



# Evergreen Garden Club

## The Wild Iris

Volume 18, Issue 21

May 2008

### *A Word from the President...*

#### SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE

I love our spring workday. It is the first chance we have after the New Year to gather in the garden and begin working the soil together. It is the first chance we have to get back to what we love to do: tend the plants. We work side-by-side, learning and laughing, speaking the same language--gardenese. To non-gardeners our endless chatter about all things growing may seem boring. But to gardeners, our conversation is a delight.

Each of our community gardens is unique in it's location, plants, exposure, water and most important, the people who see and enjoy it's existence. Our largest garden, the Dam Garden, has the most visitors. It is rare to drive by the garden and not see people and dogs strolling around or taking a moment to sit on a bench and become part of the space. The Hiwan Homestead garden enhances an already beautiful setting and building. It has become part of Evergreen's historic past. Our newest garden at the Evergreen Fire and Rescue facility is part of Evergreen's future. I sometimes worry that many people in their work-a-day busy lives overlook the Library, Post Office and Bergen Park Round About gardens. But when we have gardeners working in those gardens, people slow down, take notice and even stop to talk or thank us for our work.

We have no secret community gardens. None of our gardens are restricted access or hidden away from the public. I don't think gardens should be secret; gardens should be shared. I think that is why people look forward to our garden tours, to have an opportunity to see a garden that they have never seen and take away an idea, inspiration or even just a good feeling. When my garden has been on our tour I get to see it through new eyes and I learn what the garden's true value is.

Gardens are habitats for plants, animals and people. When we are exposed to the individual beauty of gardens we remember our connection with the Earth. Henry Mitchell is one of my favorite garden writers. He would be one of the people I would chose to sit and talk with and mostly listen to if I was given the opportunity. He writes in his book, *The Essential Earthman*, "Gardening is not some game by which one proves his superiority over others, nor is it a marketplace for the display of elegant things that others cannot afford. It is, on the contrary, a growing work of creation, endless in it's changing elements. It is not a monument or an achievement, but a sort of traveling, a kind of pilgrimage you might say, often a bit grubby or sweaty, though true pilgrims do not mind that. A garden is not a picture, but a language, which is of course the major art of life."

I will see you all on our May workday. We will be pilgrims in the garden all speaking the same language. Happy Spring!

Karla Briggs



### *EGC Spring Workday, May 13, 2008*



**When:** Tuesday May 13 at 9:00 AM to work and 11:30 AM to eat.

**Where:** Please report to the community Garden where you normally work OR the one you signed up for at April's meeting. Questions - contact Irma Wolf.

**What:** Bring tools, gloves, garbage bag, and a drink. Also bring a sack lunch for the brief

meeting at the Fire Hall afterwards.

**Uncooperative Weather:** You will be notified by phone or email. Please come the Fire Hall at the usual time for a meeting and the Workday will be rescheduled.

**World Gardening Table:** Please bring your plants and items for the World Gardening table.

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#### EGC 2007-2008 Board Members

##### President:

Karla Briggs

##### Vice Presidents:

Ken Ball

Mary DeBaets

##### Secretary:

Pam Hinish

##### Treasurer:

Beth Feldkamp

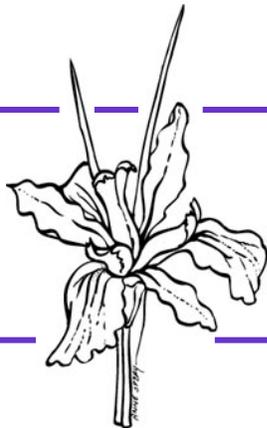
The **Wild Iris** is a free monthly publication for members of the Evergreen Garden Club.

**Meetings** are held on the second Tuesday of the month from Sept. to June at Fire & Rescue Station on Bergen Parkway at 9:15 am. All are welcome.

For **membership** information please contact Beth Feldkamp at 303-679-9465 or EGCBeth@comcast.net

**Newsletter Contributions** are due by the 20th of each month to Liz Hamilton@Liz@Maia-Consulting.com

**Newsletter Editor & Website** Evergreengardenclub.org



# Garden Club News

## THE EVERGREEN GARDEN CLUB, INC. 2008 MOUNT GOLIATH TRAIL TOUR

The Mount Goliath Tour is scheduled for Tuesday July 8, 2008. Response has been great with 17 of the 24 available spaces already filled.

Members - Please remember that even if you signed up, your spot on the tour is only guaranteed when you sign and turn in the required Denver Botanic Gardens Waiver form! Forms can be found online from previous mailings, from tour coordinator Ken Ball (303-403-1434), or at the May work day/meeting.

The tour involves hiking down hill (really more of a rock scramble in places) for about 1.5 miles. The trail is about 12,000 feet elevation, so be prepared for cold weather. Items to bring on the tour: jacket, water, snacks, long pants, sun screen, a hat, and closed toe shoes (preferably hiking boots). No pets or children are permitted on the tour. We will be traveling in groups of 6 or less with each group having a DBG guide.

EGC, Inc. 2008 Tour Coordinator, Ken Ball 303-403-1434 Ken\_ball\_asla@msn.com



### Evergreen Garden Club Hospitality Bites

Claudine Pardi   Kathi Grider   Chris Gray   Susan Jones   Bonnie Hisgen

Our appreciation for sharing breakfast treats last month

Bring your own sack Lunch   May 13, 2008 11:30 am

Lemonade, fruit and vegetable trays and dessert bites provide by  
Lucille Nelson   Toni Yerkes   France McCauley,   Peggy Durham

Next month, Tuesday, June 10th, we will be treated to refreshments provided by  
Evergreen Fire & Rescue. Thanks to all for sharing refreshments this past year.



## Welcome New Members! Naomi Pallante and Connie Ning,

I moved here ten years ago from Austin, where I was an elementary school teacher. I think I inherited my love of gardening from my grandmother, who had an incredible green thumb. I still remember her using eggshells and coffee grounds in her plants. I have two girls. Olivia who is 8 and Sophia is 6. They also love to garden and enjoy designing their own window boxes and growing plants from seeds ~ Naomi Pallante

In addition to gardening, we own a small home in Guatemala and spend the better part of the winter there. This is the land of eternal spring and EVERYTHING grows in that beautiful country. My husband and I have a non-profit there and so spend a good deal of time working with the Mayan people, especially children. We have part time staff when we are here. I also love to hike, and read and write poetry.

I do have a large perennial garden and this year am putting in a rather ambitious (some might say over ambitious) vegetable garden ~ Connie Ning

## *Minutes of the April 8th, 2008 Meeting*

Evergreen Garden Club Meeting Tuesday April 8, 2008 Board in attendance- Karla Briggs, Beth Feldkamp and Mary De Baets.

President Karla Briggs called the meeting to order at 9:45 AM. Guests were Beth, Bunny, Connie, Steve, Donna, Norma, Linda, Marta, Wait and Karla. Most of the guests were from the Idaho springs Garden Club. In total there were 50 people in attendance. The minutes from March meeting were approved.

### **Correspondence**

We received a letter telling us about the Jeffco Summer Camp. The camp will be having campers do yard work and some gardening. Church of the Hills asked the club to participate in their "Jesus has left the building" day. Peggy and Dale Fetchenhier are coordinating a day of cleanup at our Metro Garden with the church. The date is Sunday June 29th at 10:15 am -12:15 at the garden. If you are interested in assisting them contact Peggy and Dale. Secretary- Tricia Scott subbed for Pam Hinish. We received a letter to confirm our 501 C 3 approval. We are now Evergreen Garden Club Inc.

**Budget Report-** Beth reported we have \$1565.19 in checking and \$6320.85 in savings.

**Earth Day-** Saturday April 19th at the Lakehouse. Tina Kellogg is requesting more volunteers to man our booth there. Please contact Tina if you can help.

**Mount Goliath Tour-** Tour is on July 8th. Waivers must be signed and turned in. Contact Ken Ball for further details.

**Sign Up for May garden Workday-** Karla passed put a sign up sheet for the next meeting's workday. We will meet at our assigned garden at 9:30 AM. Bring tools, gloves, garbage bag, and a drink. Also bring a sack lunch for after when we will reconvene at 11:30 AM back at the Fire Hall for our meeting. The club will provide beverages and cookies. If the weather is not cooperating someone will contact you via email or phone if not on the email list. If the workday is cancelled we will still have a meeting at the Fire Hall. If you do not know what garden to work at contact Irma Wolf for details.

**2008 Garden Tour/Lecture/Plant Sale -** Irma Wolf was not able to attend.

Plant Sale Chair Tricia Scott reported that the plant sale is going well at this point- Thank you for your orders. The delivery date for the plants will be Monday June 23rd at Kathi Grider's. Pick up for members will be the following day on the Tuesday. The time for pick up has not been set yet. Tricia will contact the committee as to when a meeting will be held.

Box Lunch -Chair Bonnie Hisgen has contracted Aspen Specialty Foods to do the lunch. The lunch will include a Fruit Salad, Pasta Salad, Sandwich and a drink – the cost will be \$10.00. Gift Certificates For Garden Homeowners - Karla said the board decided to give \$25 gift certificates from our business members as gifts to the homeowners on the tour.

Publicity and Tickets- Chair Mary DeBaets said that the message about our Tour is going in several publications (Canyon Courier, Mtn Connection, Tupper Briggs newsletter, Serenity and into the Master Gardeners Newsletter.) and that progress is being made on the ticket design and how to deal with the Tour, Lecture and Lunch. At this point the pricing will be \$15.00 for the Tour, \$15.00 for the lecture and \$10.00 for the lunch separately. Tickets currently will be for sale at Wild Bird Store, Stems, Sundance and at the Evergreen Nursery.

Artists in the Garden – Chair Jo Powers reported that there are five artists for the garden excluding Yellow House due to space to set up there.

Signs- Karla showed us our updated sign from Zuni Signs that has our "Inc" on it with the date of our Tour on it. We will rotate it around town. It was suggested to hang it at One World Café as one of the sites to display it.

**New Business -** It was asked that a Nominating Committee be formed. Karen Mac Farquhar, Tricia Scott and Tina Kellogg volunteered to steer that committee. If you have any suggestions for board members please email them ASAP.

Marilyn Kaussner spoke about the Geo Dome Greenhouse proposal for Buchanan Park. It will be a Community Greenhouse. For further details, contact Marilyn. Beth organized a Membership and Sponsors Booklet- It has all the names, addresses etc. in it. It is for sale at \$1.00. They will be available at the next meeting.

Our Speaker Susan Yetter of Papa Predra and Mama Tierra spoke on the uses, placement and beauty of ornamental grasses. It was a wonderful visual and informative speech. We thank Susan for such a great presentation. It was enjoyed by all.

We adjourned at approximately 10:30 AM.



## Over The Garden Fence *By Julaine Kennedy*



Recently I read a wonderful article about Ballymaloe House and the famous Ballymaloe Cookery School in Cork County Ireland. Maybe some of you have had the pleasure of visiting Ballymaloe. My quick and magical journey began when I uncovered the most recent Colorado Celtic Newsletter. Julianna Leber's article, *The Celtic Kitchen –Pure and Simple* related the history of Ballymaloe House and their proprietors Ivan and Myrtle Allen. It is a large estate in the countryside near Middleton, Ireland located in the middle of a 100-acre, organic farm of which ten acres devoted to organic market gardens, orchards and greenhouses.

In the late 60's Darina O'Connell, a young woman discovered Ballymaloe House and applied for a staff position in the kitchen. Surrounded by specialty gardens, livestock and kitchen, Darina found her life time dream began. The kitchen staff spent part of the day at cooking classes and serving meals to Ballymaloe guests. As I read on, I was reminded of the three summers I spent at Mille Lacs Lake, near Onamia, Minnesota. I was fresh out of my first year at college and hired as the recreational director. Away from home and living in a large one room cabin with a group of novices from Dubuque IA., we worked, slept and filled the day out fishing, hiking and waterskiing. Do nuns play card games? They sure do, but I was not an easy learner.

Back to Ireland...Ivan and Myrtle Allen had a son, Tim. In the late 60's Darina and Tim were married and she formed Ballymaloe Cookery School. The school philosophy was to know your source...know and care about the quality of livestock farms, know the quality of the soil where you plant your vegetables, fruit and herbs. The current movement toward organic, natural foods can learn from Darina. Have you heard about the Slow Food movement? Darina is Ireland's leader of Slow Food, centered on product sourcing and taking time with food — slow — in the making and the eating. It's fresh — not processed. It's from neighborhood farms and stores — not from industrial growers...



Our area community gardens, small organic farm and orchard growers are good examples of slow food. It is possible that in the near future we will see a slow food community effort in our mountain community. There is room in Evergreen to share food, conversation and promote well being among us.

I look forward to the summer!! Our winter snow and 'slow snow melt' will help the landscape get off to a wonderful season of gardening. This month is a perfect time to pull weeds; they are so easy to dig out right now. Don't wait until the roots get a hold on the soil and begin to bloom. Mark your calendar to show up to spruce up our community gardens on May 13th. Volunteer some time to our 2008 Garden Tour. There is so much to learn about Rocky Mountain gardening while participating at the club's events. Friendships grow along with the flowers and vegetables. We all look forward to being with you! *Julaine*

### **Pediocactus simpsonii** Photo by Lorna Chorn



This beauty is the harbinger of spring in my Genesee “wildscape”. Within a few days of April 15th, it bursts into bloom and brings a winter-weary smile to my face. My husband knows to drop everything and just get it over with when I yell, “Come see - the cactus is blooming!” The following information tells much more about one of our native Colorado cactus.

The mountain ball cactus (*Pediocactus simpsonii*) is a wide-ranging plant found throughout much of the mountain west. Its preferred habitat is generally higher in elevation and cooler and moister than most other cacti. This is one of the most cold-hardy species and has been found as high as 11,000 feet.

**Stems:** Globular stems that are generally singular but occasionally forming small clusters. Older plants can be up to 5 or 6 inches in diameter. The surface of the plant is covered with spirally arranged tubercles which are conical and about 1/4 to 1/2 inch long

**Flowers:** The 3/4 to 1 inch, bell shaped flowers open from mid April on into May. The buds and flowers originate in a small circle at the apex of the plant. Flower colors range from magenta, pink, straw-yellow, to whitish. This is likely to be the earliest cactus to bloom.

**Fruits:** The 1 1/2 inch long fruits are almost spherical. They are green at first, turning tan and splitting along the side when dry and mature.

**Habitat:** These plants can be found growing in a variety of, grassland, sagebrush, pinyon-juniper woodland, and montane forest habitats.

**Comments:** This cactus is frequently concealed under larger vegetation and is frequently camouflaged under plant litter and grasses. During winter dormancy it may actually shrink below the ground surface. This plant shows quite a bit of variation throughout its range and some taxonomists recognize several varieties.

**Culture:** A well drained, porous soil is preferred. A desert rock garden with lots of additional coarse sand and gravel is ideal. Partial shading, especially during the hottest part of the summer, is helpful. Supplemental water should be provided during the growing season when the plants are getting established and during extended hot dry periods. Do not add any supplemental water during the fall and winter seasons. Light annual applications of a well balanced fertilizer may improve plant vigor and flowering.

Text courtesy of Colorado State University Cooperative Extension  
website:

[www.colostate.edu/Dept/CoopExt/TRA/PLANTS/demogardens](http://www.colostate.edu/Dept/CoopExt/TRA/PLANTS/demogardens)

Pasque Flower (*Pulsatilla vulgaris*) Photographed by  
Linda Ringrose in her garden on April 20th.



FROG (Front Range Organic Gardeners) is having their annual plant sale on May 15, 6:30 to 9:30, at the Presbytery Hall, 1710 So. Grant, Denver, 80210. They specialize in heirloom varieties of tomatoes. There are also many other vegetables (including lots of peppers), herbs, berries, & landscape plants.

For updated information, go to [www.coauctioneers.org](http://www.coauctioneers.org), click on Auctions, then click on May 15. You may also contact Meredith Bossert at [LM81042@AOL.com](mailto:LM81042@AOL.com) or 303-697-4534.

# HORTICULTURE

## The Dirt on Gardening by Colin McEnroe from the June, 1989 issue of *Mirabella* magazine

Why should I grow my own vegetables when I can get them at the store? Good question.

Vegetable gardening is one of humankind's most enriching activities. It separates us from the lesser animals who stroll shiftlessly around the jungle eating whatever they want right off the trees, instead of spending incalculable amounts of time, effort, and capital in a vainglorious attempt to produce a few eggplants.

Our prehuman ancestors (who roamed the vast Serengeti and are virtually extinct today except for the life forms which inhabit Morton Downey, Jr.'s audience) did not grow their own vegetables. They lacked the opposable thumb needed to get the seed packet open, and thus could only stare at the pictures of the vegetables and wonder what it would be like to eat one.

In a way it was a happier time. These stooped nomadic hominids never had to confront the essential unfairness of gardening: one's own vegetables are always fungus-sparkled, bug-gnawed, mysterious carbuncle-festooned counterfeits of the happy, shining vegetables on the packet, which are probably treated with botanical Valium, like glamorous screen sirens.

The first vegetable plot was started by the Egyptian Pharaoh Hiatal Ruptures VI whose garden took four years to build, cost seven hundred workers their lives, and produced one medium-sized zucchini. In the centuries that followed, gardening techniques have been refined to the point where a single half-acre garden may yield three tomatoes and a cucumber with relatively minor human casualties.

Still the canny reader may wonder: why should I grow my own vegetables when I can get them at the store? Good question, smarty-pants reader. One possible reason is that supermarket produce contains such vast amounts of pesticide residues that most people would receive greater health benefits from a crunchy salad of Slim Jims and fuel rods from nuclear reactors.

If you are in doubt as to whether you would enjoy having your own vegetable garden, take the following personality quiz. You will have twenty minutes to complete the quiz. Choose **ONLY ONE** answer for each question. **DO NOT** break the paper seal until told to do so. If you should need to leave to use the bathroom during the quiz period, a proctor will accompany you. You may begin.

1. My idea of a pleasant evening is: a. Dinner and a movie. b. Bingo, freemasonry, and a snack. c. Prying a slug off a leek.
2. When I die I want to: a. Go quick. b. Take Bryant Gumbel with me. c. Be sucked head-first into a compost heap.
3. I enjoy sex more when: a. Another person is present. b. Inca gourds are involved. c. bits of mulch and gypsum are lodged in my personal crannies.

**STOP.** Do not continue taking the quiz. If you answered "c" to all three questions or even bothered to take the quiz at all, my guess is that you have an enormous, pulsating void in your life that can be filled only by vegetable gardening.

In setting up your garden, however, you should be aware of several major myths about horticulture.

Myth #1. A novice gardener has to buy about \$700 worth of equipment. Utter nonsense. About \$4700 is more like it. I recommend a tractor, a Rototiller, a broacher, a crimper, a pinker, a combine, a carbine, a whacker, a reaper, a shredder, a chopper, a clipper, a pinta, and a santa maria. You may find it difficult to pay for all this especially since, in order to get your garden going, you must ask your employer for a one-year leave of absence.

Myth #2. A novice gardener will not be able to grow vegetables if soil conditions are not quite right. Actually, this is true. The real myth is that you would be able to grow vegetables if conditions were ideal. You probably have neighbors who have become Jedi masters, who can make cucumbers grow in solid tungsten merely by concentrating their thought beams. Do not be misled by their example. The first thing you need to do is examine the soil in your yard to determine what kind it is. You will most likely find the following types: sandy loam, acidic peat, sammy kay, noodles romanoff, bix biederbecke and alkaline theformerdetroitigersoutfielder. Unfortunately, all of these are utterly toxic to plant life. You might as well try to breed tropical fish in Mr. Clean as grow vegetables in this soil. You will be lucky if there is a patch of usable soil the size of a piece of raisin toast in your yard. So now what you have to do is start trucking in "soil amendments," a euphemistic term meaning "high-priced filth." When you garden, substances -- such as bat feces and cantaloupe rinds and Wade Boggs's hair -- that you could not have paid the world's most desperate person to take off your hands, become insanely valuable. If you live in an upscale neighborhood, you will probably get sucked into a competition with your neighbors over who can find the most exotic kind of animal waste to dump on his garden. One guy buys New Zealand lizard guano, so the next guy has to get composted Senegalese gnu urine. The advice from this corner: stock up on Irish otter vomit and Sri Lankan cobra castings.

Myth #3. Plants will not grow if there isn't full sunlight. Not true. For example, I have a very shady yard and I grow all sorts of alleged vegetables. Most of them have a vaguely fernlike taste, but you get used to that. If you truly prefer real tomatoes to tomato-ferns, you can always rent additional garden space on the Yucatan Peninsula and jet down there on odd-numbered days.

I myself grew a little tired of marinara-fern sauce. So I rented a sunny plot at the nearby town garden, only to discover that the town garden had been used for years and years by the sorts of people who use lots and lots of chemicals without doing much to restore the soil quality. The result was a little piece of Connecticut that had turned into a swirling twister-plagued landscape oddly reminiscent of Dune or Grapes of Wrath, inhabited chiefly by mutant, spiked, flesh-tearing recombinant DNA weeds from hell.

Which brings me to mulch. MULCH. Mulch. Say it loud and it's almost like weeding. Say it soft and it's nematodes breeding. For gardeners, mulch becomes a separate, perhaps coequal, avocation in itself. Mulch is extremely dead stuff that you use to crush the life out of all the hardy, health-club-visiting, aerobic plants that live in your garden so that the frail, spindly Bronte sister plants you are trying to grow will overcome their natural inclination to wither and die.

If you are on a fixed income but do not trust yourself to go around collecting random dead stuff, the best bet is to buy many sacks of "pine bark mulch," for what it would cost to upholster the entire country of Chad in Harris tweed. I urge all congresspersons not currently locked into heavy drinking and womanizing schedules to launch a full-scale investigation of the mulch industry. I mean, isn't pine bark basically a natural by-product of the ongoing rape of our forestlands? And that's entry-level mulch. You get into the designer stuff -- crushed abalone shell and blackened armadillo scales -- and the numbers start to get big. So you've got miles and miles of mulch, plus all of this other stuff I've mentioned. You're ready to garden, right?

Nope. You still need seeds.

I see that it is getting dark outside, but I'd like to point out something about seeds in the minutes left to me. When you were a kid, it was easy to pick out seeds because everything went by its generic name. Tomatoes, peppers, radishes, ocarinas, vermouth. Now, all of the vegetables have names that suggest unpromising racehorses, such as Fat Boy, Little Squat, Lucky Lady, Personal Problem. By the time you get all of these sorted out the planting season will have passed you by, so you can bring all of your unused mulch to the Jedi masters and pray that they will give you an extra kohlrabi or two when harvest comes.



Lying there afterwards on the shady alkalinic tundra of your yard, you might comfort yourself with the thought that it probably would have been unfair to string a lot of plants and predators along with the false hope that you had any idea of what you were doing.

Article submitted by Lynn Dimmick

*Charley's Tomatoes - Fruitful Persistence*  
by Lorna Chorn

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## Denver Botanic Gardens Schedule of Events [www.denverbotanicgardens.org](http://www.denverbotanicgardens.org)

**The Gardens' 2008 Plant Sale** will start the spring planting season with more than 85,000 plants for sale. The sale will highlight plants from 12 different plant divisions including favorites like perennials and annuals as well as PlantSelect® plants, water plants, 75+ kinds of herbs, plants grown at Denver Botanic Gardens and hanging baskets.

This year you can Get Urbanized! In conjunction with this year's premiere exhibit, Urban Nature, you can get expert input on the best plants for your city setting. The annuals section will have pre-packaged plant kits for small space container plantings.

Horticulture experts will be on-hand to answer questions and assist you in choosing the right plants for your garden.

While a limited number of shopping carts will be available at the sale, we encourage you to bring your own wagon for shopping.

The Gardens will close at noon on May 8 in preparation for the Plant Sale Preview Party.

**Date / Time:**

Fri., May 9

8:30 – 10 a.m. (member-only shopping)

10 a.m. – 6 p.m. (open to public)

Sat., May 10

8:30 – 10 a.m. (member-only shopping)

10 a.m. – 4 p.m. (open to public)

**Admission:**

Free entry and free advice from horticulture experts! What's not to like?

Members receive 10% off all purchases!



**Parking Information:** Limited parking will be available. Visitors are welcome to utilize the free shuttle service to-and-from the gardens. Guests should park at the Church in the City located at 1530 Josephine Street, Denver, CO 80206.