

The Wild Iris

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE....

Well, welcome to springtime in the Rockies, on Solstice morn, I woke to two feet of snow and subzero temperatures. Oh, life up here is grand, ain't it? In the spring we seem to get a lot more snow in this little valley than other places in Evergreen, and here as I write, we're expecting another ten to eighteen inches tonight! I guess we bless all this moisture and move on with our 'indoor' seed starting efforts. As much as I love it up here, I long to welcome in the spring some day, with bare feet on warmer soils!

As gardener's we're all itching for that feeling of soil between our fingers and our toes, in fact after a long cold winter it's all we want to think about. It isn't easy, nor is it the board's preference to continue long discussions on bylaws or policies but know that your board of officers, along with policy making committees are working hard on the club's behalf to make this transition from a club of dirt loving gardeners to a 501 (c) 3 corporation. The better and smoother this transformation, the more input we get from you, ensures that we can all, once again get back to that dirt and the green life we love some much.

Please visit the following link

<http://www.EvergreenGardenClub.org/private/committee.html>

to read the recommendations of our Financial Ad Hock Committee, we will be voting on this at our meeting on April 13th. The more informed you are the better the discussion. **THANK YOU** for your patience. Tina

APRIL 13, 2010 MEETING & PROGRAM

“Chickens in Your Garden”

Connie Ning, will share her extensive knowledge of raising chickens. She will advise us of the many benefits of raising chickens and discuss their interaction with the garden.

Meet at the Fire & Rescue Station on Bergen Parkway at 9:15 am. Remember to bring your plants, cuttings, pots etc for the World Gardening Table... And in keeping with being green, your own coffee mug.



NEW MEMBERS

No new members

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

4/15 Jeri Dufford

4/13 Bev Wickland

4/16 Louise Mounsey

4/25 Jeff Davidson

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2009-2010 OFFICERS

- President—Tina Kellogg
- Vice President—Diana Aldridge
- Secretary—Stan & Liz Barrett
- Treasurer—Dwight Gilliland
- Past President—Karla Briggs
- Member Emeritus—Louise Mounsey

8th Permaculture Principal

“Integrate Rather than Segregate.”

Many, many examples of this theory are put to use in everyday life as well as in the gardens. I'll discuss a few of the practices we use in the garden this month and leave how it applies to life to your imaginations!

“Many hands make light work!” This motto is yet another thing my grandmother tattooed on my forehead; so much so, you would have thought she originated the saying. Of course her versions always seem to pertain to all the chores around the farm. For example, canning fifty quarts of pears on a hot sticky afternoon goes much faster with three or four pairs of hands!

The web site reference talks about composting, and how any individual item you put in your compost does little good in the garden, when put in singularly. However combining or *integrating* many items in the compost pile will stew up together to make the most nutritious amendment you can imagine. That's because the decomposing process of each individual item, adds and enhances the others. For instance, a small amount of fine wood chips and pine needles can greatly assist in lightening up the overall composition of the compost. However, when wood chips start to decompose, they absorb a lot of nitrogen to do so. You have to be sure to add plenty of nitrogen rich greens or green manure crops to compensate for this. (Green manure being plant material, not animal waste.) The idea is that 'many ingredients' working together to balance each other enhances and enriches the ultimate combination.

Another good example of 'integrate rather than segregate' comes in the form of companion planting; where the root systems of different plants help each other out. Onions and strawberries, one of the oddest combinations I'd heard of, serve to sweeten both. There are many, many combinations of plants that do well together, strengthening the quality of the soils as well. And it's not just the root systems that assist: The fragrances of herbs often repel insects such as the basil repels flies from the tomato plants. I've talked often about my favorite combinations of African marigolds dispersed with broccoli and cabbage. Marigolds have that stinky habit of confusing the moths that just love to lay their eggs in the broccoli and cabbage. Unfortunately the pretty little annual marigolds that are most common have had most of the stinky bred out of them. I use the African marigolds as they are a much taller plant, and get them started quite early so they are taller than the brassica and bloom well ahead of the vegetable.

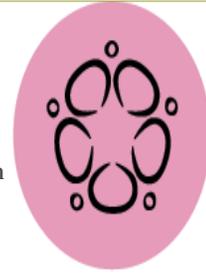
In contrast there are also plants that are true antagonists. Don't make the mistake of planting peas where the chives have run amuck. The chives do well regardless, but the peas, not so much. In fact the chives stunted the peas to where they didn't grow at all. Interestingly enough, things that do well with bush beans, don't help the pole beans at all. And I'm sure most of you have heard of the Native American's "three sisters" corn, squash and pole beans. But don't plant any of those near the potatoes.

Companion planting is one of the most fascinating subjects in permaculture, worthy of chapters of research, (as well a degree in biochemistry!) My favorite reference for the veggie garden is by John Jeavons, *How to Grow More Vegetables...* he donates an entire chapter to this subject as well as lists and charts. There are numerous web sites loaded with this information as well. Simply type 'companion planting' into your preferred search engine.

While all this makes for great reading and study, I've found it somewhat challenging to plant some crops together, or as tightly as some recommendations tell you. It makes the collection more difficult. As well, our short seasons necessitate giving more space and ultimate growing conditions to plants that take longer. Study and observation in your very own microclimate will *always* be your best reference.

No doubt the studies of permaculture go beyond our gardens and speak to the heart of balancing our environment. The 'many hands' of nature provide an abundance of plant, shrub and tree souls who then provide for the birds and wildlife. I spotted my first robin this morning, and even though I thought I'd heard a new song added to the morning melodies, I hadn't given much thought as to who's familiar tune that was until I spotted him. Our environmental whisperer of springtime and seasonal change has once again returned. I hope he fares well through the next snowstorm!

HAPPY SPRING to you all, Tina



8. Integrate rather
than segregate
"Many hands make light work"

MEETING PHOTOS —MARCH 9, 2010

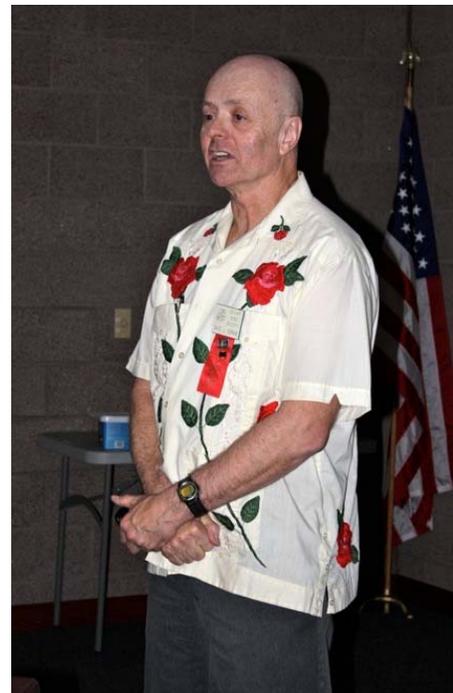


Stan and Liz Barrett, Co-Secretaries of the Evergreen Garden Club



Marilyn Kaussner made an announcement for volunteering Earth Day, April 24th

David Ingram, consulting rosarian for the Denver Rose Society



THANKS! To member & Historian Susan Blake for many of the great photos in this issue!

HIGH ALTITUDE VEGETABLE GARDEN

By Karla Briggs

HIGH ALTITUDE VEGETABLE GARDENING – ONE MORE TIME!

Spring is officially here according to the calendar. Spring is also officially here according to my nose! One day last week, as I was walking down to the barn early in the morning, I smelled spring. I also saw 3 feet of snow covering most of my north sloping property. It will be a month or two before I can begin to garden outside but I am ready to roll once the soil warms up.

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This month we will discuss the importance of mulching and watering the high altitude vegetable garden. The benefits of mulching are as follows: minimizes the evaporation of water from the soil surface--possibly reducing the need to irrigate by 50%, maintains moisture level in the soil, encourages beneficial activity of soil organisms, reduces soil compaction, maintains soil temperatures, controls weeds, and eventually becomes incorporated as soil amendment. So, for a little extra work, mulch provides a lot of benefit.

How much mulch to apply depends on the material used. Grass clippings make excellent mulch. Do NOT use clippings that have been treated with herbicides or pesticides in the past month. Layer ¼ inch thick and allow each layer to dry out before adding the next. In our dry climate, layers can be added weekly. Use only a few layers to stop weed germination--do not apply thick layers of clippings as they will mat, reduce water and air infiltration, and begin to rot. Apply the clippings carefully around the crops so they don't stick to the leaves. To further control weeds, use a couple sheets of newspaper under the clippings--it limits the light, preventing germination. Apply only a couple sheets to prevent a carbon-to-nitrogen imbalance in the soil. Do not use "glossy" paper because those inks are most likely not soy-based, while newspaper inks are. The newspaper and the grass clippings can be incorporated into the soil in the fall as organic matter.

Black plastic is recommended for use as mulch around tomatoes, pepper, melons, and squash because it warms the soil. It is not recommended for other crops, such as lettuce, peas, beans and root crops, because it warms the soil too much. Black plastic controls weeds and reduces the need for irrigation; it is easy to overwater crops when using black plastic. Be careful to not let the plastic touch the crops, as they will burn. Do not plow the black plastic into the soil in the fall; it will never decompose and is not a soil amendment. There are some new biodegradable plastics for horticultural use becoming available on the market. CSU cautions using colored plastics to increase crop yield because they soften the texture of the fruit and aren't that beneficial in Colorado's high intensity light.

Clear plastic can be used to warm the soil in the spring before planting. Warming the soil can give an extra week or two to your growing season. But clear plastic will encourage weeds to germinate because it acts like a greenhouse. Turn the soil and rake the weed sprouts out before planting.

When using plastic, be sure to bury the edges or hold them down in some way to prevent the plastic from blowing around in the wind. Also, the irrigation source, i.e. soaker hose, will have to be installed under the plastic.

Weed free straw, not hay, makes excellent mulch for potatoes. Pine needles also work well. The straw or needles protect the tubers growing near the surface from sunlight and eliminates having to mound the soil around the plants. Potato tubers exposed to sunlight turn green and mildly toxic. Remember when your grandmother said eating a raw potato would give you worms? Turns out only the green ones will give you a bellyache. The straw or needles can be turned into the soil as amendment in the fall.

I have used soil prep as mulch for the garden. It can be purchased by the bag or in bulk. It works well and can be turned in as a soil amendment in the fall.

CSU does not recommend using wood bark or chips as mulch in the vegetable garden. They interfere with the future year's soil preparation and take around ten years to decompose in the soil. Wood bark and chips placed on the soil surface do not tie-up soil nitrogen, however sawdust could create a carbon-to-nitrogen imbalance. Wood

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from High Altitude pg. 4)

bark and chips do make excellent mulch between raised-bed boxes.

They control the weeds and give the walkways around the beds a finished look.

Vegetables require an adequate supply of water for quality and yield. Check the soil moisture in the garden regularly. Irrigate when the top 2-4 inches of soil is dry to the touch. Be sure to check the soil under the mulch. Irrigate the garden in the morning when the temperatures are cool; plants watered in the morning will tolerate the higher temperatures of the mid-day. Properly preparing the soil, using mulch and having an efficient irrigation system will help to conserve water.

Vegetables use about ¼ inch of water per day during the growing season. Use straight-sided cans placed around the garden to measure the amount of water the irrigation system is producing. Time the irrigation system to learn how long it takes to collect one inch of water. Apply one inch of water every four days and that should be enough to grow healthy crops. A rain gauge will also help in determining how much natural precipitation is falling on the garden.

Keep in mind that cooler temperatures require less water than warm, wind will increase the need for water, crops that are blooming require more water, and, most important, MULCH will reduce the amount of water required.

Choosing an irrigation system depends on your garden layout and how much you are willing or able to spend. Sprinkler irrigation is efficient; it wets the entire soil surface. But tall crops such as peas and pole beans can interfere with water delivery. Some crops, such as tomatoes, peppers and potatoes, are subject to foliar diseases caused by water splashing on the leaves.

Drip irrigation is great for raised beds and block style layouts. One drawback with a drip system is that it can easily become plugged up with dirt or mineral deposits. Drip systems can be automated with a controller and installed with rain shut-off controls.

Soaker hose irrigation works well in a traditional row style layout or raised beds. Place the soaker hose on the surface of the soil, UNDER the mulch. If you are not using mulch (ah hem) bury the soaker hose under the soil a few inches to prevent the hose from breaking down in the sunlight. Soaker hoses work best on level ground in short runs less than 25 feet. The water should drip, not spray, out of the hose; if water is spraying out of the soaker hose, the pressure is too high. Because of the low water pressure, the system may need to run for an hour or more to adequately water the garden.

Next month we will wrap up our high altitude vegetable gardening with critter protection and block style and raised bed designs. After that, we will just have to get our hands dirty!

Karla Briggs

Sundance Garden Center has a new website sundancegardens.com

Garden Center Specials

April Garden Center Specials

Stimulus package for your garden!! Mention this ad for 10% off soil, compost, & mulch.

Garden Tips

April Garden Tip

Give your perennial garden a soil drench with Age Old Kelp or Age Old Bloom. This will encourage healthier soil, greater flowering, and stimulate roots.

MINUTES MARCH 9, 2010

MINUTES OF THE GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING HELD ON 03-09-2010 AT THE BERGEN PARK FIRE & RESCUE TRAINING CENTER.

President Tina Kellogg opened the meeting at 9:45am. The number of members in the meeting was counted to be 38, which satisfied the newly amended quorum requirement of 25% of the membership. She welcomed guests and new members.

Tina then moved to retroactively approve the minutes for the General Membership meetings held in November, December and January as published in the Wild Iris Newsletters for December, January and February respectively. The motion was seconded by Stan Barrett and approved by the members in attendance.

REPORTS FROM BOARD MEMBERS

Secretary's Report Stan Barrett asked for any comments or corrections to the minutes of the February General Membership which were published in the March Wild Iris. Since none were offered he asked that the minutes be approved as published. A motion was made, seconded and approved.

Treasurer's Report Dwight Gilliland summarized the activity and balances in our bank accounts. The balances in the Savings and Checking accounts as of 03-08-2010 were \$10,033.36 and \$1,303.79 respectively. A copy of the Banking Summary will be filed with these minutes. Dwight briefly discussed the preliminary budget but asked for agreement to delay formal presentation of the budget until the April General Membership meeting, at which time he will ask for the membership's approval of the budget. There were no objections to this request.

OTHER BUSINESS

-- Tina asked for volunteers to represent the club at the Earth Day event to be held in Evergreen in April and passed a list around for sign-ups.

-- Karen MacFarquhar, the Community Gardens coordinator, said that additional volunteers are needed to help with garden maintenance and passed a signup list around.

-- Karla Briggs reported that she received a letter requesting advice on selecting a suitable tree to be planted as a memorial for a former Evergreen resident who died recently in an airplane accident.

There being no further business, the President adjourned the meeting at 10:10am, after which the members took a break for refreshments and socializing. Diana Aldridge then introduced our Guest Speaker, David Ingram, who is a consulting rosarian and a past president of the Denver Rose Society. He gave a presentation on "High Altitude Rose Gardening" which included information on sources of roses suitable for this area and their culture and maintenance.

These Minutes respectfully submitted by the Co-Secretaries, Liz and Stan Barrett.

SPRING !

Springtime is the land awakening. The March winds are the morning yawn. ~ Lewis Grizzard

I love spring anywhere, but if I could choose I would always greet it in a garden. ~Ruth Stout

EVERGREEN COMMUNITY GARDEN AT BUCHANAN PARK

Evergreen is one step closer to having a community garden at Buchanan Park. Megan Mitchell, a representative from the Evergreen Alliance for Sustainability, EASY, gave a presentation to the Evergreen Park & Recreation Board at their March 23rd meeting. EASY is a new non-profit in Evergreen focused on promoting environmental protection and sustainability through recycling, composting and gardening. Their first project is to jump start the community garden project that was started by Allan Wurthen several years ago.

Megan presented the board with a site plan and proposal for the creation of a garden that would include a demonstration garden, raised bed garden plots for lease, assessable raised bed garden plots for lease, an eight foot fence to protect the vegetable plots from elk and deer, and future expansion projects such as a geodesic dome greenhouse and sculpture garden.

Megan and her committee have been working with John Skeel from EPRD on the project. The board was very much in favor of the project, comments from the board members are as follows: Kit Darrow – liked the educational and community involvement aspects of the project, Peter Eggers – reminded the board that in EPRD's initial community survey regarding possible uses for the then proposed Buchanan Park, the number one request was for a community garden; he also liked the idea of having an outdoor classroom for the community school children, Roger Hoagland – said that this is exactly the kind of low impact development of the park that he supports.

Some of the questions and concerns regarding the project are the cost to EPRD, the person or entity that would be liable and financially responsible for the project. The board is also curious about how much community interest exists for this project, i.e. the lease of garden plots.

EASY will be conducting two town meetings in May and the community garden project is on the agenda. EPRD will be conducting their own community input survey and EPRD board member Janet Heck asked that the community garden project be included. EASY and EPRD will share the information gathered in both forums.

EASY is asking for a ½ acre site as well as a water meter to provide water for the gardens along with an additional 1-1/2 acres for future projects.

The board was pleased with the work EASY has done so far and asked that it continue with staff input from John Skeel.

I am a member of EASY and have volunteered to share the information regarding the garden project with Evergreen Garden Club. Evergreen Garden Club is not officially involved with the project at this time. It is however, EASY's hope that at some point there will be community involvement with other interested organizations.

Evergreen's Alliance for Sustainability is dedicated to keeping the "green" in Evergreen by becoming a catalyst for awareness, action & access that will develop sustainability in our local community. While sustainability can mean many things to many people, our values stem from the "triple bottom line" of sustainability, which balances environmental, economic & social concerns to build a resilient, diverse & vibrant community. Most importantly, we believe that the sustainability of our community comes from YOU! We each make the decisions that create our world every day ... for better or for worse. We are here to help making the right decisions EAS-Y!

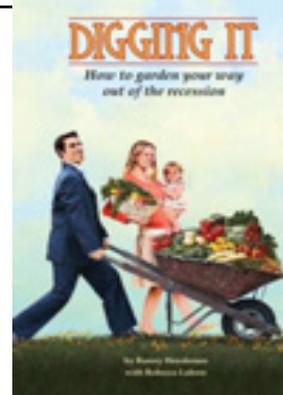
EASY is a 501(c) 3, non-profit corporation registered with the state of Colorado.

For any questions or additional information regarding the community garden project at Buchanan Park, or information regarding EASY, please contact me – Karla Briggs at karla@tuppersteam.com.

Meet the Author at HearthFire Books - Thurs. April 8th Wine@5 p.m

Bunny Henderson will tell you how to garden at altitude in her nifty little get-started-gardening book, "**Digging It: How to Garden Your Way Out of the Recession.**"

Henderson's book gives you step-by-step directions for growing a garden that provides nutritional bounty and saves you money. Find out about fertilizer, mulch, watering, weeding, pest management, frost dates and protecting your garden from those beastly critters!! HearthFire Books Wine@5 p.m. Thursdays at the bookstore offer the community a chance to meet local authors in an intimate environment. Please join us for a glass of wine, a yummy treat or two, and the opportunity to chat with so many of our creative, talented authors who live and write along Colorado's magnificent Front Range.



GARDEN CLUB NEWS—

Happy Easter and Spring

Ad Hoc Committee Report

The Evergreen Garden Club Ad Hoc Finance Committee's report is contained in six documents that are accessible via

<http://www.EvergreenGardenClub.org/private/committee.html>

These documents are:

- Evergreen Garden Club, Inc. Cash Reserve
- EGC Proposed Budget 2009-2010
- Evergreen Garden Club, Inc. Recommended Budget and Line Item Clarification
- Evergreen Garden Club, Inc Policy for Fund Expenditure Authorization and Control
- Evergreen Garden Club, Inc Charitable Giving Policy
- Ad Hoc Committee Thoughts and Revelations

Each member is strongly encouraged to read these recommendations and at the April membership meeting be prepared to discuss and vote on these items.

The ad hoc finance committee is comprised of seven garden club members: Karla Briggs, Barbara DeCaro, Dwight Gilliland, Beth

Springtime is the land awakening. The March winds are the morning yawn.

In Memorandum— Kenard Arthur Johnston, 90 of Evergreen passed away on March 10, 2010. He and his late wife Mary were Co-Presidents from 1987-1989. They were very active for many years in the Evergreen Garden Club, and the community. He was an environmentalist ahead of his time. Some may have been lucky enough to visit the envelope house that he built that was conducive to growing a large variety of Orchids. Fondly submitted by Louise Mounsey.

HOSPITALITY BITES

The hospitality team for April 2010.

Priscilla Chapin, Lorna Chorn, Nancy Parker, Sandy Swan, Jo Powers, Sharon Eaves, Jeri Dufford.

Please would you arrive between 8:45 & 9:00 am to help set up the room and be prepared to stay after the meeting for clean-up. THANKS!



Photos by Paul Luzetski

ASK A GARDEN QUESTION



What common houseplants are toxic to cats? Are geraniums? How toxic are geraniums?

- Yes, geraniums are toxic to cats.

Below is a list of **common houseplants** that can be harmful or fatal depending on the quantity swallowed. Also, remember that cats who chew plants are exposed to any chemical pesticides or fertilizers that may have been applied directly to the plants or through the soil.

Amaryllis	Daffodil	Indian Rubber Plant
Asparagus Fern	Easter Lily	Mother In Laws Tongue
Cactus	English Ivy	Narcissus
Calla Lily	Ferns	Pencil Cactus
Chrysanthemum	Geranium	Poinsettia
Cyclamen	Hyacinth	Primrose
	Hydrangea	Rubber Plant

This list is just a few of the more common plants you might have in your house, take a look at <http://www.xmission.com/~emailbox/plants.htm> For a full list including outdoor plants.

You can prevent your cat from chewing on plants by misting the leaves then sprinkling them with cayenne pepper. You might also want to consider planting a container of grass (regular grass, not the drug) for your cat. If your cats are digging in your pots, go to your local hobby/craft store and buy a few pieces of plastic needle-point canvas. Trim it to the shape of the pot, cut a slit in it and then a hole in the center for the plant. Rest it on top of the soil and your cat will be unable to dig.

Note that any plant that looks like a variation of grass is likely going to be considered food to a cat, so it's best to keep them in hanging pots well out of reach.

Symptoms of poisoning will range from seizures and foaming at the mouth to vomiting and coma. Immediate medical attention as soon as you see the cat has eaten a toxic substance (don't wait for symptoms to appear) is necessary. Take the cat to your local veterinarian immediately.

The ASPCA National Animal Poison Control Center is a 24-hour emergency service with phones manned by licensed veterinarians and toxicologists (these are not free calls; have your credit card handy):

You can call 24 hours a day from anywhere in the U.S. 1-888-426-4435

If you provide a small container of grass (oat grass or regular grass), your cat might leave your potted plants alone.



EVERGREEN GARDEN CLUB

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 Dwight Gilliland at (303) 679-1846 or Members@EvergreenGardenClub.org

Newsletter Contributions are due by the 20th of each month to Editor@EvergreenGardenClub.com

Newsletter Editor & Website www.EvergreenGardenClub.org

Backyard Chicken Keeping

Running Time: 2 hours & 30 minutes

The Backyard Chicken classes on

- Saturday, April 24
- Saturday, May 15
- Sunday, June 20

Call to register and for more info. Join Sundari Kraft of Heirloom Gardens for an accessible introduction to raising backyard hens. Topics covered will include:



- Choosing the perfect chickens (best breeds and how/where to purchase) - Chick care - Housing and fencing - Feeding -- Common chicken challenges - All about the eggs - Financial considerations (initial investment and ongoing costs) - Livestock permitting process
- The content of the class will be geared toward the needs of the participants. Instructor: Sundari Kraft. Sundari is the proud owner of a beautiful flock of backyard hens. She has shared her love of chickens with the many working members and children who participate in Heirloom Gardens, and has worked with city officials to modify Denver's chicken laws.

April 22 is a free day at the Denver Botanic Gardens. See the Moore exhibit

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