

DIG iN

SPRING 2022
NEWSLETTER



FRIENDS OF
THE GARDENS
ON SPRING CREEK



UPCOMING CALENDAR

April

- 12** Membership deadline for early access to Spring Plant Sale and concert ticketing
- 19** Member early access to Live at The Gardens Summer Concert Series tickets
 - > Adult Education Classes
 - > Read and Seed: English and Español

May

- 2-4** Member early access to Plant Sale tickets
- 14-15** Spring Plant Sale
- 30** Memorial Day—Gardens open!
 - > Adult Education Classes
 - > Read and Seed: English and Español

June

- 17** Member Morning
- 19** Juneteenth—Gardens open!
- 27** Garden a'Fare tickets on sale
 - > Yoga and Tai Chi in The Gardens
 - > Summer Camps
 - > Adult Education Classes
 - > Read and Seed: English and Español

July

- 4** Independence Day—Gardens open!
- 15** Member Morning
- 30** Urban Homestead Tour
 - > Yoga and Tai Chi in The Gardens
 - > Summer Camps
 - > Read and Seed: English and Español

August

- 19** Member Morning
 - > Garden to Fork cooking classes
 - > Yoga and Tai Chi in The Gardens
 - > Summer Camps
 - > Read and Seed: English and Español

September

- 5** Labor Day—Gardens open!
- 13** Pumpkins on Parade tickets on sale
- 16** Member Morning
 - > Garden to Fork cooking classes
 - > Adult Education Classes
 - > Read and Seed: English and Español

October

- 20-23** Pumpkins on Parade
 - > Adult Education Classes
 - > Read and Seed: English and Español

November

- 1** Garden of Lights tickets on sale
- 24** Thanksgiving Day—Gardens closed
 - > Adult Education Classes
 - > Read and Seed: English and Español

December

- 6** Colorado Gives Day
- 9-24** Garden of Lights
- 25-26** Christmas holiday—Gardens closed
- 31** New Year's Eve—Gardens closed



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.





Friends of The Gardens Board President

TOM SATTERLY

As The Gardens continues to grow, so does the Friends of the Gardens and the impact we have on our Northern Colorado botanic garden.



MEMBERSHIP IS BLOOMING

The Friends is rapidly approaching 3,000 member households! The membership committee is actively working to streamline the membership process, developing new member levels based upon your feedback and finding more ways to engage with all of you.

FRIENDLY FUNDING

Our Friends Board has committed \$200,000 to Gardens operations! This funding provides needed staffing and supplies for garden maintenance, community events and programs. In addition, the Board committed \$50,000 to grow the Endowment Fund at the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado a long term investment to secure the legacy of The Gardens.

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Board has continued to grow, adding three new members at the end of 2021. We are excited for the new ideas, experience and energy our new members bring.

As spring comes to The Gardens, I look forward to seeing you at the Spring Plant Sale or an upcoming Member Morning.

Gardens on Spring Creek Executive Director

MICHELLE PROVAZNIK

At The Gardens, winter is no longer our “slow season.” Instead, it is a time to reflect on the previous year, determine any lessons learned and plan for the coming year—it takes a lot of planning to make all aspects of our operations happen.



Earlier this year (in addition to the everyday planning of horticulture operations, education programs and community events) we revisited our strategic plan and modified the organization’s big picture goals for 2022. They include:

1. Developing a strategy to increase daily admissions.
2. Creating a comprehensive staff onboarding process and increasing staff training and appreciation opportunities.
3. Launching a guest experience survey for daily visitors.
4. Continuing work to increase inclusivity, diversity, equity, and access in our gardens and programs.
5. Focusing on our Plant Collection Management Plan through improvements in the plant database and enhancing our gardens through signage.

It is always challenging to balance strategic visioning with managing day-to-day operations. Due to the seasonality of our work, winter is the perfect time to look bigger. I am grateful for a team that strives to continually improve, wants to create a stellar guest experience, and is passionate about our mission. I can’t wait to see what’s in store for 2022!

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR PROPAGATION PARTNERS





GARDEN OF LIGHTS BRIGHTENS COMMUNITY

Through the Gardens for All program, the Gardens on Spring Creek distributes complimentary family passes and event tickets to nonprofit partners throughout the community. We were delighted to have a number of tickets to gift.

“My husband, Phil, and I went to the Garden of Lights and had such a delightful evening! We had the privilege of being given free tickets through the amazing and life-giving organization of Dementia Together. My dear husband of 47 years was diagnosed with dementia in the summer of 2020.

The evening was special because the lights and decorations were so elaborate and colorful but what really made it such fun was that we had the opportunity to walk around and enjoy the company of a dear “new friend” named Norma.

Norma is 92 years young and also has dementia but that did not deter her for one second as she was like a “kid in a candy store!” She was in awe of every single thing she saw and kept saying, ‘this is unbelievable, this is unreal and here we are in the middle of it!’ We waved at Santa and pointed out all of our favorite color-changing trees and ‘dancing flowers!’

The thing we enjoyed most was getting to experience the lights at the gardens with a person who has lived

almost 20 years longer than we have and yet was still in awe and delight of such amazing lights! We were compelled to pause and join in with the dancing lights when Dean Martin started to sing ‘A Marshmallow World.’ The artistic workmanship, expression and care that went into creating such a colorful, extravagant array of lights and music was not lost on the three of us. The lights at the Gardens on Spring Creek was a perfect reminder of what Christmas is all about, LIGHT coming into the world! Thank you!” - *Cathy Thompson*

“We loved getting to visit the Garden of Lights. Our whole family was able to go and there was something for everyone—Ames was delighted by the lights and really enjoyed hearing the carolers. He kept bobbing his head to the music which was really sweet. We were able to meet my sister and her two kids there as well and all the cousins were ecstatic to visit Santa. Please pass along our gratitude for the generous gift!” - *a Repite Care client*

Your membership with the Friends of the Gardens on Spring Creek supports the Gardens for All program, helping to bring joy and light to our community. Thank you for your generosity!





MOCK ORANGE



HOT WINGS TATARIAN MAPLE



WHITE MULBERRY



YELLOWHORN

RARE CUTTINGS FROM CHEYENNE'S HISTORIC **HIGH PLAINS ARBORETUM**

Jacob Mares, Arborist and Horticulturist

Many of our favorite plants have deep histories we rarely hear about. Stories of plant explorers searching the world over for new genera and species evoke images of Indiana Jones searching for some hidden treasure—but they are true.

Late in the 1880s, the United States Department of Agriculture began sending individuals out into the world to discover plants. The perils of traveling to these exotic locales were many and some never returned home. These intrepid explorers scoured the globe to find the best plants and crops which would become staples in our modern life. The plants were shipped back to special research stations at key locations across the United States for trialing, with station locations chosen to mimic the plant's climate of origin.

One of these field stations, built in 1929 and located in Cheyenne, would prove to be a large resource for many of the hardy plants we see for sale today. Nearly 100 years later, the station is still a repository for rare and interesting plants thriving in our climate. From

the exquisite Hung Hai Tung crabapple (*Malus asiatica*) found growing from a wall of a Buddhist temple in China to the beautiful Des Fontanes Cherry (*Prunus x fontanesiana*) grown in France by botanist Rene Des Fontane during the events of the French revolution, the stories about these plants are as diverse as their origins. While these examples are a little harder to find (not impossible), many plants from the station are staples in our landscape.

For instance, Cheyenne Mock Orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*) is a xeric shrub prized for its fragrance, beauty and adaptability (and happens to serve as the border between the Children's Garden and the Timberframe). The Hot Wings Tatarian Maple (*Acer tartaricum* 'GARANN'), with its ubiquitous red samaras (winged seeds), is one of the most popular ornamental trees for



FIELD STATION CIRCA 1928

sale in our region. Plant propagators from far and wide visit the station to request and take cuttings to add to their collections.

With permission, members of our horticulture staff recently visited the station multiple times to take cuttings and seed from plants selected for their rarity and hardiness. These plants will be grown and trialed at the Gardens, much like they are



at the Cheyenne station. These additions to our collection help add to the vast amount of biodiversity our gardens contain and serve as another stop on the plant's history!

My colleagues and I selected a white-fruited Mulberry (*Morus alba*) for its unique white fruit, and it has done quite well from cuttings. Seeds from Yellowhorn (*Xanthocerus sorbifolium*) have split and sprung into life. The Yellowhorn, a native to northern China, is a small tree (or shrub) which performs well in dry situations. While most sources site the need for winter protection, the selection from the station remains undamaged by the recent extreme cold and wind. Flowers emerge during the spring and are a distinct white and yellow that darkens as the season progresses. Its fruit, shaped much like a pear, starts a bright green and eventually turns black and splits into sections, revealing the large, brown seeds.

Altogether, 10 different species from 7 separate genera were collected. Our team looks forward to seeing how these new specimens will perform on our site. Additionally, plans to return this spring for more material are underway with a few key species in mind.

The Cheyenne station, now called The High Plains Arboretum, is open for visitors year-round. The next time you take a stroll around The Gardens—or even purchase a plant from your own home—take time to ponder how this plant got here and what stories it might have.



BOARD NEWS

THANK YOU FOR A WONDERFUL YEAR!

2021 proved fruitful for Friends of The Gardens. Not only did we cross the 2,850 active member threshold, but we also sold out Date Night at The Gardens for a second consecutive year and exceeded our Annual Campaign goal by 10%. Thank you for a wonderful 2021 and here's to 2022!

ANNUAL INVESTMENT

Because of your support last year, Friends of The Gardens is contributing an additional \$50,000 towards Gardens operations in 2022, bringing our total annual commitment to \$200,000 and furthering our mission of cultivating a world-class botanic garden through fundraising and advocacy.

GOODBYE DATE NIGHT, HELLO GARDEN A'FARE!

In 2020, Date Night at The Gardens debuted as a safely-distanced, music and dining experience—right when people needed something to celebrate. And celebrate we did! But after two highly successful and sold-out seasons, Date Night is retiring. A reimagined Garden a'Fare will take its place in 2022. With full site activation and all-inclusive tickets for music, food and beverages, Garden a'Fare will pick up where Date Night left off—giving people a unique, summertime entertainment experience. Tickets to Garden a'Fare go on sale June 27, 2022.



NEW BOARD MEMBER BRITTANY CONANT

Brittany Conant grew up in Ojai, California, moving to Fort Collins with her husband 22 years ago.



She has worked at HP Inc. for 17 years, and in her current role as a human resources business partner, she handles all things people-related for her client organizations.

One of the best parts of her job, she says, is employee engagement and creating a sense of community. Community is what attracted her to the Friends of the Gardens—she looks forward to connecting with the existing community and helping to make it even stronger.

Brittany is a Member of the Gardens, loves bringing her family to Garden of Lights and can't wait for the summer music season.



2021 BY THE NUMBERS

HORTICULTURE

- 5,900 bulbs added to Undaunted Garden
- 500+ plants added to the Prairie and Rock Gardens
- 200+ species planted in the Welcome Garden
- 120+ pounds of fresh hops harvested at The Gardens & Twin Silo Park
- 39 new daylilies added to the Daylily Garden
- 12 tons of pea gravel used to mulch Undaunted Garden
- 3 species collected using BLM permit
- 2 plants in Plant Select® trials
- 1 Bureau of Land Management seed collection permit obtained

COMMUNITY GARDEN OUTREACH PROGRAM

- 81,743 pounds of produce donated to the Plant it Forward program, in conjunction with the Food Bank for Larimer County
- 5,643 pounds of produce grown in the Garden of Eatin'
- 646 vegetable and herb seedlings donated to organizations serving low-income populations
- 630 volunteer hours donated by community gardeners to maintain the gardens
- 160 Community Garden plots rented to community members

BUTTERFLY HOUSE

- 41 different species
- 7,486 individual lepidopterans

EDUCATION PROGRAMS

- 2,235 adult students learning onsite and virtual
- 1,992 participants in Read and Seed
- 1,539 students in-person school tours
- 189 high school students onsite for botany labs
- 57 families served through Summer Camp programs

GARDENS FOR ALL

- 3,139 community participants
- 168 free Poudre School District and Thompson School District Early Childhood Education family memberships

VOLUNTEERS

- 411 volunteers
- 9,637 hours contributed

VISITATION

- 210 Colorado zip codes of guests
- 50 states represented by guests plus Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico
- 80,784 visitors

COMMUNITY

Spring

PLANT SALE

IN PERSON FOR 2022!

After two years of planning your garden from behind a computer screen, we are overjoyed to be bringing our 2022 Spring Plant Sale to you live and in living color on May 14-15!

This year's event will be unlike any other. With a growing Member base and excitement over the return to in-person shopping, we anticipate heightened demand for access to the sale.

As a result, we are implementing timed and ticketed **free** event admission.

Tickets are free and are only used to manage capacity and ensure a quality shopping experience. It won't be like Black Friday 2019 at The Gardens—our timed ticketing system allows shoppers to browse and select their plants without having to throw any elbows.

Beginning on May 2 at noon, Members have the opportunity to reserve their free tickets for the shopping time slot of their choice—two days ahead of the general public. All adults are required to have a Plant Sale ticket to enter The Gardens, so during the weekend of the sale, membership cards are not valid for Gardens entry.

Once again, we are partnering with Colorado State University to provide more than 30,000

locally grown annuals, perennials, herbs, veggies and hanging baskets for your home garden and landscape. Plants are spread throughout the site for browsing, and staff and volunteers are available to answer questions and provide recommendations

We anticipate some shopping times will sell out, so mark your calendar to log into your Member account at noon on Monday, May 2 to reserve your time. Then, grab your boxes and wagon and head over to The Gardens with your ticket for your time slot the weekend of May 14-15 to shop 'til you drop!

Enjoy planning ahead? Visit our website to see a list of what we're growing for this year's sale at fcgov.com/gardens

Reservations required! Members can reserve their shopping time beginning at noon on Monday, May 2.

Is your membership expiring soon? We highly recommend renewing by April 12 to ensure early access to ticketing both for our Spring Plant Sale and our Live at The Gardens Summer Concert Series. Visit friendsgosc.org to renew today!

**RESERVE YOUR
FREE SPOT ONLINE**

SATURDAY, MAY 14

SUNDAY, MAY 15

9 A.M. - 5 P.M. EACH DAY



BEHIND THE SCENES: ORDERING SEEDS



Mary Miller, Community Garden and Outreach Coordinator

Often the question is posed to me, “So...what do you do in the winter? Do you just take a few months off?” My reply, “Oh, there is much to do when the garden beds are quiet.” The tasks include yearly reports, pruning, lots of meetings and planning the next season—and my favorite part of my job—ordering all the vegetable seeds for the Garden of Eatin’ and our annual Spring Plant Sale.

Catalogues begin arriving in November. Demand for vegetable seed has soared since 2020 with many folks at home in the advent of the pandemic. As people experienced empty grocery shelves, they turned to home gardening, supporting local farmers and shortening the food journey to the table. This made ordering seed in January 2021 enormously challenging. Unprecedented interest and demand left mail-order site after site with the dreaded out of stock status. Through adaptation and much persistence, the seeds were purchased for The Gardens.

In most years, The Gardens seed order is placed in January when our budget coffer refills. After last season’s challenges, we reserved funds to place the order in December 2021—thankfully.

For the 2022 season, seed companies integrated the many lessons learned. They secured additional seed stocks, and—a big change for the consumer—one could no longer place a backordered item into the cart. That meant one could not be in the queue for the seed, but only when the seed is in hand and the staff are available to fill packets and orders, could the seed be purchased. It results in checking the websites often.

How do I go about actually ordering the seeds? First, I reflect on the past season, consider which varieties performed well or poorly. How did certain crops hold up in the prolonged heat wave? Did certain varieties succumb to disease? Which will I no longer grow? Which were stunning? Delicious?

Next, I get to the ordering. On a six-foot table, I spread

out the catalogues and inventory seed, checking the age and quantity of seed on hand. Choosing a category of vegetables—for instance tomatoes—it becomes a puzzle in determining which company has the 30+ varieties we grow. For each variety, the puzzle can become complex as I look for the quantity needed at the best price. Generally, purchasing larger numbers of a seeds reduces the price. However, different crop seeds have different timelines for viability. The recommendation for onion seed is one year, while winter squash is four to five years. Economically it is not useful to purchase three years of onion seed yet makes sense for squash.

For the Garden of Eatin’, I focus on diversity of colors, shapes, textures and interest. With that is an endeavor to create an integrated garden design with a genuine “wow” factor. A vegetable garden is capable of igniting inspiration and can be rich in beauty.

Complementing the bed designs is a focus on what will be useful for The Gardens programs that utilize the fresh produce, as well as intention on growing high-value crops for the individuals and families served by the Food Bank, the recipient of the garden’s produce.

For Plant Sale seedlings, I always strive to provide the greatest array of varieties for those shopping. I look for reliable producers, folks’ favorites and new varieties to discover. Knowing gardeners have myriad growing spaces, I look for crops for small spaces and containers and those with big gardens. With knowledge of our common challenges, I look for crops adapted to our region and the vagaries of our weather. Often, I will “trial” a new variety in the Garden of Eatin’ to feel confident in offering it at the Plant Sale. Always I seek crops that are delicious to eat!

Between the Garden of Eatin’ and Plant Sale, the number of individual vegetable varieties grown is 300–400, and the number of vegetable seedlings is 12,000–16,000. Whew! Seed ordering is about discovery and exploring new vegetable varieties to grow. Essentially it is about the promise, anticipation and excitement a new season may bring. Here’s to great season!

In just a few short months, The Gardens will fill with the sounds of summer in more ways than one—bees buzzing in the Northwest Grove and kids splashing in the Children’s Garden are joined by a full season of our summer concert series held this year from June–September.

Last year, The Gardens fully realized its master plan as the Fort Collins Symphony and Herbie Hancock played to sold out crowds of 1,500 people in the first ever full-capacity concerts at the Everitt Pavilion and Great Lawn, providing music-loving Coloradoans with a beautiful and unique space to see their favorite musicians perform.

We are incredibly excited to once again partner with our sister organization The Lincoln Center for the second season of Live at The Gardens and we look forward to seeing you there!

We will announce the 2022 line up in mid-April, with tickets going on sale April 19 at noon for Gardens on Spring Creek Members and April 21 at noon for the general public.

Members of The Gardens will receive an email containing a password for early access to purchase tickets. This password can also be used in person or over the phone.

Official and authentic tickets for Live at The Gardens summer concert series are available only through The Lincoln Center Box Office. Tickets are not available at the Gardens on Spring Creek.

Don’t miss out on exclusive early access to ticketing for Live at The Gardens! We strongly recommend you purchase or renew your Gardens membership by no later than 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, April 12 to receive this special Member benefit. Visit friendsgosc.org or call 970.416.2486 to learn more.

We invite you to bring your own lawn chairs for our concerts and be advised we continue to enforce our Clear Bag Policy again this summer. Visit fcgov.com/gardens/concerts to learn more.



LIVE

AT THE GARDENS RETURNS FOR A SECOND SEASON IN 2022!

HELP THE GARDENS

FLOURISH

SPONSORED ANNUAL BEDS!

Scattered across The Gardens are annual beds that provide beautiful pops of color, drawing the eye and delighting the senses of all who visit. This year we are seeking donor support to ensure their vibrancy throughout the growing season. Sponsoring an annual bed comes with a new, upgraded or renewed membership, a donor plaque placed on site and recognition in the next issue of *Dig In*.

As The Gardens prepares to host a record number of visitors in 2022, putting our best foot forward is critical to our success in the coming year. Your support of \$500 or \$1,000 will not only ensure that happens, but it also comes with great benefits!

CONSIDER AN ENDOWMENT GIFT

Did you know The Friends has an Endowment? We do! For nearly a decade, the Community Foundation for Northern Colorado has managed—cultivated and fertilized—this fund. Since endowed contributions are permanently invested with only a small percentage withdrawn each year, it was created to ensure the legacy of The Gardens for future generations.

Contact us to learn more about how you can notify us of your intention to include the endowment in your estate plans.

TAX ADVANTAGES OF GIVING TO THE FRIENDS

As a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, giving to The Friends provides you and your family with a number of useful tax advantages. From simpler gifts like cash or qualified charitable distributions from your IRA to more complex estate planning tools like gifts of appreciated stock or charitable remainder trusts, Friends of The Gardens is able to accept donations from a wide range of sources. Depending on your intent, consult your tax advisor on the best way to leave a gift, and, if you want to let us know about it, consider joining the Evergreen Legacy Society so we can ensure your intentions are met.

To help The Gardens flourish in any of these ways, please contact Gardens Development Officer, Michael Coleman, at mcoleman@fcgov.com or 970.224.6106.



WHY WE'RE MEMBERS



JON AND SUE WEISS

Since 2016, Jon and Sue Weiss are two of our most hands-on members at the Gardens on Spring Creek. The Gardens are a perfect fit for this retired couple, as Jon has interests in horticulture and Sue enjoys education.

While Jon enjoys all his work at The Gardens, he is currently working to establish an orchid collection in The Gardens' Butterfly House. He has introduced 16 different varieties that thrive in the humid environment.

Sue is a regular helper with Read and Seed, The Gardens' early childhood learning program. This program serves nearly 2,000 young learners a year with garden story time, movement or song plus a hands-on, nature-inspired activity.

In the year ahead, Jon and Sue look forward to enjoying the expanded gardens and our in-person Spring Plant Sale, as well as supporting additional Read and Seed groups and volunteering for cooking classes and concerts.

DON'T WAIT! RENEW TODAY

Join or renew your membership by April 12 to ensure early access to ticketing for Live at The Gardens Summer Concert Series and our Spring Plant Sale!

Visit friendsgosc.org to learn more.

CONTACT US

Phone: 970.416.2486

Email: gardens@fcgov.com

Website: fcgov.com/gardens

Facebook:

[facebook.com/
TheGardensOnSpringCreek](https://facebook.com/TheGardensOnSpringCreek)

Instagram:

[instagram.com/
gardensonspringcreek](https://instagram.com/gardensonspringcreek)



FRIENDS OF
THE GARDENS
ON SPRING CREEK

2145 Centre Ave. Fort Collins CO 80526

NON-PROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

Fort Collins, CO
Permit No. 2

COMMUNITY

SPRING

PLANT SALE

SAVE THE DATE

In-person sale returns

MAY 14 - 15

Join us for our online sale of annuals, perennials, veggies and herbs. All plants are locally grown and proceeds benefit local horticulture programming. fcgov.com/gardens



THE GARDENS
ON SPRING CREEK

City of
Fort Collins



Colorado State University