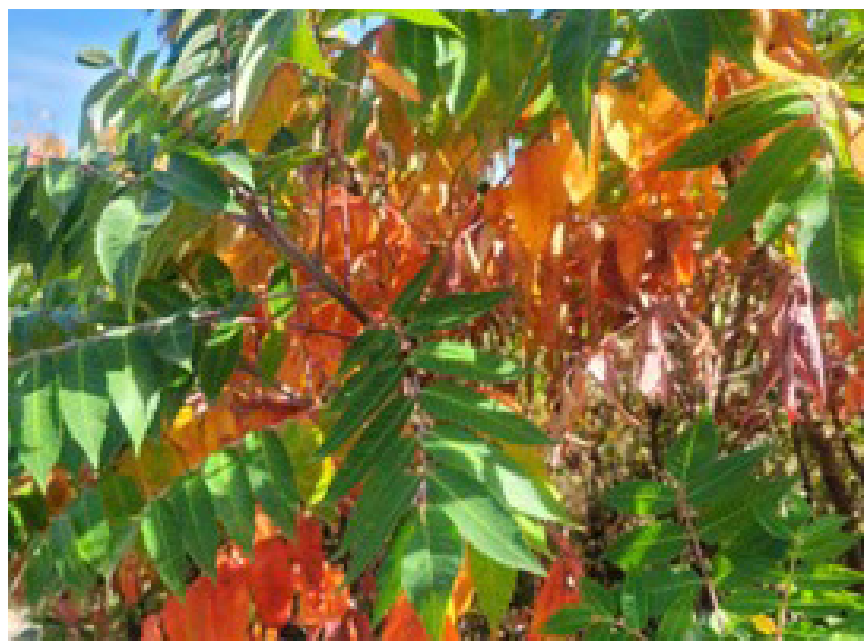


Gambel Oak

In general, *Quercus* are an interesting group of plants. One could do a whole thesis on the subject. Their ability to naturally hybridize with one-another produces many different plants that don't cleanly fit into our idea of a given species. This phenomenon can lead to any seasoned plant identification expert scratching their head when working with the group. Regardless, we have many great examples of these oaks in the Foothills Garden. If you are looking for one you can learn to identify while out hiking, start with Gambel oak (*Quercus gambelii*).

Quercus gambelii, can be found all along the foothills of the Southern Rocky Mountains. They are a deciduous shrub or small tree, typically growing between 5,000-8,500 feet in elevation. Gambel oak tolerates more moisture than other western oaks, and so can be seen on steep mountain slopes, which they colonize

Rhus glabra, Rocky Mountain sumac





Prunus pumila var. *besseyi*

after forest fires. The trees light these slopes ablaze in fall, when they color in shades of gold, orange, and near-red. *Q. gambelii* have alternate, deeply lobed leaves (compared to other native *Quercus*) that are two to four inches long, have a brown-gray bark, and produce long acorns that caps cover one third or more of the nut in the late summer early fall. A good example of *Q. gambelii* can be found right before you enter the Foothills Garden in the sedum slope closest to the stage.

Sumacs

The *Rhus* spp. (sumac species), that we have in the Foothills Garden have some of the best fall colors in the garden. Even in late September the leaves on the *Rhus glabra*, or Rocky Mountain sumac, have already started to turn a deep, dark red. Just about all sumac species in the Foothills Garden are Colorado natives. *Rhus glabra* f. *lacinata*, *Rhus glabra* var. *cismontana*, and *Rhus trilobata* are three examples of this. All three can be found in our foothill region from Arapaho & Roosevelt National Forest to Pike—San Isabel National Forest here in Colorado, though each prefers a slightly different habitat.

Rhus glabra, Rocky Mountain or smooth sumac favor dry slopes in plains and foothill zones. They are a deciduous shrub that can grow 3.5 to 10 feet tall, the leaves are pinnately, toothed shaped, with cream-color, greenish- yellow flowers that shape into a pyramid. Their seed head forms the highly characteristic, cone-like cluster of red seeds that can be identified from afar. *Rhus trilobata*, three-leaved sumac, has two attributes that make it easy to recognize. As stated in the common name, three-leaved sumac has three leaves on each petiole. An alternate common name highlights its other identification trait: sometimes



Foothills Garden

called skunk bush sumac, it has a very distinct smell. *R. trilobata* flowers have five fuzzy petals and form little clusters of orange-red, fuzzy berries. *R. trilobata* dwells along streams in the foothills and plains zones.

Sand Cherry

Speaking of plains dwellers, *Prunus pumila* var. *besseyi* are for sure one to keep an eye out for this fall. You won't have to look very hard to find them in the Foothills Garden or in our foothills zones that roll into the plains. We have the species type *Prunus pumila* var. *besseyi*, which forms a mound to four feet high, as well as the nearly flat growing cultivar 'Boulder Weeping'. Both are great additions to add to your fall peeping list.

Prunus pumila var *besseyi*, 'Boulder Weeping' has outstanding deep red-orange fall colors. This Colorado native was found just west of Boulder, Colorado. Considered more of a groundcover, it grows less than two feet tall and spreads up to six feet wide. If you are looking for a xeric groundcover, this is a great one to try. Both sand cherries, Western and 'Boulder Weeping' are deciduous. They can be identified by their simple, obovate leaves that are narrow on fruiting branches. In the spring they have beautiful white, five petaled flowers that transform into purple-black fruit in late summer and, of course, their gorgeous red leaves in the fall.

These are just a few examples of beautiful Colorado natives to look for this fall. Hopefully during your fall expeditions through the Foothills Garden and through our foothills region you will be inspired to get outside. Maybe that inspiration will lead you even further by applying it to your own landscape. All plants covered here are not only native but xeric too. No matter how this little fall missive inspires you, hopefully you find the time this autumn to get outside and relish in nature's beauty.

Día de Muertos



CELEBRATE AT THE GARDENS

The Gardens is a gathering space for our community, whether it's through volunteering, learning, celebrating or simply enjoying the beauty of our gardens. As a space where people gather, we are committed to being a place where community connections can be nurtured and celebrated.

With the Latiné community having deep and rich roots in the City of Fort Collins, we were excited to partner with various community leaders to host the Latiné and Hispanic Heritage Celebration on October 14. This event shined a spotlight on Latiné and Hispanic Heritage and honored significant contributions of Latiné individuals and communities through art, music, dance, food and services.

The Gardens will once again be honoring the tradition of Día de Muertos during the week of October 28 through November 4. Día de Muertos, or Day of the Dead, is a deeply cherished tradition in many Latiné communities. It is a time to honor and remember loved ones who have passed away. At The Gardens, we honor this tradition by opening space for community

members to adorn and set up their ofrendas to pay tribute to their loved ones and fill the Butterfly House with monarchs and cempazúchitl. Also, we will host a Día de Muertos story time and display a larger-than-life Nicho filled by Vanessa Jimenez the owner of Frida Azul. Visitors will have the opportunity to participate in these events. For more information on these events, visit fcgov.com/gardens/dia-de-muertos.

We work closely with community leaders to co-create or host community created programming to ensure that these events represent the essence of Latiné and Hispanic culture. From the planning stages to execution, these events would not be possible without the community's invaluable insight and unwavering dedication. Through community partnerships like these, we hope to foster greater understanding, respect and appreciation for the Latiné and Hispanic heritage that enriches our lives here in Fort Collins.



WHY WE GIVE: JUDY & KERMIT ALLARD

Judy and Kermit Allard stumbled upon The Gardens only a few years ago. Their busy schedules and health constraints kept them from fully enjoying the botanical oasis.

“We would drive by, especially around Christmas with the lights, and always make the promise to ourselves that we would spend more time there. During early COVID, Judy started meeting friends at The Gardens for coffee and a stroll. It was then that we decided we needed to support The Gardens and the enjoyment they provide to all ages.”

Community connection is paramount for Judy and Kermit. Their philanthropic commitment to The Gardens reflects their belief that such community spaces should be nurtured.



“We have always felt a close connection to community and feel it is so important for everyone to give back, whether it’s through

monetary donations or volunteering,” the Allards said.

Judy and Kermit enjoy everything The Gardens offers, from seasonal strolls to exploring the gift shop. The Butterfly House captivates them as a living “textbook” for visitors of any age.

The Garden of Lights, our annual holiday lights festival, is a favorite of the Allards. One of their most beloved memories is visiting The Gardens to see the lights with dear friends. The experience reinforced their connection to this community treasure.

With their support of The Gardens, the Allards look forward to the continuation and expansion of activities, workshops, concerts and other offerings that benefit the community. In Judy and Kermit’s words, The Gardens on Spring Creek is a “priceless gem” worth cherishing. Their story inspires others to discover, appreciate and give back to this place that enriches our lives and our community.



Garden of Lights RETURNS FOR A 15TH YEAR!

Stroll through a whimsical half-mile loop of towering flowerbeds, glowing grapevines and other imaginative displays before stopping off for a visit with Santa, who will be on site nightly. Enjoy hundreds of color blossoms as they illuminate the Great Lawn in a multi-colored motion display, a holiday village, and other nightly entertainment while music of the season plays throughout the grounds. And, on select nights this year you can also meet Mrs. Claus! Tickets on sale November 2. Learn more at fcgov.com/gardens/lights.

December 8-23 from 5-9 p.m.

Santa visits nightly

Adults \$10 (ages 12+)

Children \$5 (ages 5-11) 0-4 are FREE!

Members receive 20% off regular price!





LEGACY Giving

SUSTAINING OUR VISION

At The Gardens, we aspire to be a world-class, community-oriented botanic garden that enriches lives through horticulture and environmental stewardship. Our core values include cultivating community, honoring our local environment, showing respect and compassion, engaging with the Northern Colorado community, and providing exceptional service.

Legacy giving lets you be part of our mission's lasting impact. Join us in sustaining our vision for a thriving botanic garden that fosters environmental stewardship and enriches lives.

For more information, visit friendsgosc.org/donate or contact Michael Coleman at mcoleman@fcgov.com or 970-224-6106.



If you have already included The Gardens or The Friends in your will or estate plan, or for more information, contact Michael Coleman, The Gardens Development Officer, at 970-224-6106 or mcoleman@fcgov.com or visit friendsgosc.org/legacy.





CELEBRATING A MAJOR GIFT FROM NUTRIEN!

We are proud to announce a generous \$100,000 gift from Nutrien Ag Solutions to support the Outdoor Teaching Kitchen! Representatives from Nutrien joined representatives from the City of Fort Collins and Gardens staff on August 24 to celebrate this wonderful gift.



The Gardens' partnership with Nutrien spans more than a decade and has been a key to The Gardens' success—in growing from a small space to an impressive 12-acre botanical oasis. Together, we are making a difference in Colorado and inspiring healthy living through the joy of cooking and eating homegrown food.

As you savor the experience of learning in our Outdoor Teaching Kitchen or perhaps just stopping in for a rest, take a moment to relish the fact that this wonderful space is made possible with support from Nutrien.

SEASON OF GIVING: WAYS TO LEAVE A GIFT

Endowment



Endowment gifts are a wonderful way to create a legacy at The Gardens. They are permanently invested, with only a small percentage withdrawn each year. Over time, the total amount distributed to The Gardens far exceeds the initial gift and ensures that your passion for enriching

the lives of people and fostering environmental stewardship through horticulture extends through the generations. The Friends endowment fund is carefully cultivated and maintained by the Community Foundation for Northern Colorado and exists solely to support Gardens operations.

Contact us at friendsgosc@gmail.com for more information or on how you can make a gift to the endowment.

Annual Campaign + Colorado Gives Day



The generosity of The Gardens community never ceases to amaze. Over the past few years, your generosity has enabled us to support nearly 10,000 children and families through Gardens for All, education and horticulture programming, and even capital improvement projects that keep The Gardens looking its best.

Colorado Gives Day is December 5. If you are able to make a gift this holiday season, we ask that you keep Friends of The Gardens in mind. You can donate online at coloradogives.org/organization/friendsofthegardensonspringcreek or mail a check to Friends of The Gardens at 2145 Centre Ave., Fort Collins, CO 80526.

OPEN DAILY!
TICKETS REQUIRED

Members receive free admission during normal business hours.

Beginning Dec. 1, The Gardens shifts to winter hours/rates and will close daily at 4 p.m. with the final Butterfly House tour at 3:15 p.m. Also admissions rates are half off Dec. 1 – Feb. 29. For more information, please visit fcgov.com/gardens/admissions.

CONTACT US

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