

DIG iN

SUMMER 2022
NEWSLETTER



FRIENDS OF
THE GARDENS
ON SPRING CREEK

UPCOMING CALENDAR

August

- 7** Live at The Gardens Summer Concert: **Three Dog Night** (sold out!)
- 15** School's Out! Day Camp registration opens
- 16** Garden to Fork Cooking Class
- 19** Member Morning
- 26** Garden a'Fare
- 30** Garden to Fork Cooking Class
- + *Yoga and Tai Chi in The Gardens*
- + *Summer Camps*
- + *Read and Seed*
- + *Saturday Strolls*

September

- 5** Labor Day, Gardens open!
- 13** Pumpkins on Parade tickets on sale
- 13** Garden to Fork Cooking Class
- 16** Member Morning
- 17** Live at The Gardens Summer Concert: **Stewart Copeland, Police Deranged** with the Fort Collins Symphony
- 20** Garden to Fork Cooking Class
- 25** Live at The Gardens Summer Concert: **Angélique Kidjo**
- 27** Garden to Fork Cooking Class
- + *Adult Education Classes*
- + *Read and Seed*

October

- 13-14** School's Out! Day Camp
- 20-23** Pumpkins on Parade
- + *Adult Education Classes*
- + *Read and Seed*

November

- 1** Garden of Lights tickets on sale
- 24** Thanksgiving Day, Gardens closed
- + *Adult Education Classes*
- + *Read and Seed*

December

- 6** Colorado Gives Day
- 9-24** Garden of Lights
- 25** Christmas Day, 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.





What an exciting time to visit The Gardens on Spring Creek! After two years of construction followed by two years of pandemic, it is wonderful to see our gardens living up to our shared vision of being a world class botanic garden that is community oriented, educational, experiential and sustainable.

Our gardens are a buzz with activity...

GUESTS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY

To date, guests from 46 states plus Washington, D.C., in addition to residents in 178 Colorado zip codes have visited our Northern Colorado botanic garden.

BLOSSOMS GALORE

With more than 2,100 different plant species, varieties and cultivars, our gardens blossom from March through November. In addition, the Butterfly House showcases more than 40 plant varieties providing year-round interest.

POLLINATORS OF ALL TYPES

All those blossoms provide many food sources for all types of pollinators including insects, birds and bats. The beehives are thriving and helping to increase the abundance of the Garden of Eatin'. To understand our impact on local pollinators, City of Fort Collins Natural Areas and Colorado State University Extension are both collecting data on all types found in our gardens.

STUDENTS OF ALL AGES

From our youngest learners in the Read and Seed preschool program, through elementary students in school programs and summer camps, to teens in our new Project Hort program, The Gardens now

provides education programs for all pre-kindergarten students through seniors in high school. For our lifelong learners, our adult education programs offer terrific opportunities to learn about gardening, art, cooking and our natural environment. Health and wellness programs continue to grow.

A UNIQUE BIRD HOUSE VILLAGE

Our latest temporary art exhibit features nine large, upcycled bird houses artfully displayed throughout the site. The one-of-a-kind pieces were created by local artists Dan Huling and Todd Kundla specifically for our gardens. Keep reading to learn more about this exhibit.

INTERNATIONALLY ACCLAIMED MUSICAL ARTISTS

A stellar lineup of critically acclaimed artists from across musical genres have introduced thousands of music lovers to our botanic garden increasing our mission of enriching lives through horticulture.

With so many ways to engage in The Gardens, we hope to see you soon.



*Friends of The Gardens
Board President*

TOM SATTERLY



*Gardens on Spring Creek
Executive Director*

**MICHELLE
PROVAZNIK**

THANK YOU TO OUR PROPAGATION PARTNERS





GARDENS WELCOMES A NEW EXHIBIT:

BIRDHOUSE VILLAGE



Celebrating both the beauty and the ecological functions of birds, including seed dispersal, pollination and pest control, The Gardens is delighted to partner with local artists Dan Huling and Todd Kundla on an exciting new art installation, *Birdhouse Village*, through February 2023.

As assemblage pieces, the exhibit's nine sculptures are made with found objects—a bird-approved style of construction. Birds, along with most every living creature, are resourceful and make their home with what they can readily find in the natural world. Coming from the modern human construct, this scavenging way of life can lead to wild creativity and invite uniqueness. For this exhibit, the artists attempted to channel our inner winged, migratory creatures and adopt the built life of birds.

Collecting materials from across our community, the artists harvested driftwood from lake shores, hauled burnt trees down canyons and pulled bike tubes from the bin at the bike shop. They also incorporated driftwood, salvaged piano parts, scrap wood and many odds 'n ends in their sculptures of micro-habitats and clustered dwellings, creating niche bird neighborhoods throughout The Gardens.

These found-object, assembled sculptures encourage dialogues about what exactly makes a house a home, the merits of varying construction styles and the resourcefulness of a home builder.

GARDEN GOWN

Springing up from the earth to emerge from the surrounding vegetation, *Garden Gown* embodies the building styles of birds who focus on form and function within the constraints of working with what's nearby. You'll see scraps of wood from chairs, tables, spindles from a handrail and salvaged press tin. The longer you look at this sculpture, the more you will see.

CACOPHONY

This piece was a reaction to the current influx of population resulting in a housing boom in many parts of Colorado. Made from old, boxed porch posts, 15 generic bird houses are spiraling out of a willow stand, much like a flock of birds being flushed from the brush. The steel rods, connecting the houses to the base, allow for some kinetic motion when the wind picks up.



CHAR

These darkened and dead pillars bring stark contrast to the lushness of the gardenscape. The overtones of changing climate conditions and wildfires are no match for the sheer beauty of the four sculpted sections of this tree charred by the High Park Fire. This sculpture is difficult to photograph let alone see, as it seems to absorb light. At the same time, gorgeous sheens of reflectivity on the fire-eroded surface pull your eye in when the light is low. Sympathetic of the non-human world, *Char* is our interpretation of how birds might survive a wildfire catastrophe.

ADRIFT

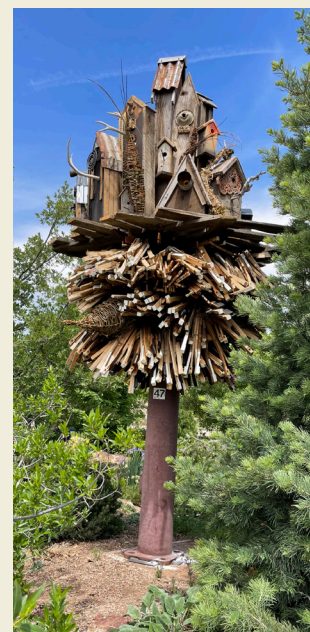
Inspired by balance and cantilever, *Adrift* speaks to the security shelter provides. Many birds demand a high, out of reach nesting place to keep their broods safe. Pulling from heron nests near Terry Lake (and other nests of large birds of prey) and large clusters of driftwood collected from Horsetooth Reservoir, *Adrift* looms over your heads as you explore The Gardens. The "nests" are precariously perched atop steel poles, reclaimed from a mining project.

F.C. POPLAR

Several figurative houses emerge from logs in gentle sweeping curves, making a graceful transformation from organic material to geometric structure. Carved by chainsaw and hand planes from poplar logs harvested from a tree clearing operation in a Fort Collins Natural Area, *F.C. Poplar* acknowledges the one of the most versatile home building materials for bird and human alike.

BIRDHOUSE VILLAGE

Birds, large and small, enjoy exploring the many accommodations making up this sky village. Perched on a light pole salvaged from the Foothills Fashion Mall, this tight-knit grouping of birdhouses is nestled atop hundreds of piano keys, creating a safety barrier from potential predators below. No HOA here—each home brings something unique to the community and celebrates the variety and diversity of their feathered occupants.





> Birdhouse Village can't

WALKING STICK

This sculpture is anchored by a large, anthropomorphic black walnut tree stump donated by a friendly neighbor. From this solid base, *Walking Stick* rises up to become a protective fortress of lathe reclaimed from a deconstructed residence in Fort Collins. Intricate piano pieces, downcycled from Fort Collins' Pianos About Town program, fill the niches surrounding nesting boxes, replete with corrugated roofs.

FALCONER

Drawing inspiration from larger birds of prey, *Falconer* has a large, claw-like base supporting a slender woven spire culminating in a large nesting box protected by a collection of spent leather work gloves. The apex of this birdhouse is embedded with four separate nesting boxes under its pointed cap.

WOVEN

Inspired by the weaver birds, known for nest building techniques using grass stems and other plant fibers, *Woven* uses willow branches harvested from an irrigation canal in nearby town of Laporte. Three truckloads of willow branches make up this undulating organic shape. The sculpture is set on a rotating base, letting this piece dance with the wind.

MANY THANKS TO THE SPONSORS

The Mantooth Company, Outpost Sunsport, Greyrock Wealth Advisors, Francoise, and JoAnne and Carol Busch

The early bird gets the worm, exhibit runs through February 2013.

WHY I'M A MEMBER: BEN MANVEL

As a frequent visitor and sometime Member, I have enjoyed the Gardens for many years, watching it develop from Jim Clark's dream to the impressive reality we see today. I learned a little about the operation of The Gardens during my years on City Council but volunteering for the past year, I have

come to appreciate the synergy of staff and volunteers, city and community that makes it so special.

Most of my hours have been in the Butterfly House, where I especially enjoy greeting the younger visitors. Now I am training as a Gardens Ambassador, to help introduce even more people to our growing enterprise.





LOCAL STUDENTS CREATE BIRD HABITAT IN OUR CHILDREN'S GARDEN

This May, The Gardens benefited from a unique community partnership! Nearly 40 local students, many of whom participated in Wildlands Restoration Volunteers' Seeds of Stewardship Program, came together to create an Audubon Rockies Habitat Hero planting area in the Children's Garden. They planted an attractive area for wildlife, making our gardens even more bird and pollinator friendly.

Seeds of Stewardship is a program run by Wildlands Restoration Volunteers designed to engage local youth in ecological restoration while building connections with the outdoors and other students. Students learn the science of restoration and are exposed to career opportunities in the outdoor field.

High school youth from Fort Collins engaged in five sessions throughout the 2021–2022 school year. A field trip to High Plains Environmental Center in September taught students how to identify native grasses, flowers and shrubs and how to collect seeds outdoors. Adult helpers from the Colorado Native Plant Society, Wildlands Restorations Volunteers leaders and student teachers from the Colorado State University Environmental Learning Center accompanied 40 students and collected 11 native species. Over the winter, students participated in three classroom sessions on how to clean native seeds and propagate plants at the Poudre High School greenhouse facility. Topics included understanding why using native species is important for wildlife, how professionals use these plants to restore ecosystems and the life cycle and biology of native plants.

The Gardens witnessed the success of this program firsthand when students installed their native plants (grown from seeds they had collected themselves) in the Children's Garden. Audubon Rockies worked with us to renovate the beloved area and create a habitat for wildlife in our urban landscape by incorporating native plants into a beautiful, yet ecologically functional garden. Students can visit the space year after year, watch as wildlife utilize the maturing garden and show off their plants to family and friends.



This program's purpose supports bird conservation by preventing habitat loss. Audubon Rockies' Habitat Hero program provides people, businesses and cities with the resources to create bird habitat in their communities. By planting bird-friendly gardens with native plants, not only are we creating more beautiful and water-efficient communities, but we're also connecting people to nature.

Students from Poudre Community Academy and Poudre High School participated from September to May, and students from Centennial High School joined for the May planting at the Gardens.

Learn more about these community partners at wlr.org and rockies.audubon.org. Special thanks to Annemarie Fussell, Community Relations Coordinator with Wildlands Restoration Volunteers for contributing this article.



BOARD NEWS

MEMBERSHIP MILESTONE

Earlier this year, The Friends reached a major milestone—3,000 active Member households! Membership is critical to our long-term success. Over the past two years, The Friends have made significant investments in staffing and infrastructure aimed at helping The Gardens' staff prepare for a new era of growth and development. These enhancements enable our team to provide a world-class experience as we expand our reach into the communities we serve. Thank you for being a Member!

OUR GROWING TEAM

This year, The Gardens will employ nearly 35 people as full-time, part-time or seasonal staff. That's up from 16 in 2018, the last year before our expansion. Every time you renew your Membership, sign up for a class, attend an event or make a donation, you help us grow, allowing us to continue our mission of enriching the lives of people and fostering environmental stewardship through horticulture.

NEW BOARD MEMBER ALLISON HINES

At our last meeting, we elected Allison Hines to be our newest board member. Allison has a rich background in fundraising and community development and currently serves as the Senior Vice President of Development and Communications at United Way of Larimer County, an organization she has been with since 2014. After receiving her B.A. in Technical Journalism from Colorado State University (Go Rams!), Allison began working in fundraising and has 20 years of experience in the local nonprofit and higher education sectors. As a passionate and community-minded professional, she was recognized as the Fort Collins Chamber Young Professional of the Year in 2015 and actively volunteers with Poudre School District and Fort Collins Soccer Club. When she's not raising money for local community needs, Allison enjoys hiking, running, skiing and spending time with her family soaking up life in Colorado. Welcome Allison!



THE GARDENS SELECTED TO AMERICAN PUBLIC GARDENS ASSOCIATION'S IDEA COHORT

The American Public Gardens Association, with support from Denver Botanic Gardens and the Institute for Museum and Library Services, launched an initiative this winter to teach and inspire inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA) initiatives among the association's public garden members.

The IDEA Center for Public Gardens™ was launched earlier this year and will offer intensive peer-to-peer cohorts to develop next practices as all cultural institutions strive to be more inclusive and relevant. We are honored to announce The Gardens on Spring Creek was selected as an Inaugural Cohort Program participant. The group is comprised of board members, executive garden leadership and staff at 21 public gardens, arboreta and parks from across North America. Michelle Provaznik, Gardens Executive Director, Ashley Krueger, Gardens Education Coordinator and Craig Russell, Friends of the Gardens Board Member are representing The Gardens in the cohort.

The Gardens on Spring Creek and Friends of the Gardens Board are dedicated to creating an equitable, diverse and inclusive culture where the contributions of all community members are valued, respected and appreciated, and we are delighted to be part of this important work within our industry at the international level.

For more info on the IDEA program, visit publicgardens.org/node/36634.

Plant Summer Seeds for Fall Produce



As we roll through the latter half of summer, our vegetable gardens are in full swing. Ripe tomatoes abound, cucumber vines are heavy with fruit, and garden-fresh corn is definitely on the menu. With a bit of planning and forethought, you can extend this bounty into autumn by planting seeds for fall vegetable crops like cauliflower, broccoli, lettuce, cabbage, kale, carrots and brussels sprouts. Autumn generally brings lower levels of light, more consistent moisture, and the occasional light frost, all ideal for cool weather crops that excel well into the waning days of fall. With some careful planning, you can keep your garden productive through fall and, if you're ready to build a cold frame, even winter. At Fort Collins Nursery we have a number of great fall seed varieties to choose from. Before you get started it is important to know the following information:

Average First Frost

In Fort Collins, the average first frost date is October 2nd. For those of you in other surrounding areas you can look up your average first frost date through the Old Farmer's Almanac. Timing the planting of your seeds will depend on knowing this date, as different plant varieties are planted a certain number of days or weeks before the first average frost.

Days to Maturity

To find out the best dates to plant your seeds, you will need to calculate when to plant your vegetables so they'll mature before being killed by frost and cold. To find the optimal date, simply subtract the days to maturity from the average first frost date in your region. For example, for a vegetable like beets that take 60 days to reach maturity, you would need to plant your seeds between August 3rd based on our October 2nd average first frost. Most seed packets list information on how many days until the crop

reaches maturity. Bear in mind that some plants will easily tolerate frost or even a freeze, such as spinach, kale, and lettuce.

Cold Hardiness

Certain varieties like broccoli, beans and winter squash are more susceptible to frost while kale and cabbage are more tolerant. If you're worried about losing your crops to premature frost, you may want to choose from the more cold tolerant crops.

Frost Protection

Providing frost protection can extend your season even longer. Simple protections such as row cover help trap air over your plants where the warm soil will help them survive nighttime cold. Cold frames can act as a sort of miniature greenhouse, providing extensive insulation and trapping plenty of heat well into late fall, ensuring delicious home-grown food stays on the table long after the first snows of winter arrive!

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MUST SEE LATE SEASON BLOOMS

CALAMINTHA

PHOTO: BRYAN FISCHER

Bryan Fischer
Curator and Horticulturist



The dog days of summer are upon us. With their arrival, the dogged enthusiasm many gardeners start the season with seems to have disappeared—it's probably napping on a cool tile floor someplace, worn out from all the hot days, watering and weeding. I have good news if you find yourself in such shape: you're a Gardens Member, and as such have easy access to acres of thoughtfully designed and managed garden spaces that dazzle until season's end—whether you pull the weeds or not. Next time you visit, watch for the following late-season perennials, appropriate for home gardens and selected for this feature thanks to sustained aesthetic appeal and ease of cultivation.

This time of year, *Eriogonum allenii*, or shale barren buckwheat, is alight with insects in the Undaunted Garden. Lasting for several weeks, the blooms on these plants are a profusion of minute yellow flowers held in clusters on stiff stems above mats of rounded, two- to three-inch leaves. Native to shale barrens in the Eastern United States, the plant is adapted to alkaline soils and is a breeze to grow with weekly watering. Shale barren buckwheat may prove more adaptable to cultivation in our gardens than some of our western native species and is worth a try if you've had trouble growing *Eriogonum* in the past.

Even easier going and longer blooming than *Eriogonum allenii*, *Calamintha nepeta* 'Montrose White' ('Montrose White' calamint) is quickly gaining steam on our grounds, not to mention my home garden. A personal favorite, this bunching (not running!) mint relative produces a dark-green mound of handsome, rounded foliage and follows with a diaspora of dainty, white to white-lavender throated flowers. Easily grown in full sun with a variety of water regimes, the plant is sterile, and so doesn't have the troublesome seediness of other *Calamintha* taxa. Since the plant isn't able to produce seed, it blooms from July to frost in a perpetual state of what might be described as parental frustration. Bees seem to delight in this dilemma, frequenting the plant more than almost any other in bloom at the time, suggesting it is a prodigal producer of pollen or nectar.

Pollinated by wind, rather than insects, late summer and early fall are peak season for many of our ornamental grasses. Of particular note is *Muhlenbergia reverchonii* UNDAUNTED® (UNDAUNTED® ruby muhly), a surprisingly hardy Texan native selected by Lauren Springer and being promoted by Plant Select®. The long-lived, adaptable grass keeps a low profile through the summer, presenting as a fine-textured tuft of green foliage, before dazzling in the fall with a diaphanous cloud of pink flowers and seeds up to two feet tall and somewhat wider. Equally appealing, the Colorado and Midwest native *Sporobolus heterolepis* (prairie dropseed) shares its long-lived, low-profile



RUBY MUHLY
Salvia farinacea

PHOTO: APRIL WHICKER

habit in the garden with ruby muhly until its bronze-to beige-colored, vase-shaped bloom appears in midsummer. Notably, this is one of the only scented grass flowers—I've heard it compared to both coriander and vanilla. Either way, it's surprisingly pleasant. Both grasses will tolerate some drought or a seasonally wet soil, with the muhly being more drought tolerant and the *Sporobolus* being more cold hardy. Find the latter in the Hellstrip, the Prairie Garden, and the Theme Gardens.

So, if home gardening has you doggone done, remember that working isn't required for a visit here at The Gardens. Soak up some of our late-season scenes in the flashy Welcome Garden, the serene Prairie Garden or one of the many in between and leave refreshed.



GRANT AWARDED TO **LAUNCH OUR INTERNSHIP PROGRAM!**

The Gardens on Spring Creek recently received a Larimer County Workforce Innovation Grant to launch a comprehensive paid internship program. Through this grant, totaling just under \$150,000, The Gardens can offer up to 26 paid internships over the next two years. Another 16 internships are available at the City's Volunteer Services and Neighborhood Services through this grant award.

Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development awarded a total of \$1.1 million in competitive grants to organizations and governments to fund initiatives that find solutions to workforce challenges focusing on employment, training and skills development. The Gardens were selected from 26 proposals, and we are delighted to offer paid internships in horticulture, education and event hospitality to Northern Colorado students starting this fall!

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.

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