

NoCo Bloom

SPRING 2016



THIS YEAR'S GARDEN
trends

EDIBLES
COOL
SEASON
VEGGIES

GET
GOING
IN THE
GARDEN

TURF
TIPS
WITH
TONY



Hello Fellow Gardeners!



Colorado State University
Horticulture and Landscape Architecture
301 University Ave.
Fort Collins CO 80523-1173
Bldg. Shepardson 111
970-491-7019
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CSU Extension in Larimer County
1525 Blue Spruce Dr.
Fort Collins, CO 80524-2004
970-498-6000
larimer.org/ext



The Gardens on Spring Creek
and City of Fort Collins
2145 Centre Ave.
Fort Collins, CO 80526
970-416-2486
fcgov.com/gardens

NoCo Bloom

We want to hear from you!
For inquiries, please contact Korrie
Johnston (kjohnston@fcgov.com)
at the Gardens on Spring Creek.

Did you know that gardening and lawn care are the two biggest hobbies for Larimer and Weld County residents? For those of us who have come from other parts of the country or even those of us born and raised here, we know the challenges NoCo gardeners face to be successful. Intense sun, drought, high winds, hail, flooding, and wide temperature swings are just part of what keeps each gardening season interesting.

That is why we are excited to bring you NoCo Bloom—a free guide for all things gardening in northern Colorado. Brought to you by Colorado State University’s Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, the Gardens on Spring Creek and CSU Extension in Larimer County, NoCo Bloom will provide timely topics to help your lawn and garden thrive.

We hope NoCo Bloom inspires, educates and empowers you to get your hands dirty!

Dr. Steve Wallner
HLA Department Head
Colorado State University

Dr. Alison O’Connor
Horticulture Extension Agent
CSU Extension in Larimer County

Michelle Provaznik
Executive Director
The Gardens on Spring Creek



Early *Spring* Tips

Mitzi Davis, Colorado State University Extension Master Gardener in Larimer County



MARCH



PLANT HARDY

In March, the hardiest seeds like parsnips, lettuce and onions can be planted when the soil temperature is only 35 degrees F. Other spring vegetables like kale, beets, and peas require soil temps of 40 degrees F. Optimum temperatures for seed germination are at least 5 to 10 degrees higher. Cold, wet soil can make the seeds more susceptible to rot, and they take longer to germinate. Now is a good time to invest in a soil thermometer.

GET DOWN TO BARE ROOTS

Bare root plants are available in March and April, while plants are still dormant. You'll usually find roses, shrubs for hedges, small fruits and vegetables like raspberries, strawberries, gooseberries, asparagus

and rhubarb in local nurseries. Keep plants cool and moist until you are able to plant. Soak the roots overnight and prune any dead or damaged roots or stems. Following planting, water in well and cover with organic mulch.

OIL UP TO WARD OFF PESTS

Horticultural oils are highly refined petroleum oils, combined with an emulsifying agent and mixed with water to spray on plants. Used during the dormant season (before bud break), they can control many common pests that overwinter on plants. These oils pose little risk to humans and beneficial insects. Generally the oils work by blocking air holes and causing insects to die from asphyxiation.

APRIL

YOU'RE SMART TO TEST YOUR SOIL

Have your garden soil tested. Whether you are making a new flower bed or growing a vegetable garden, it's good to know the make-up of your soil. Information and testing kits are available at the Larimer County Extension, Gardens on Spring Creek, or at many of the local nurseries.

GET HOOPY

Place plant hoops around your tall perennials now

march events

FORT COLLINS

March 5 - Building Patios, Gardens on Spring Creek, 2145 Centre Ave. Reduced fee on behalf of Fort Collins Utilities. \$5 fcgov.com/gardens

March 12 - Compost: Buying It, Making It, Using It, Gardens on Spring Creek, 2145 Centre Ave. Reduced fee on behalf of Fort Collins Utilities. \$8 fcgov.com/gardens

March 14-18 - Junior Garden Ranger Spring Break Camp, Gardens on Spring Creek, 2145 Centre Ave. \$125 fcgov.com/gardens

March 14-18 - Garden Explorer Spring Break Camp, Gardens on Spring Creek, 2145 Centre Ave. \$125 fcgov.com/gardens

March 19 - Starting Cool-season Seeds in a Cold Frame, Gardens on Spring Creek, 2145 Centre Ave. \$15 fcgov.com/gardens

March 20 - Fairy Gardening Class, Fort Collins Nursery, 2121 E. Mulberry St. \$35 fortcollinsnursery.com/workshops

March 26 - Everything You Wanted To Know About Xeriscaping, Gardens on Spring Creek, 2145 Centre Ave. Reduced fee on behalf of Fort Collins Utilities. \$8 fcgov.com/gardens

as they are rapidly emerging and before they get too tall. You can use metal hoops and stakes or "grow through" metal rings. Twigs and branches also work. The "scaffolding" will disappear as the foliage grows and covers it up.

APRIL 15 IS ARBOR DAY

Are you looking for a tree to plant in your yard this spring? Colorado's Arbor Day is April 15. Check out the Front Range Tree Recommendation List® at extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/garden/treereclist.pdf.

UNWRAP ON TAX DAY

Tax Day (April 15) is a good way to remember it's time to remove tree wrap. Leaving the wrap on trees can give insects and disease organisms a great place to hide and harm your tree.

For more details about these tips and other garden topics, please visit extension.colostate.edu. 🌱



STUNNING STAR OF PERSIA

by Sherry Fuller, Curator, Gardens on Spring Creek

My favorite plants are always a little unusual; and never finicky divas. Star of Persia, *Allium christophii*, fits these criteria perfectly. With strap-like leaves and stems 12-24" tall, this onion is topped by stunning 8-12" geodesic domes of starry purple flowers. These arrive in late spring and only last a few weeks, but the inflorescences dry and remain eye-catching for months.



Many of the ornamental onions are so tall they look a bit top-heavy and are difficult to work into a landscape gracefully. Others are small and cute but hardly spectacular. But Star of Persia is the perfect size to use with a skirt of low groundcover.

Star of Persia prefers a sunny location and will tolerate dry soil, sometimes reseeding to create a small colony of plants. And its oniony scent ensures it isn't readily eaten by rabbits or deer. Like most bulbs, these are planted in the fall and look best in clumps of at least 3 to 5. 🌱



Gardening trends, just like clothing styles, change each year. Growers and consumers are always on the hunt for the "next great thing", whether it be flower color combinations or making gardening more accessible. Check out these trends for 2016!

Gardening TRENDS

By Alison Stoven O'Connor, CSU Extension in Larimer County

Incredible Edibles

Edible gardens are still popular, but consider making them more portable and growing combinations of tasty plants in containers. Don't limit container choices to only annuals, like nasturtium and marigolds—use perennials and plant them into your garden in the fall.

Cue Color

Group hyssop (colors range from salmon, purple and pink), lavender, coneflower (colors range from purple, pink, white, yellow, orange and red), rue and yarrow for non-stop summer color.

Join In & Help!

Community gardens are popping up all throughout NoCo! If you rent or don't have space in your backyard, look into renting a plot at one of the many community gardens in our area. Also, growing food for those in need is always in style. To benefit Food Bank for Larimer County, Plant it Forward kicks off this May. Read more at fcgov.com/gardens.

Fifty Shades of Foliage

Another trend is to just keep it simple and stick to the basics—use plants grown for their foliage. The classic example is coleus. But if you've seen coleus lately, you'll notice that the foliage now comes in shades of green, red and yellow with interesting variegation. Coral bells, a perennial, also can entice the senses with foliage ranging from dark chocolate brown to lime green. 🌿

Tough Beauty

Succulents have blossomed into popularity. Hardy succulents are a great choice for rock gardens or even plugged into containers. If you have garden space, these plants need full sun and well-drained soil. For the garden, try any of the ice plants (Plant Select® has introduced several), agave, hens and chicks, sedum and native prickly pear cactus (careful of the spines around kids and pets).

Create a Honey Buzz

"Bee" kind to our pollinator friends and plant bee balm, basil, rosemary, lavender and hyssop together for a one-stop-shop for bees, butterflies and moths. Letting these plants flower will provide needed nectar for these insects. Fragrance collection: Pair anise hyssop, basil, lavender, lemon balm, rosemary, mint and thyme together for an herbal knockout.

march events

LONGMONT

March 5 - Habitat Heroes - Gardening for Beauty & Birds Workshop, Audubon Rockies, Boulder County Parks & Open Space - Prairie Room, \$15 rockies.audubon.org

LOVELAND

March 12 - Landscaping with Colorado Native Plants Conference, The Ranch Events Center, Thomas M. McKee 4-H Building, \$90 landscapingwithcoloradonativeplants.org

March 16 - Gardening Made Easy, CSU Extension, Loveland Library, 300 N. Adams Ave. Free lovelandpubliclibrary.org

March 20 - The Rose Hybridization Process at Jackson and Perkins, Loveland Rose Society, First Baptist Church, 1002 W. 6th St. Free lovelandrosesociety.wordpress

March 23 - Replacement Trees for Ash, CSU Extension, Loveland Library, 300 N. Adams Ave. Free lovelandpubliclibrary.org

March 30 - Veggie Troubleshooting: Managing Pests and Disease, CSU Extension, Loveland Library, 300 N. Adams Ave. Free lovelandpubliclibrary.org

WINDSOR

March 17 - Plants for Pollinators, Northern Colorado Beekeepers Assoc., Windsor Recreation Center, 250 N. 11th St. Free nocobees.org



april events

FORT COLLINS

April 1-3 - Spring Perennial Sale, Fort Collins Nursery, 2121 E. Mulberry St. Free
fortcollinsnursery.com/workshops

April 2 - The Dry Garden: Plants & Practices for Un-watered Colorado Gardens, Gardens on Spring Creek, 2145 Centre Ave. Reduced fee on behalf of Fort Collins Utilities. \$8 fcgov.com/gardens

April 2 - Veggies in Raised Beds 101, Gardens on Spring Creek, 2145 Centre Ave. \$18 fcgov.com/gardens

April 8 - School's Out Day Camp, Gardens on Spring Creek, 2145 Centre Ave. \$45 fcgov.com/gardens

April 9 - Just Drip It!, Gardens on Spring Creek, 2145 Centre Ave. Reduced fee on behalf of Fort Collins Utilities. \$10 fcgov.com/gardens

April 9 - Designing the Mixed Garden, Gardens on Spring Creek, 2145 Centre Ave. Reduced fee on behalf of Fort Collins Utilities. \$8 fcgov.com/gardens

April 9 - Extended Education Workshop, Fort Collins Nursery, 2121 E. Mulberry St. \$15
fortcollinsnursery.com/workshops

April 13 - How to Turn a Brown Thumb Green, Gardens on Spring Creek, 2145 Centre Ave. \$15 fcgov.com/gardens

April 16 - Grow Great Tomatoes and Peppers!, Gardens on Spring Creek, 2145 Centre Ave. \$15
fcgov.com/gardens

April 17 - Fairy Gardening Class, Fort Collins Nursery, 2121 E. Mulberry St. \$35
fortcollinsnursery.com/workshops

April 23 - Underused Perennials, Gardens on Spring Creek, 2145 Centre Ave. Reduced fee on behalf of Fort Collins Utilities. \$8 fcgov.com/gardens

April 23 - Spring Open House, Fort Collins Nursery, 2121 E. Mulberry, Free fortcollinsnursery.com/workshops

April 23 - City of Fort Collins Earth Day, Civic Center Park, Free fcgov.com

April 30 - Roses Here Are Easier Than You Think, Gardens on Spring Creek, 2145 Centre Ave. \$18
fcgov.com/gardens

Turf Tips with Tony



PREVENTING CRABGRASS AND ITS UGLY RELATIVES

Tony Koski, Turf Specialist, CSU Department of Horticulture & Landscape Architecture



Crabgrass—it ranks right up there with bindweed and thistle on the list of most-hated landscape weeds. It seems to come out of nowhere during June and July, quickly forming dense mats of coarse, light-colored leaves and fingerlike seed heads.

Crabgrass and its equally unattractive relatives (foxtail, barnyardgrass, goosegrass) are summer annuals, meaning that they grow in lawns and gardens from seed beginning in late spring. Weather that makes your garden's tomatoes and zucchini happy can likewise encourage infestations of these annual grassy weeds in your lawn.

Colorado lawns that are mowed high (2½ to 3 inches), fertilized a couple of times every year (at least one of those times in the fall), and irrigated uniformly and adequately will rarely have problems with crabgrass. Lawns that are thin from being mowed too short, are rarely fertilized, or aren't irrigated properly (crabgrass needs little irrigation to thrive) are most likely to become infested with crabgrass.

While maintaining a healthy lawn is the BEST approach to preventing crabgrass in your lawn, crabgrass can sneak into the healthiest of lawns if we have a very hot summer, as has been the case for the last many summers. To further ensure that crabgrass and its cousins don't ruin your lawn, you can apply one of the many effective crabgrass preventers available to homeowners. Products containing dithiopyr/Dimension (Ace, StaGreen, Pennington, Ferti-lome) or pendimethalin (Scotts products) are both effective and long-lasting.

It is essential to apply crabgrass preventer early enough to kill the germinating crabgrass seeds, sometime between April 15 and May 10 is ideal (or when 1" soil temperatures reach 55 F, for you lawn nerds). This roughly corresponds to the END of forsythia and Callery pear flowering in the spring, if those are growing in your landscape or nearby. Follow the recommended spreader settings for the product you choose so that the correct amount is applied, and follow up with a heavy watering to move the herbicide into the turf.

If you are seeing coarse, fast-growing grasses in your lawn now (March-May), it's not crabgrass, but likely tall fescue, brome grass, or quackgrass. These perennial grasses aren't controlled by crabgrass preventer and must be addressed differently. To have these grasses properly identified and to get the most effective control options, contact Alison O'Connor at the Larimer County Extension office (970-498-6005, astoven@larimer.org) or me (970-222-1450, tony.koski@colostate.edu). 🌱

Cool Season Veggies: Tips, Tricks, & Favorites

By Susan Perry, Colorado State University Extension Master Gardener



Cool season vegetables are a great way to kick off the gardening season. These vegetables thrive in cooler temperatures and don't perform as well when temperatures get above 80 degrees.

Cool season vegetables include hardy (daytime temperatures above 40 degrees and will likely survive a light frost) and semi-hardy (daytime temperatures between 40–50 degrees but intolerant of frost). Of equal importance is soil temperature—most vegetables require a minimum soil temperature to be able to germinate.

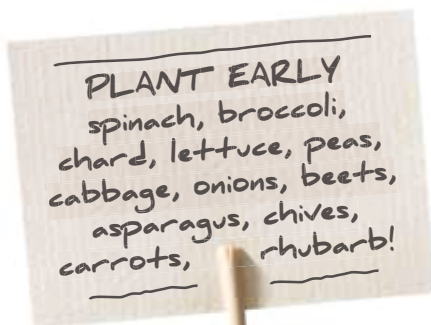
There are both annual (one year only) and perennial (year-after-year) cool season vegetables. Annual cool season vegetables include spinach, chard, lettuce, peas, broccoli, cabbage, onions, beets, and carrots. Perennial cool season vegetables include asparagus, chives, and rhubarb.

Peas can be direct seeded as soon as soil can be worked in early- to mid-March. Carrots can also be direct seeded in the spring; however they prefer warmer soil temperatures so it's best to wait. For the intrepid gardener, it's easy to start onions, lettuce, and spinach indoors in a sunny window, then transplant outside in early spring. Broccoli seedlings are available in local garden centers in late March. As with all seedlings, it's best to harden them off to acclimate them to outdoor conditions for several days before planting.

Many experienced gardeners have their favorite vegetable varieties. For the beginner gardener or if you want to try something new, one easy way to get ideas is to read online reviews where other gardeners have shared their criticisms or praise of a specific

variety. Once you have a list of possible varieties, you can visit local garden centers to find the ones you want. This works best for seeds since local retailers stock many varieties. For seedlings, using what you find locally is a good approach, since these tend to be selected for Colorado's conditions and are reliable producers.

For more details about cool season vegetables and other garden topics, please visit extension.colostate.edu. 🌱



april events

CHEYENNE

April 9 - Habitat Hero Workshop, Audubon Rockies, Laramie County Community College, \$20, rockies.audubon.org

LOVELAND

April 17 - The Development of Mile-Hi Organic Fertilizer Products, Loveland Rose Society, First Baptist Church, 1002 W. 6th St. Free lovelandrosesociety.wordpress

April 21 - All About Swarms, Northern Colorado Beekeepers Assoc. Pulliam Bldg. 545 Cleveland Ave. \$10 nocobees.org

April 30 - City of Loveland Earth Day, City of Loveland Civic Center 500 E. 3rd St, Free cityofloveland.org/earthday

WINDSOR

April 16 - Windsor Arbor Day 5K Run/Walk, Boardwalk Park, \$15-\$20 windsorgov.com

Spring PLANT Sale

MAY 6-8

GARDENS ON SPRING CREEK

The sale of the year is back! We have just what you need to grow a beautiful landscape, bountiful veggie garden, and lively containers. Since January, our staff, volunteers, and students from CSU and Front Range Community College have cultivated thousands of annuals, herbs, perennials, and veggie starts ready for you. Proceeds benefit all three organizations. Remember to bring your own box for carrying your favorite plants home! Watch our websites for a complete list of available plants.

MEMBERS-ONLY: **FRIDAY, MAY 6**, 3 - 6 P.M.
PUBLIC HOURS: **SATURDAY, MAY 7**, 9 A.M. - 4 P.M.
AND **SUNDAY, MAY 8**, NOON - 5 P.M.

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Auxiliary aids & services are available for persons with disabilities.



Don't be a spectator... Get out and grow!

Fort Collins NURSERY



Upcoming Sales & Events

April 1-3: Spring Perennial Sale

April 23: Spring Open House

Details at: www.FortCollinsNursery.com



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2121 E Mulberry



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