

# Community Garden News



## Welcome to the 2018 Season!

In an effort to involve everyone, I have sent out a survey for you all to fill out that helps to gain a feel for what being a gardener here in the Longmont area is like. We all have valuable contributions to make that could be the key to answering the questions that challenge a fellow gardener. Whether you are a novice or have been growing your own food for decades, we would like to hear from you! I have gotten quite a few responses already and they are excellent! I will be including these interesting responses in the newsletters from now on. PLUS! This response will count for .5 hours of service time. **WIN-WIN!!**

We require everyone in the garden to contribute 2 hours (per plot) of volunteer time. There are many tasks that are helpful to the overall enjoyment of the community. Not everything needs to be physical labor and we are open to suggestions. Something that has worked well in the past was to have a gardener claim a certain area of the garden to keep weed free. For instance, areas like the small apple orchard in the back, the parking lot or the compost dumpster area need constant attention. 8 short sessions of 15 minutes through the season would be a wonderful help. **As usual, please confirm your project with the Garden Coordinator before starting any project.**

Occasionally, the jail crew will be out to help with various tasks. They will be working on tasks that require heavier maintenance and are generally not here to keep the weeds down in the aisles. It is your job to keep the aisles around your plot clear of weeds. If you have large plants or materials blocking the path, you will be asked to clear the way!

It seems like every year, more and more items are being left in the garden to over-winter. We ask that you limit your "stuff" as Boulder County is not responsible for the security of any objects in garden OR the removal of debris at the end of the season. You will be asked to remove non-essential items at the end of the season.



Dear Gardeners,

Welcome to the 2018 gardening season! In an effort to make the Community Garden experience an enjoyable one for all involved, we will continue to put together the newsletter this season.

Hopefully, it is a way to distribute information on pertinent and timely topics. Thank you all for contributing your time and talents to the garden, and I look forward to another abundant year!

Here we go!

Allison Appelhans

CSU Extension, Boulder County  
 Garden Coordinator



## C o n t e n t s

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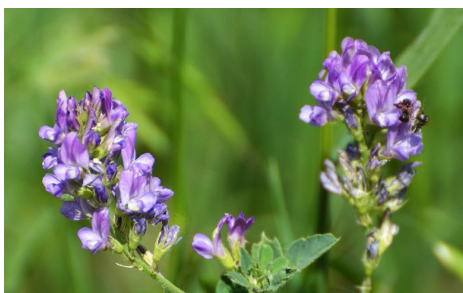
*Get involved!  
Answer the survey questions  
to get credit for community  
hours!*

## Community Service

### Survey Questions

1. Your number one observation from last year: Anything from weeds to weather.
2. What veggie, fruit, annual, or perennial was particularly successful or not and why?
3. Did you notice any unusual or any extra amount of pests, did you do anything to remedy this situation?
4. What did you do to prepare your garden? Did you till, amend, chemically enhance you garden this year? Was it affective? What preparations are you planning on this year? What type of mulch did you use and was it affective?
5. Was there something you did last year that you would do again this year or something you would avoid?

*Thank you for taking the time to answer this survey!! You will see your gardening community's feedback in an up coming newsletter!*



## Dates to Remember

**Monday April 16th. 6-8 pm.**  
**Composting Workshop @ Boulder  
County Recycles 1901 63rd St.**  
*Registration required.*

**Friday April 20th. 8-12 am.**  
**Compost delivery.** A wheel barrow of compost will cost \$7.00. A slight increase from last year due to the larger size wheelbarrows. Please plan on getting your compost moved from the parking lot to your plot ASAP after delivery. Extension can not be responsible for your compost beyond its delivery date.

**Tuesday April 24th. 6-8 pm.**  
**Composting Workshop @ Boulder  
County Parks & Open Space, 5201  
Saint Vrain Rd.** *Registration required.*

**May 12th**  
**Annual Plant Sale**  
Boulder Garden Club  
(Saturday before Mother's Day)  
Unitarian Universalist Church  
5001 Pennsylvania Ave.  
Boulder, CO 80303

**May 15th**  
- Plots must be obviously worked and weed control begun by May 15th (weather permitting).

**June 8 & 9th (9 am – 3 pm)**  
**The LSO Longmont Symphony  
Orchestra Guild Garden Tour.**  
*Registration required.*

### Work days

**Saturday, April 21st 7 am-11am.**  
*Dates are subject to change – weather  
delay will be rescheduled TBD.*

## Healthy Garden Tips

### *Benefits of Composting*

"Nature's ultimate recycling system where living or once-living materials break down into a rich soil-amendment called compost. Compost is a dark, crumbly, and an earthy-smelling form of decomposed organic matter."



- **Natural Process:** Collecting organic materials and combining them to encourage their breakdown makes use of the natural process of decomposition to create a high-quality soil amendment.
- **Reduces Waste:** Almost 20 % of the waste stream in Boulder County is plant trimmings and fruit and vegetable scraps that could be recycled as home compost. Recycling organic resources extends the life of our landfills.
- **Valuable Soil Amendment:** More cost-effective to keep materials onsite and cycle them back into the yard as a rich soil amendment.
- **Healthy Garden:** Your garden benefits as well. As the health of your soil improves so will the health of your plants and the abundance of your harvest. There is evidence that veggies from a well amended garden are higher in nutrition - and flavor!!

## Composting Plants & BioDynamic Gardening

By Mary Ellen Ellis

Turning your food waste into nutrients for the garden is a great way to reuse and recycle, but you can go even further by growing specific plants to make your compost even richer. Some gardeners practice more intensive organic methods that include specifically growing plants for the compost pile.

With plants grown for compost, you add specific plants to the pile to enrich it in a particular way. This is a common practice in biodynamic, or bio-intensive, gardening, and while you may not want to embrace every aspect of these gardening philosophies, take a cue from the rich compost preparations and consider adding specific plants to your pile for optimal nutrients.

### Plants to Grow for the Compost Pile

There are several plants that improve compost nutrient content, and most are easy to grow and can become a part of your garden specifically for the purpose of composting, or a secondary purpose.

One of the most obvious choices is any type of legume, like clover or alfalfa. These plants fix nitrogen and are easy to grow between rows and at the edges of gardens. Harvest them and toss the clippings into your compost pile for added nitrogen.

Grow extra brassicas (*cabbage, kale, broccoli, cauliflower, turnip, daikon radish and mustard.*) in your garden and use the excess in compost. Use the remaining parts of the plants after harvest to enrich the compost pile with extra nutrients.

Growing plants for compost is a smart way to enrich your garden, cheap and it's easy too. Legumes will enrich the soil where they grow and in the compost pile, while brassicas and some herbs can do double or even triple duty for the insects, compost and at harvest time.

<http://www.gardeningknowhow.com/composting/ingredients/growing-plants-for-compost.htm>

## Community Critters

### Worms

We all like to see worms in our gardens when we are doing our prepping and planting. We know how important they are for the health of soils. Worms aerate the garden's soil by burrowing tunnels which allows water and oxygen to penetrate deeper into the soil. They greatly add to the soil's tilth by slowly bringing soil minerals up from deep below. Worms also pull rotting plant materials back down into the soil from the surface where they consume it. This churning alleviates compaction and allows roots to dig deeper which benefits the plant's ability to survive drought stress. Worm's lives represent an indispensable cycle that is crucial to life on the planet.

In addition to the physical improvements in the soil's structure, there are also vital chemical reactions that take place because of worms. Worm castings are considered gold for the garden for good reason. Worm castings are the excrement left behind by worms after they have digested rotting plant material. The digestive system of worms hold the key to plant health. Every casting includes nutrients and beneficial microbes that support plant's health. Plants need microbes and fungi to be present in the soil in order for them to utilize the nutrients needed to sustain life.

There are about 5 different varieties of worms that we see here in Colorado. Generally, worm eggs are laid in groups of 1-20 into a protective cocoon that is leather like and resistant to drying out. These cocoons can stay in the ground anywhere from 3 weeks to 5 months before hatching when conditions are right. Worms generally live from between 4-8 years depending on environmental factors, and can produce anywhere from 3-80 cocoons per year. Deeper dwelling worms like night crawlers produce less offspring than shallow soil dwelling red wigglers.



To promote the best living conditions for the worms in your garden, it is important to keep the moisture level even. Too saturated and the worms rise to the surface where predators can easily pick them off, too dry and they either burrow down, hibernate or worse. Worms react similarly to extremes in temperatures. A way to remedy temp and moisture fluctuation is to mulch the garden with an organic material that decomposes into the soil. (food for worms) Wood chips and gravel do not offer as much protection for worm populations. Basically, if you keep your soil protected from the sun, evenly moist and steering clear of harmful chemicals you will do good for the worm life in your garden plot.

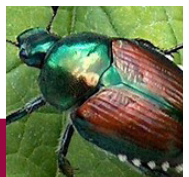
#### Harmful soil management activities:

What areas dry out faster than others?  
Tilling  
Acidification  
Removal of crop residue  
Use of toxic products

#### Beneficial soil management activities:

Crop rotation  
No till approach  
Manure application  
Organic amendments & fertilizers  
Surface crop residue (removing only diseased or insect infected plants)  
Mulching

<http://www.learner.org/jnorth/search/WormNotes2.html>



*Eyes Pealed!*  
*Last year, we found Japanese beetle in the garden & would like to monitor the presence of others.*



# April's Tasks

Prepare tools for the upcoming season - sharpening pruners, clean pots with a weak solution of 10:1 water/bleach solution, cleaning and repairing rakes, trowels, spades, shovels and hoes, make sure hoses are up to snuff, watering cans, spray bottles and fertilizer dispensers are in working order.

## *Start Seeds Indoors -*

- Soaking some larger seeds overnight or for several hours seems to speed germination.
- Save leftover seeds in their sealed envelopes in the refrigerator - It is easy to put up a note or just bring in extras and put them on the bulletin board. I will try to have a place to keep them.
- Be aware that some seeds want to germinate in the dark, some like to be scarified/nicked
- Thinning: not for the faint-hearted but really necessary (remember there were too many seeds to start with)

### **More handy helpers:**

- Inexpensive shop lights on chains that can be raised or lowered
- Heat mats
- Fan to circulate air
- Seed-starting containers gleaned from the trash and water-tight trays to hold seedlings so they can be watered from the bottom.

April is the best time to kill many overwintering cover crops. Just hoe them down to be incorporated in to the soil when the weather warms up. April weather doesn't offer lots of chances to get on the ground, but it is worth taking those chances when they happen. This is also a great time to get weeds while they are young!

## *Planning*

Things to consider for your gardens success next season...

- Garden lay out plan
- Amending the soil
- What to grow - dates to plant
- Pathways to work the garden
- Crop rotation
- Succession planting
- Cover crop
- Nitrogen fixing crops
- Compost area
- Mulching
- Irrigation design
- Lists for the garden supply store



## Terms to know

**Green manure** - A crop grown for the purposes of turning under in an early stage of maturity or soon after maturity for purposes of soil improvement.

**Tilth** - The condition of the soil in relation to the growth of plants, especially soil structure. Good tilth refers to the friable state and is associated with high non capillary porosity and stable granular structure. Poor tilth is non-friable, hard, non aggregated and difficult to till.

**Vermicompost** - is the product of the composting process using various species of worms, usually red wigglers, white worms, and other earthworms, to create a mixture of decomposing vegetable or food waste, bedding materials, and vermicast.