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SUMMER 2023
NEWSLETTER



FRIENDS OF
THE GARDENS
ON SPRING CREEK

UPCOMING CALENDAR

August

- 1** Digital membership cards launch
- 5** Live at The Gardens Summer Concert: **Ricky Skaggs** and **Kentucky Thunder** (sold out!)
- 10** Member Morning featuring Prairie Garden with Bryan Fischer
- 19** Bonsai Show
- 25** Garden a'Fare
- 30** Garden to Fork cooking class
- + *Yoga and Tai Chi in The Gardens*
- + *Garden to Fork cooking classes*
- + *Summer Camps*
- + *Read and Seed*
- + *Saturday & Sunday Strolls*

September

- 4** Labor Day, Gardens open!
- 8** Member Morning featuring Garden of Eatin' with Mary Miller
- 9** Open Days Garden Tour
- 16** Live at The Gardens Summer Concert: **Blood, Sweat & Tears** (sold out!)
- 23** Live at The Gardens Summer Concert: **WAR**
- 30** Plein Air Art Show
- + *Yoga and Tai Chi in The Gardens*
- + *Garden to Fork Cooking Classes*
- + *Read and Seed*
- + *Adult Education Classes*

October

- 19-22** Pumpkins on Parade
- 28-30** Día de Muertos Celebration
- + *Adult Education Classes*
- + *Read and Seed*

November

- 1-6** Día de Muertos Celebration continues
- 2** Garden of Lights tickets on sale
- 24** Thanksgiving Day, Gardens closed
- + *Adult Education Classes*
- + *Read and Seed*

December

- 1** Winter hours begin
- 5** Colorado Gives Day
- 8-23** 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.





Since 2019, membership has grown from 500 to 3,000 households annually. Most Members engage with The Gardens in many ways throughout the year, and it is a cornerstone of our success.

Members are the biggest shoppers at the Spring Plant Sale, a driving force behind tickets sales to our many events, loyal patrons to education programming for children and adults, beloved volunteers, and even our most active and valued donors.

As the non-profit partner of The Gardens on Spring Creek, Friends of The Gardens is committed to cultivating a robust and vibrant membership program. It's why we offer free daily admission to The Gardens and Butterfly House, participate in the American Horticultural Society's reciprocal admission program which grants free admission to more than 325 botanic gardens in North America. We also offer discounts on everything from Gift Shop sales to event tickets and education classes to memberships at the Museum of Discovery and invite you to Member Mornings in summer.

It's also why we continually look for ways to enhance the program—like digital membership cards. Look for

more information in the coming pages on the launch that's coming later this summer. Digital membership cards will make us more sustainable and make it easier for Members to show proof of membership at gardens around the country. No more looking for those plastic cards before a trip or paying \$7 for replacements!

Membership is the foundation of our vision of becoming a world-class botanic garden that is community-oriented, educational, experiential, and sustainable. The Gardens grows as membership grows. With that growth, Friends of The Gardens continually deepens its commitment to investing in the types of programming you value most and we value your support.

We've had a wonderful first half of 2023 and we look forward to seeing you this summer. Thank you for being a Member!



*Friends of The Gardens
Board President*

**MARY
ATCHISON**

THANK YOU TO OUR PROPAGATION PARTNERS



With our event season in full swing and our gardens in full bloom, summertime is always the best time to be at The Gardens!



Live AT THE GARDENS SUMMER CONCERT SERIES

Brothers, Chris Botti and Herbie Hancock to the Everitt Pavilion. So far this year, thousands of patrons have watched sold out performances by Rebirth Brass Band with Delvon Lamarr Organ Trio, Old Crow Medicine Show, and Pink Martini.

Only three performances remain in 2023! Already SOLD OUT are Ricky Skaggs and Kentucky Thunder on August 5 and Blood, Sweat & Tears on September 16.

Limited tickets are still available for WAR on September 23. See the full line up and purchase tickets online [LCTix.com](https://www.lctix.com).

Visit [fcgov.com/gardens/concerts](https://www.fcgov.com/gardens/concerts) for more information on weather-related issues, food options, our clear bag policy, and much more.

Don't forget, Members receive exclusive pre-sale access to concert tickets. Get a head start on next year's concert series by renewing your membership today at [friendsgosc.org/membership](https://www.friendsgosc.org/membership).

In just its second season, *Live at The Gardens* has welcomed a diverse mix of artists like Angelique Kidjo, The Wood



GARDEN A'FARE ON AUGUST 25

Everyone's favorite summertime party returns the evening of Friday, August 25. Enjoy a gourmet buffet, complimentary beer and wine, a custom cocktail, and great live music spread across our 12 curated acres of botanic bliss. Guests also have the opportunity to try their luck at the Wine & Whiskey Pull, bid on unique art from our plein air live painting silent auction, and create photographic evidence (the good kind!) at the photobooth. Tickets are \$95 and Members receive 10% off. Purchased online at [friendsgosc.org/garden-afare](https://www.friendsgosc.org/garden-afare).

Garden a'Fare is a fundraiser that benefits Friends of The Gardens on Spring Creek and furthers our mission of cultivating a world-class botanic garden through fundraising and advocacy.





NEW ART EXHIBIT NOW THROUGH APRIL 2024

Colorado artist Jodi Bliss wants to take you on a journey. Through her metalwork, Jodi explores psychology, cultural anthropology, and the wonders of the natural world. Over her 20 years of experience, she and her team have created everything from one-of-a-kind chandeliers to public art pieces for municipalities.

Her new installment coming to The Gardens is a series of sculptures titled, *A Journey of Growth and Transformation*. Each piece speaks to a different stage in this process including choosing a path, opening up, taking a leap, falling, finding gratitude, standing strong in your transformation and sharing it with the universe.

A Journey of Growth and Transformation parallels the growth of a seed: breaking free from its shell, growing, leafing, budding, blossoming, and, finally spreading its own seeds.

View this new exhibit now through April 2024. Standard admission rates apply, and as always, Members get in free!



OPEN DAYS ON SEPTEMBER 9

This year, The Gardens is partnering with the Garden Conservancy for their national Open Days program. The Garden Conservancy is a national non-profit that believes the best way to experience the transformative power of gardens is to visit them in person. We couldn't agree more!

Open Days celebrates the country's most exciting, creative, and innovative private gardens. The Gardens is proud to participate on Saturday, September 9, and we want to extend our admiration and appreciation to the homeowners of our three fabulous local home gardens featured at this year's program.

Tickets to Open Days are à la carte, which means attendees can choose to purchase a ticket to visit one, two or all three featured gardens. There is also an option to purchase tickets to a special "Digging Deeper" learning session about meadow garden design with The Gardens' curator, Bryan Fischer.

Read more and purchase tickets at gardenconservancy.org/open-days/open-days-schedule/larimer-county-co-open-day.

MEMBER MORNINGS

Two Member Mornings remain in 2023! Mark your calendars and join us on the following dates and times.

Thursday, August 10

Prairie Garden with Bryan Fischer

Friday, September 8

Garden of Eatin' with Mary Miller

Both presentations begin at 8:30 a.m. and last for 30 minutes with time at the end for Q&A. Members get in free, and you must be a Member to attend. Simply show proof of membership when you arrive.





PLANT DATABASE AND GROUND TRUTHING



Bryan Fischer, Curator and Horticulturist

One of the most frequent questions our horticulture staff hears is, “Excuse me, but what is this plant?” This is closely followed by, “Do you put out plant identification signs?”

The answer to the first question is typically a tougher one to answer, but the second, I can confidently say, is a resounding “yes, AND...”

Prior to our expansion, all plant identification on the property were engraved vinyl signs our staff printed on site. Due to longevity issues with vinyl, a faulty engraver, and a need to boost staff efficiency, these vinyl signs were phased out and we’ve spent the last couple of years with very little signage on the grounds. The good news is, we’ve begun a transition to laser-engraved, metal signs.

Considerably longer lasting than vinyl, metal signs virtually eliminate the need for re-engraving, reducing staff burden in the long run. They are also more professional in appearance and—if run through a single person at The Gardens—more consistent. Metal signs, however, require production machinery we do not have at The Gardens, and outsourcing the work to a third party causes delays. They also require more proofreading since they represent a significantly larger investment per sign in time and money than vinyl signs.

As part of my still-fresh role as curator of plant collections, I’ve taken on this responsibility.

Together with Mitchell White (our database whiz), we are systematically proofreading spelling, cross-checking names, and ordering batches of laser-engraved metal signage at a pace that should result in our entire grounds (barring one or two gardens that are being examined for possible renovation) being signed by year’s end.

Mitchell and I have also been systematically inventorying (sometimes called ground-truthing) our collections using our database and a new set of high-resolution satellite maps. This is an extraordinarily slow process. Each plant listed in a specific location by the database is individually checked to verify its identity and that it exists in the number specified. Once that process is complete, we then work backwards on what remains, individually identifying and logging each plant in the bed that is missing from the database.

While laborious, this inventory is crucial for working towards any form of accreditation by the American Public Garden Association and is foundational to our understanding the contents—and therefore value, strengths and weaknesses—of our living collections! Perhaps most relevant to the visitor and a good starting point for the first question posed above, is that all these cross-checked, databased plant items will be available for anyone to view on our website under the “Gardens Explorer” feature, allowing visitors to backtrack by garden space to discover what any unsigned plant might be called.

With two labor-intensive, detail-heavy jobs being tackled simultaneously, it’s important to understand that, for the time being, there will be plants with identification signage that are not in the database and vice versa. While it is possible to make substantial progress toward our goal of completing signage across The Gardens by year’s end, a full site inventory will take a bit longer. In the meantime, the horticulture staff appreciates your understanding and, perhaps more importantly, are open to plenty of questions. Just expect to hear “Yes, AND...”

CHILDREN'S GARDEN INSTALLATIONS



Chelsea McLean, Horticulturist

One of my favorite parts of caring for the Children's Garden is watching how kids interact with each element. Some see the pond as a quiet place to sit and watch ducks, while others find joy dropping rock bombs from the bridge to see how far the splash travels. Whatever the pleasure, the Children's Garden continues to impact thousands of childhoods. While no two years are the same, one challenge of a 20-year-old garden is ensuring each season engages adventurous kids in new ways. Thanks to a generous donation, we are excited to announce the addition of two new interactive features.

Three sandstone panels now stand in the shade of the Chanticleer pear trees. Designed by former horticulturist Jacob Mares, the locally quarried Dakota Roughback stone was purchased from The Rock Garden in Fort Collins and installed in late winter. Soon, children will be able to grab a paintbrush from the upcycled flowerpot rack, dip it in water flowing from the adjacent watering can feature, and paint whatever their imagination can dream up! Within a few minutes the Colorado sun wipes the canvas clean, making space for new ideas.

Across the way in the Secret Garden, aspiring rock stars can now jam out on a new steel tongue drum. The head of the drum is in the shape of a daisy atop a kid-sized post and includes mallets to produce resonant sounds in the A-minor scale. Coupled with the existing talking tubes that allow kids to speak to each other at a distance, I'm working on getting a few of the summer campers to start a band! So far, no takers, but stay tuned!

These new features provide opportunities for learning long after the in-your-face excitement of a peak season garden wanes. That's part of experimentation's beauty! Does the sound of the drum carry differently after the leaves have fallen off the trees? Does the ambient temperature affect the length of a strike's reverberation? How long does it take for the water to evaporate from the sandstone under the July sun versus the February sun? The opportunity is limited only by the participant's curiosity and powers of observation.

The Children's Garden is a space for learning, engagement, and fun, but these tenets aren't reserved just for the kiddos. We invite all visitors, from young to young-at-heart, to join us and unleash your inner artists. And, hey, while I have you—have you ever considered starting a band?



WE DID IT AGAIN!

The Spring Plant Sale is a fundraiser benefitting The Gardens on Spring Creek and is vitally important for annual operations. More than 3,300 people shopped the Spring Plant Sale from May 20-21, purchasing more than 32,000 plants and helping us set another sales record, \$165,000!

To our growing partners and Colorado State University, our many volunteers who helped the event run smoothly, and, of course, to our amazing Members who are our most fervent shoppers, thank you for making this year's Plant Sale the best yet! Our staff has already started propagation for the 2024 sale and we look forward to seeing you there!

Members receive early access to reserve their shopping time. Renew your membership today at friendsgosc.org/membership to make sure you're on the pre-sale list for next year.



OPEN DAILY!
TICKETS REQUIRED

During the Summer, The Gardens is open daily from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. with the final Butterfly House tour at 4:15 p.m. Members receive free admission during normal business hours. For more information, please visit fcgov.com/gardens/admissions.

CONTACT US

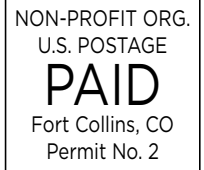
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DOWNLOAD YOUR DIGITAL MEMBERSHIP CARD

BEGINNING AUG. 1

In our efforts to promote sustainability at The Gardens, we are excited to announce the launch of Digital Membership Cards!

On August 1, every Member will receive a link with instructions on how to download their digital card. Digital cards work with any smart phone or touch screen device and are perfect for checking into The Gardens or any of the 325+ botanic gardens in North America participating in the reciprocal free admission program (more information at ahsgardening.org).

No more rooting around trying to find your old card buried in an old purse or couch or paying \$7 for a replacement card. Digital membership cards live in the personal wallet on your phone and can be pulled up anytime, anywhere for quick and easy access.