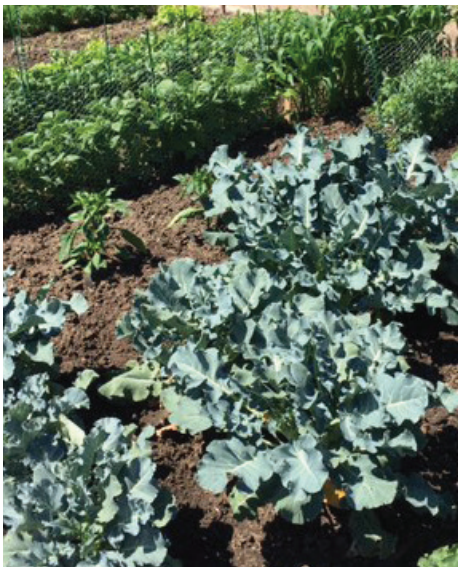
Colorado State University EXTENSION

Community Garden News



Fire-blight has been a major problem in the area this spring. If you are interested in learning more, there are some fact sheets in the office. We are sad to announce the removing all of the trial apple trees in the community garden due to a mass infection. (*see article*)

Q & A Continuation

What activities did you do in order to prepare the garden last year that you would recommend to others? What prep activities would you advise against?

1. I use (my) compost and additional garden compost as well as peat moss (for berries) to add to the soil. I vigorously dig out bindweed and other weeds, to help loosen the soil in early spring.

2. Garden prep for me is adding bagged organic mulch. This year I may add organic manure.

3. I always utilize the compost heavily. My plot partially flooded during the 2013 flood and a lot of silt was deposited. I have finally gotten that part of the plot close to being back like it was before the flood, but I just keep putting lots of compost in! I have also found that tiling in the fall gets things in good shape and if I end up without a lot of time in the spring (which often happens), I can always go ahead and plant and the soil is still nice and loose.

4. I enrich the soil with compost because I know good soil is most important for good garden output

5. We have added, as an organic option, blood-meal and that seems to have helped quite a lot.

6. Last year we placed 8 wheelbarrow loads of the compost and supplemented, especially under each tomato plant with Sheep and Peat from a local nursery. This year I'm planning to add an overall application of about one inch of compost, and a layer of material such as composted manure, Sheep and Peat, or dry turkey manure if I can find it. All this is subject to hearing about the soil test.

One practice I learned from the Urban Farmer is to use a long fork that is inserted well into the subsoil and then the handle is pulled back and forth to open up the tight lower strata - but without disrupting all the beneficial porosity and structure that has been created by old roots and worms. This is part of no-tillage practices.

Anyone who has dug beyond 10-12" in our plots knows that down at that depth we have a fairly impervious clay. By cracking this open with a fork we allow some topsoil to infiltrate and begin improving the subsoil, provide of better drainage, and not disturb the good structure that we have by deep tillage.

I have read to put mulch in the garden in the fall and rototill it in and also rototill leaves and straw also in the fall to help keep the topsoil from blowing away in the high winds.

Boulder County

Community Service

Thank you Mark for fixing the old wheel barrow! It has been out of commission for some time and it will be great to have the extra one available!

Thank you Archie with your help with trellising the hops this year! They are all looking healthy and happy so far!

We require that each plot donate two hours of community service. This is in addition to the maintenance of your personal gardening area and pathways. We will have community work days listed for those of you who would like to work as a group. You are also free to work on your own with a pre-approved task as some tasks may be already spoken for.

Please get approval from the Garden Coordinator before you do any projects.

Community Service Ideas

We like unique suggestions from you all!

- Weeding in general ... and always.
- Organizing events, talks, seed swaps, pot lucks etc.
- Donations of **needed & approved** items including more hoary hoes, soil amendments, gas & oil for tiller.
  **** We can not accept everything!***
- "Adopt" a specific area of the garden to keep weed free all season.
- Building repairs, pathway maintenance, recycling scrap metal.

Dates to Remember

June 8th & 9th (9 am – 3 pm)
The LSO Longmont Symphony Orchestra Guild Garden Tour.
http://longmontsymphony.org/

June 16th (9 am – 1 pm)
CoNPS Native Plant Garden Tour in Boulder.
Registration conps.org

Work days

Saturday, June 23rd
Group efforts will be on the following dates. *Dates are subject to change – weather delay will be rescheduled TBD. Volunteer time is from 7-11 am.*

County Fair in August!

Think of entering some of your finest, flowers, fruits or veggies this year! It's lots of fun!!

There are no gardening mistakes, only experiments.

— Janet Kilburn Phillips

Fire Blight, Deadly to Trees, Runs Rampant

Disease goes after apple, pear, quince and crabapple

By Carol O'Meara
Colorado State University Extension

Pulling into my drive, I noticed the honeycrisp apple tree we love didn't look quite right. From a small distance away, wilt was evident around its branches and a sinking feeling settled in my stomach. Upon closer inspection, my worst fears were confirmed: This tree has fire blight.

To have an apple tree is to risk infection from this deadly disease, one that includes oozing bacteria, curled, brown leaves, inedible fruit, and spreading cankers. This year, with several hail storms coming just as the tree was in bloom proved fatal. Temperatures and moisture played a role in the infestation and my tree is entirely engulfed and without hope for recovery.

My tree isn't alone. In the past week, samples and emails have been brought to our office by people in similar situations, conversations sound more like support groups, and the disease is everywhere I look. My mind cues up the dramatic, Hitchcockesque music each time I see another blighted tree.

It's a banner season for fire blight, a bacterial disease that is especially destructive to apple, pear, quince and crabapple. It attacks in spring, when temperatures reach 65 degrees and

frequent rain occurs. Bacteria overwintered in cankers on the tree resume activity, multiplying rapidly. Hail drives the bacteria around and into woody tissues.

Our wet early summer weather created good conditions for this damaging disease, and masses of bacteria have been forced up through cracks and bark pores to the bark surface, forming a sweet, gummy exudate called bacterial ooze. Insects are picking up the bacteria on their bodies and carrying it to opening blossoms where it infects trees.

Girdling cankers — areas of disease on the wood — eventually develop from branch or blossom infections. Leaves wilt, darken and curl to form a shepherd's crook. This gives the tree a fire-scorched appearance, thus the name "fire blight."

There is no cure for this disease, so prevention is the best solution. Remove and destroy newly infected young twigs as soon as possible, so that your tree doesn't become the mother ship for disease in the neighborhood. Do this when no rain is predicted for at least two weeks. It may be best to leave pruning until winter when the bacteria are not active. In young twigs, make cuts at least 12 inches below the dark, visible edge of infection to avoid slicing into the bacteria. Remove all blighted twigs and cankered branches. Prune larger limbs about 6-12 inches below the edge of visible infection.

After each cut, surface sterilize all tools used in pruning. Spray tools with Lysol or dip tools in 70 percent ethyl alcohol, or a 10 percent bleach solution. Bleach can rust tools, so if you use this to sterilize your pruners, wash them after you're done and apply a light tool oil to keep them rust-free.

Be on the lookout for apple scab, a fungus that attacks leaves and fruit, which also favors cool, wet weather. You'll see the rapid spread of this disease across apples and crabapples. At first, leaves get yellow or dark olive-colored spots, then turn yellow and fall off. Fruit develops dark, greasy-looking spots that then become sunken.

The disease overwinters on fallen leaves, so clean the area during fall. Avoid overhead watering that can splash spores around. For more information on fire blight or apple scab, see the CSU Extension website at extension.colostate.edu.

Carol O'Meara is the extension agent in horticulture entomology for Colorado State University's Extension in Boulder County. Contact her at comeara@bouldercounty.org.

Healthy Garden Tips

10 great benefits to using alfalfa in your garden:

1. Good Source of Minerals
Alfalfa is a good source of nitrogen, along with several other minerals including: phosphorus, potassium, calcium, sulfur, magnesium, boron, iron & zinc

2. Builds Organic Matter
Alfalfa builds organic matter in your soil providing nutrients to plant roots. Its high nitrogen content helps other organic material to decompose. Organic matter also helps to prevent compaction, acts like a sponge and holds moisture in the soil, improves soil structure, and helps to prevent erosion.

3. Feeds Microorganisms
The microorganisms in your soil love alfalfa because of the protein, amino acids, fiber and sugars in its stalk – items they need to thrive. Alfalfa hay has an almost perfect balance of carbon to nitrogen (24:1) which soil organisms require.

4. Stimulates Growth
Alfalfa contains triacontanol, a hormone which stimulates the growth of plant roots, enhances photosynthesis, and increases beneficial microbes which help to suppress many soil-borne diseases.

5. Fixes Nitrogen
Alfalfa actually takes nitrogen from the air and holds it as nodules on its roots, a process called "nitrogen fixing". This nitrogen is available in the soil for other plants to use when the alfalfa plant is cut down and its roots are left in the soil, or when the plant is turned into the soil.

6. Stimulates Compost
When added to your compost pile, alfalfa acts as a stimulator. It decomposes rapidly, creating heat which helps the rest of your compost to decompose. And your finished compost will have higher nutrient levels when alfalfa is used. Higher nutrient levels in your compost and soil means more nutrient-dense produce in your garden.

7. Controls Harmful Nematodes
A study in Italy showed that alfalfa pellets significantly reduced infestation of root-knot nematode on tomato plants, and cyst nematode on carrots. As an added bonus, yields for both tomatoes and carrots were increased in comparison to the control groups.

8. Provides Drought Resistance
Because of alfalfa's sponge-like ability to absorb and hold moisture, it helps plants grown in that soil to be more resistant to periods of low rain. Alfalfa grows a strong taproot which aids it's drought tolerance and helps soil compaction.

9. Is a Dynamic Accumulator
Alfalfa roots reach down into the sub-soil up to 8 feet, bringing valuable hard-to-reach nutrients up to the soil surface where they are stored in the leaves of the plant. Using the cut alfalfa in your garden and compost adds these nutrients to the upper layers of your soil where other garden plants can use them. Alfalfa is particularly good at bringing iron to the surface, a micro-nutrient needed for chlorophyll synthesis.

10. Is a Great Cover Crop
Leaving garden beds bare in the winter leaves them exposed to the harsh elements of weather. They should always be mulched, or a cover crop should be planted. Also known as "green manure", cover crops are generally planted in the fall and then dug into the soil in the spring to improve soil. The crop may also be cut down at soil level and used as a mulch, rather than digging it in.

https://learningandyearning.com/10-benefits-of-using-alfalfa-in-your-garden

How to Grow Alfalfa as a Cover Crop

Prior to planting, clean the area, work the soil, and remove any debris. Pure alfalfa seed can be purchased from most feed supply stores.

Those living in cooler climates can plant alfalfa in spring while milder regions should opt for fall planting. Since alfalfa roots quickly, it doesn't require deep planting—only about a half inch deep. Merely sprinkle the seeds evenly onto the soil and cover lightly with dirt. Use about ¼ pound of seeds per 25 square feet and space rows about 18-24 inches.

You should begin to see sprouts within seven to 10 days. Once seedlings have reached about 6 to 12 inches, thin them as needed to avoid overcrowding issues.

Unless growing alfalfa as hay for livestock, allow it to grow until its purple blooms appear, at which time you can simply mow it down and till it into the soil or leave it. The alfalfa shoots will breakdown. This 'green manure' will then fertilize the soil as well as stimulate microbial activity, thus aerating it too.

https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/edible/vegetables/alfalfa/growing-alfalfa.htm

June's Tasks

If you haven't already, start any of the warm weather vegetables (Corn, Beans, Peppers, Egg Plant, Tomatoes, Squash, Pumpkins, etc.) as soon as possible.

Start feeding tomatoes a balanced fertilizer weekly once fruits set.

Protect your fruit from the birds with netting - make sure to check your netting daily as creatures can get caught in them and hurt themselves.

Prune suckers and water sprouts from all fruit trees.

Continue thinning your vegetable seedlings to provide ample room for growth.

Mound the soil up around your potato plants. Tubers near the surface which are exposed to sunlight will turn green and poisonous.

As early potatoes begin to die back, reduce watering.

Weeding a little bit everyday helps tremendously! Also, please keep the aisles around your plot weeded!

** Reminder, Please keep your aisles weeded. Thank you!!*