

SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER

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FRIENDS OF  
**THE GARDENS**  
ON SPRING CREEK



# 2021 ANNUAL CALENDAR

## *May*

- > Spring Plant Sale (May 4-21)
- > Adult Education Classes

## *June*

- > Yoga + Tai Chi in The Gardens
- > Summer Camps
- > Member Mornings (June 11 and 25)

## *July*

- > Date Night at The Gardens (Fri. 16)
- > Urban Homestead Tour (Sat. 31)
- > Yoga + Tai Chi in The Gardens
- > Summer Camps
- > Member Mornings (July 9 and 23)

## *August*

- > Garden to Fork Cooking Classes
- > Yoga + Tai Chi in The Gardens
- > Summer Camps
- > Member Mornings (Aug. 13 and 27)

## *September*

- > Date Night at The Gardens (Friday Sept. 10)
- > Pumpkins on Parade Tickets GO on Sale (Sept. 14)
- > Garden to Fork Cooking Classes
- > Adult Education Classes
- > Member Mornings (Sept. 10 and 24)

## *October*

- > Pumpkins on Parade (Oct. 1-24)
- > Adult Education Classes

## *November*

- > Garden of Lights tickets on sale! (Nov. 4)
- > Adult Education Classes

## *December*

- > Colorado Gives Day (Dec. 7)
- > Garden of Lights (Dec 10-26)
- > Adult Education Classes



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.





## OUR PLAN TO FORGE AHEAD

For many of us, the cold, dark days of winter provide the perfect opportunity to reflect on the year that was while also thinking and planning for the future. The same is true for The Gardens. Having been re-opened for just over one year, it was time to develop a new strategic plan to guide our future.

With the support of a Community Foundation of Northern Colorado grant, The Gardens hired Headwinds Planning to lead us through a process called StratOp. More than a one-time planning event, the StratOp process combines strategy and operations, provides for periodic check-ins and updated planning throughout the year.

For three days, Gardens Staff, the City’s Director of Cultural Services, and members of the Friends of the Gardens Board of Directors met at the Lincoln Center. To set the stage, we spent the first day discussing the history of The Gardens. With 30+ years of history, long-time staffers were able to tell the story about how The Gardens has evolved—very helpful to newer staff and board members.

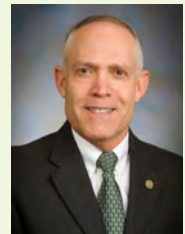
The next two days were spent discussing the organization’s mission, vision, and values. Focusing on our primary customers and their values led to deep conversations and big ideas about the guest experience, exhibits, what differentiates The Gardens, and what needs work. The result was a new plan on a page outlining seven key objectives teams will tackle over the coming months: fund development, evaluation, guest experience, IDEA—Gardens for All, living collections and storytelling.

Committees around each of these topics were formed, made up of Gardens Staff across internal departments, Friends Board Members, volunteers, Butterfly Pavilion Staff and other City of Fort Collins staff. This is where the real work will be done—turning plans into action.

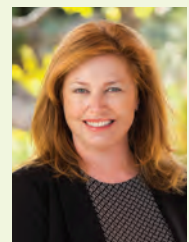
To ensure alignment of our organizations, The Friends Board then utilized this plan to launch their new strategic plan. Board members recommitted to their mission of cultivating a world class botanic garden through fundraising and advocacy. They crafted goals for the new year while looking out over the next three years. Goals include a strategy to build the Friends current endowment fund, development of a planned giving program, streamlining the membership purchase and renewal process, and increasing memberships.

With plans in place, much work will be done over the coming years as we strive to attain our shared vision of being a world class botanic garden that is community oriented, educational, experiential and sustainable.

Tom Satterly  
Board President  
The Friends of the  
Gardens on Spring Creek



Michelle Provaznik  
Executive Director  
The Gardens on Spring Creek



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TO OUR OFFICIAL  
SPONSORS**



FRIENDS OF  
**THE GARDENS**  
ON SPRING CREEK

## BOARD NEWS

### GARDENS FOR ALL GIFT MEMBERSHIPS

In December, the Friends of The Gardens unanimously approved up to \$22,500 in gift memberships in fiscal year 2021 towards Gardens for All, the equity and access program at The Gardens.

Memberships are available to families with students enrolled in early childhood education programs at Poudre and Thompson School Districts and ensures the youngest members of our community and their families have access to The Gardens and all its benefits.

### FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR THE GARDENS

Thank you to our members for all your support via memberships, the successful 2020 Annual Campaign, and Colorado Gives Day! The Friends are thrilled to provide \$140,000 of financial support for operations at The Gardens in 2021.

### THANKING BOARD MEMBERS

Two long-time members, Alex Stern and Kelsy Russell, recently left our board. We are sad to see them leave and thank them both for their years of invaluable service to The Friends of The Gardens as we finished the capital campaign and transitioned to new membership and fundraising activities. Because of you both we are a better board, and we wish you all the best!

### NEW BOARD MEMBERS & RECRUITMENT

Announcing new board members Kathy Miner as Board Secretary and Craig Russell as Vice President overseeing recruitment. If you or anyone is interested in joining the board for Friends of the Gardens on Spring Creek, contact Craig at [friendsgosc@gmail.com](mailto:friendsgosc@gmail.com). Thank you to Kathy and Craig for taking on these leadership roles!



## IMPACTING OUR COMMUNITY

Thank you for your support of The Gardens on Spring Creek! Thanks to your generosity, we have an amazing list of impacts on the community. Watch for our electronic newsletter with our annual report to see all we achieved together in 2020.

- Created five virtual field trips reaching 2,344 students
- Adult programming shifted to Zoom with hundreds learning about gardening online
- Eight weeks of summer camps that served 52 families
- Socially-distanced yoga and tai chi programs on the Great Lawn
- Experienced a 13% increase in Garden to Fork Cooking Class participants
- 1,347 participants in Read and Seed preschool program
- 2,301 guests accessed The Gardens for free or at a reduced cost
- 20,884 individuals participated in public events at The Gardens
- More than 200 volunteers contributed 4,151 hours
- 29,172 plants grown for Spring Plant Sale
- 46,996 pounds of produce donated to the Plant It Forward program
- 842 vegetable and herb seedlings donated to organizations serving low-income populations

*"I appreciate the City having The Gardens available and open during this difficult time. My child has built upon multiple years of your educational programs during the school year and the summer. We can tell her appreciation for nature and the environment is amplified with what we do at home because of your classes."*

*Thank You*

# SOUNDS OF SUMMER

Despite the many challenges of 2020, we were thrilled to have live music at The Gardens—albeit a little differently than originally envisioned. We hosted five fundraisers called Date Night at The Gardens, and two concerts featuring the Fort Collins Symphony and musician Trace Bundy. We like to think our offering of live music provided a “bit of normal” for our community.

We are excited to announce that Date Night at The Gardens is returning for its second year! The night continues to feature delicious food and drink, along

side music from regional acts. Hosted by the Friends of the Gardens, funds raised at these events support The Gardens operations. Mark your calendars for Friday, July 16 and Friday, September 10.

With rapidly changing COVID guidelines and as more Coloradoans get vaccinated, our plans for all events at The Gardens are impacted—including concerts. We promise our concerts are coming, and as always, our members have the opportunity to purchase tickets before the general public. Watch your email for more information—you will be the first to know!





*For more than a decade,* the annual Spring Plant Sale at The Gardens has been a community event unlike any other. Designed to provide access to locally-grown native and regionally-appropriate annuals, perennials, herbs, and vegetables while funding important horticulture programming in Northern Colorado, this event is one that members of The Gardens and the community-at-large look forward to.

When The Gardens—and the world—shut down in March due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we had more than 30,000 plants on site

and in greenhouses at Colorado State University in preparation for the annual sale. Fortunately, this time also coincided with a surge in gardening reminiscent of World War II victory gardens. How were we to get these plants in the hands of eager gardeners?

Like Mother Nature, we are resilient, and our staff quickly pivoted to take our sale online. In addition to growing and tagging plants, we built a shopping website and developed a plan for curbside pick-up in six short weeks. All without the support of our beloved volunteers and while maintaining social distance.

We are proud to say thanks to the generous support of our community and our partners at Colorado State. The 2020 virtual spring Plant Sale was the most successful to date, with more than 1,800 orders generating north of \$118,000 in sales.

A year later, as we wait for vaccinations to become more prevalent, we are going to build on best practices and again offer the sale virtually. Plant orders placed through our online store will once again be fulfilled by our staff and volunteers, packaged for you and picked up curbside at The Gardens.

## Ready to start browsing?

Check out our plant list at [fcgov.com/gardens/spring-plant-sale](https://fcgov.com/gardens/spring-plant-sale). Our online store opens on May 4.



**MAY 4-5**  
**Shopping Days**  
*Members-Only*



As a perk of your Gardens membership, enjoy exclusive first access to our online plant sale. Starting at noon on Tuesday, May 4, Members will receive an email with early access to the online store. Place your order prior to the public sale to help ensure you get the plants you want most and pick up at your convenience during our order pickup days (May 12 - May 21).



**MAY 6-17**  
**Online Plant Sale**  
*Open to the Public*



Our online sale will open to the public at noon on Thursday, May 6 and extend through May 17 (or while supplies last). We have grown thousands of plants for this sale, so you are sure to find just what you need to grow a beautiful landscape, bountiful veggie garden and lively containers this spring!

Our online store has detailed information about all of our plants, including their care needs and much more. As with most online products, our inventory is sold first-come, first-served and certain plant varieties may sell out earlier than others. Our team is happy to help by recommending substitutions or answering other plant questions.



**MAY 12-21**  
**Easy Curbside**  
*Pick-Up Days*



When you checkout online, you can select a time and date to pick up your order.

Once you place an order, the plant(s) you purchased are “held” for you. However, please keep in mind our inventory is living. While we do our best to keep all plants happy and healthy before they reach your vehicle, breakage and loss are a normal part of gardening. While we cannot guarantee anything, if you have your heart set on particular favorites, our insider’s tip is to pick up your order sooner rather than later.



*Cold-Hardy*  
**CACTI**

ADD SOME EXOTIC DESERT TO YOUR YARD







Lauren Springer, Horticulturist  
Gardens on Spring Creek

An unusual planting at the Gardens is wowing visitors and attracting a myriad of native bees and other pollinators. To see what the buzz is about and perhaps fall in love with some intriguing plants that broaden horizons for gardening in Northern Colorado, head to the Cactus Garden on the south side of the Undaunted Garden.

### WHY OUR GARDEN IS NOTABLE

In this relatively small, sloped space, traversed by a casual gravel path and graced by a large pergola for shaded seating and viewing from its north side, several hundred winter-hardy cacti are making themselves at home. The planting is one of the largest public outdoor collections of cacti hardy to USDA Zone 5. Unique in its attention to design, this specialty garden blends regionally resonant rockwork and companion plants with the striking and prickly cacti stars in thoughtfully artistic ways that also benefit the cacti horticulturally.

### WHY I LOVE CACTI

When I was growing up, cacti were mostly the domain of eccentric collectors. Those of us who were intrigued by nature as youngsters and collected rocks, shells, bugs and the like often also found these oddly shaped, armed plants fascinating. At my first home in Northern Colorado, I grew hardy cacti outdoors in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Passersby complained and wrote letters in the town paper claiming they were unsightly, unfriendly and dangerous and that I needed to remove them.

After a few years, I moved and took them all with me to my next home in the Foothills. A few of those original plants are now in the Undaunted Garden, as are many of their offspring. Things sure have changed—I'm back living near town and now have to worry about people stealing cacti from my home garden rather than demanding I remove them.

More and more people are being won over by the architectural beauty of cacti, the luscious colors of their showy flowers, their water thriftiness and ease of care. As demand rises, the nursery trade has stepped up to produce an ever-expanding array of options. However, most of the emphasis has been on growing and offering species with little regard to winter hardiness because the North American cactus market is dominated by highly populated areas where they can be grown outdoors such as California, Arizona, and Florida. In colder and damper regions, these winter-tender cacti are marketed as houseplants and/or movable container plants that can be moved and sheltered from both extreme cold and too much moisture.

### WINTER-HARDY = BEAUTIFUL

Winter-hardy cacti are the forgotten stepchildren of the cactus and succulent trend. It's been slow going for those of us in the less populated, arid and cold interior West wanting to grow these in our plantings, but fortunately, several intrepid and talented plantspeople are propagating and selling hardy cacti mail-order and wholesale to regional retail nurseries. Some of the plants in the Undaunted Cactus Garden come from these great folks—David Salman of High Country Gardens, Jeff Ottersberg of Wild Things and Kelly Grummons of *coldhardycactus.com*, to name a few. I propagated other plants from garden- and wild-collected seed (hedgehog, clustering or barrel species) and cuttings (Opuntia or prickly pear species) over a period of years—the plan for Undaunted was born in 2012, but the site wasn't ready until 2018. And some come from my three-decade-old home garden collection. A few were collected from the wild in “rescues” before an area was stripped and graded for development.

### LET US INSPIRE YOU

Perhaps the most exciting part of having a public garden space devoted to these incredible plants is to share the year-round beauty of cacti in a big way and inspire people to plant

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE >>



them at home. They need full sun in our climate, preferably a southerly or westerly slope for better drainage and a site that offers them some protection from cold winter winds. If the soil is particularly heavy clay, building a raised berm and incorporating about equal volume scoria (small-sized pumice/lava rock) or expanded shale (used in many green roof projects) into the soil will help prevent cold and wet conditions in winter and spring that promote rotting.

Placing cacti among rocks complements their forms and helps protect their roots from wide temperature fluctuations and drying out quickly after rain. At the same time, rocks reflect much-desired extra warmth onto plants' tops when nestled close by. A gravel mulch looks good and does the same things as individual larger rocks. I've been observing cacti in nature most of my adult life and they often grow in rocky, gravelly places, or even out of fractures in sheer stone, so it just looks natural and best to me to incorporate rocks and gravel into a cactus planting.

### **DON'T FORGET TO ROCK IT**

The stone in the Undaunted Cactus Garden was acquired from the Rock Garden in Fort Collins and

is a rhyolite from the Dakotas, an igneous rock, like basalt, that weathers and breaks in columns of faceted "crystals." In the wild you can see these chunks littering a hillside below their mother caprock of hard rhyolite. I aimed for this look, though the "caprock" in the garden is actually entirely different—the similarly ruggedly angular and tawny seating blocks that were part of the overall expansion hardscape installation are actually sandstone. Plantsman and crevice garden expert Kenton Seth and I spent a hot, hard—but also fun and rewarding—week moving, placing and setting ten tons of this rhyolite to create the naturalistic look I was after.

Now it's up to the plants to settle in and mature. It is fun to watch the new garden knit together and become a more cohesive visual and horticultural community. We may lose a few of the marginally hardy species in an unusually cold winter or a sudden extreme temperature drop during the shoulder seasons, but such is gardening. There are more seedlings and cuttings in the wings. From the busy hum of pollinators among the vibrant rainbow of bloom in May and June to the quiet architecture of snow-dusted spines and hummocks in winter, hardy cacti are a joy to experience in any month. They are natural living and growing art, all year round.





## BLUE SPRUCE HORTICULTURE: WHY WE'RE MEMBERS

For years, the Gardens on Spring Creek has provided membership options for individuals, but did you know we now offer Corporate Membership? Hear from Stuart Shoemaker from Blue Spruce Horticulture about why they joined The Gardens. A Colorado native, Stuart grew up in Fort Collins, studying horticulture at Colorado State University.

"I've gotten to watch first-hand the transformation of The Gardens since the beginning," says Stuart. "I've been visiting The Gardens periodically, over time, watching the growth and evolution. And as all the new features are coming online and the list of events is growing, we're excited to increase our interaction and cultivate a long-term relationship."



Blue Spruce was the first business to join The Gardens as an official Corporate Member.

"We first looked at Corporate membership starting in 2019 when developing our marketing strategy," says Stuart. "As a gardening and horticultural enterprise, we're always looking to strengthen our ties to the greater gardening community so in late 2020, we made the decision to join."

In addition to strengthening ties to the gardening community, The Gardens helps serve as a catalyst for their horticulture business.

*"We benefit from everything The Gardens has to offer: respite, tranquility, relationships, events and community," he says. "We use the Gardens as a place of inspiration. It's a place where we can meet with clients to look at the collections and landscape features and come up with ideas for projects."*

Blue Spruce Horticulture focuses largely on fine garden maintenance and plant-driven design build projects. To learn more, visit their website at [bluesprucehort.com](http://bluesprucehort.com).

For more information on Corporate Memberships or other ways to get your company involved in supporting The Gardens, please visit [friendsgosc.org/sponsorships](http://friendsgosc.org/sponsorships).



## MEMBERSHIP FLASH SALE!

Sustainability is always one of our top priorities at Gardens on Spring Creek. As the world grows more crowded it carries greater importance with each passing year and why Earth Day always holds a special place in our hearts.

Help celebrate Earth Day 2021 with us by purchasing a Gardens membership for friends, family, or someone you know who practices sustainability and loves The Gardens! You will receive \$5 off Individual and Individual Plus and \$10 off Family memberships purchased on Earth Day, April 22.

Membership at The Gardens is about to get really exciting with invitations to the member-only Spring Plant Sale, early access to ticketing for the inaugural Summer Concert Series and twice-monthly Member Mornings starting in June!

Sustainability is at the core of our vision and we hope you help us spread the word on April 22. Together, let us all commit to taking special care of "the little blue dot" in 2021!

*\*Valid April 22 only for new memberships. Not valid for renewals. Must call 970-416-2486 to purchase. All messages left before and after regular business hours will be honored.*

**NOW OPEN DAILY!**

**TICKETS REQUIRED**

The Gardens on Spring Creek is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. with the final Butterfly House tour at 4:15 p.m. Timed admission tickets are required for all guests, including Members. For more information, please visit [fcgov.com/gardens/admissions](http://fcgov.com/gardens/admissions).

**CONTACT US**

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