Colorado State University EXTENSION

# Community Garden News

**Please explain your irrigation practices. What do you identify as the problems & solutions? What was most effective?**

1. Our irrigation is made out of 3/4" soaker hoses, they can be controlled for each row, that worked out perfectly so we could adjust for seasonal water needs for the plants.

2. I use all the small diameter, 1/4 " drip hoses attached to a larger supply pipe that runs the length of my plot. I like it because it is easily modified from year to year. I adjust how much water things get by either doubling up on rows of plants that need more water (e.g. peppers), or making a loop around the base of larger things like tomatoes. It is generally pretty effective. However, I feel like my frequency and duration are somewhat guesses, I would like to come up with a better way to decide how often and how long I need to water through the season. I just adjust based on how dry it is, but I think I often over-water things because I am worried about them drying out. I'd like to use the flexibility of my irrigation system (set up the small hoses differently every year) to have a more creative garden, rather than just straight lines.

3. Because I have raised beds in a small garden I use a hose with a wand water-sprayer. That seems most efficient without wasting water.

4. I drip everything with 6" spacing drip tube running across beds and attached to a loop of 1/2" tubing looped completely around the perimeter and attached on both ends to the filter and digital controller.

5. I had help setting up a drip system. It has a timer and usually works great for my soil.

6. I found that the small soaker hoses (1/4") break down quickly in our harsh sun. This year we tried a 1/4' tubing with drip emitters every six inches. It seems to work pretty well. We can double up on the tubing when plants need more water. Also, I learned that tomato plants do best when the whole root system is irrigated at the same time. Therefore, we looped the hose around each tomato plant instead of a drip hose on one side of the root system.

Dear Gardeners,

I believe we can call this the year of the raccoon. They have always been around the fairgrounds, and generally enjoy our grapes and corn if anyone tries to grow it. However, this spring they seemed to be more bothersome, digging up our plants and leaving droppings everywhere. We had a bit of drama with one being caught in a trap. Later, a juvenile trapped *itself* in one of our garbage cans. (Cute but smelly!) When new gutters were placed on the NRB building, the installers told us they estimated 8-10 regularly using the roof. I will post safety information today.

Best Regards,
*Allison Appelhans*
Garden Coordinator

## Contents



Boulder County

# Community Service

Thank you to Mo and Heather for helping pick berries while I was out of town last month. Thank you Gaylynn for the beautiful bulletin board decor - as always. Thank you to Joanna for picking up lots of fallen apples. YAY! YAY! YAY!

We all appreciate volunteer efforts made over the season by our gardeners. In addition, the jail crew has been out regularly and their efforts have made a big difference.

Please let the Garden Coordinator know how much volunteer time you have contributed so far this season, and be sure to complete your time by November 15th. We also accept a $40 donations per plot. Time or money is greatly appreciated.

There is group work day scheduled for the 23rd. ***Let me know if you plan on attending!***

# Healthy Garden Tips

## *Planting, growing, and harvesting garlic*

Beyond its intense flavor and culinary uses, "the stinking rose" is good in the garden as an insect repellent and has been used for centuries as a home remedy.

**Planting**

• We advise fall planting. Yes, garlic can be planted in the spring as soon as the ground can be worked, but fall planting is recommended for most gardeners. Garlic roots develop in the fall and winter, and by early spring they can support the rapid leaf growth that is necessary to form large bulbs.

• Ensure soil is well-drained with plenty of organic matter. A sandy, clay loam is best. In heavier soil, plant it in raised beds that are two to three feet wide and at least 10" to 12" tall.

• In areas that get a hard frost, plant garlic as early as 6 to 8 weeks before the first expected fall frost date, before the ground freezes. The timing may vary with local climate; the aim is to give a long enough period before the ground freezes for the plant to develop good roots, but not enough time to for it to form top growth before freezing temperatures set in. In northern climates, planting is usually between September and November.

• Before planting cloves, work a couple tablespoons of 5-10-10 complete fertilizer, bone meal or fish meal into the soil several inches below where the base of the garlic will rest. Select healthy large cloves, free of disease. The larger the clove, the bigger the bulb you will get the following summer.

• Break apart cloves from bulb a few days before planting, but keep the papery husk on each individual clove.

• Do not plant cloves from the grocery store. They may be unsuited varieties for your area, and most are treated to make their shelf life longer, making them harder to grow. Instead, get cloves from a mail order seed company or a local nursery.

• Place cloves 2" to 4" apart and 2" deep, in their upright position (the wide root side facing down and pointed end facing up). Plant in rows spaced 10" to 14" apart. A single 10-foot row should yield about five pounds of the fragrant bulbs.

• In the spring, with warmer temperatures, shoots emerge through the ground.

**Care**

• Mulch heavily with straw for overwintering, and then remove in the spring after the threat of frost has passed. (Young shoots can't survive in temps below 20°F on their own. Keep them under cover.)

• Cut off any flower shoots that emerge in spring. These may decrease bulb size. Try cooking them in a stir fry!

• Fertilize garlic in the early spring by side dressing or broadcasting with blood meal, pelleted chicken manure or a synthetic source of nitrogen.

• Fertilize again just before the bulbs begin to swell in response to lengthening daylight (early May in most regions).

• Weeds should not be a problem until the spring. However, keep well weeded. Garlic doesn't do well with competition. It needs all its nutrients.

• Garlic is a heavy feeder which requires adequate levels of nitrogen. Fertilize more if you see yellowing leaves.

• Water every 3 to 5 days during bulbing (mid-May through June). If May and June are very dry, irrigate to a depth of two feet every eight to 10 days. As mid-June approaches, taper off the watering.

**Pests/Diseases**

Garlic has very few problems with pests in the garden (in fact, its a natural pest repellent!), and also very few problems with the diseases that plague other veggies. White Rot is one concern, but you should also keep an eye out for the same pests that plague onions.

• White Rot is a fungus that may attack garlic in cool weather. Not much can be done to control or prevent that problem except rotating your crops and cleaning up the area after harvesting. Spores can live in the soil for many years. The fungus affects the base of the leaves and roots.

**Harvest/Storage**

• Harvest from fall plantings will probably be in late July or August. The clue is to look for yellow tops. Harvest when the tops begin to yellow and fall over, before they are completely dry.

• Lift a bulb to see if the crop is ready. The garlic head will be divided into plump cloves and the skin covering the outside of the bulbs will be thick, dry and papery. If pulled too early, the bulb wrapping will be thin and disintegrate. If left in the ground too long, the bulbs sometimes split apart. The skin may also split, exposing the cloves and causing them not to store well.

• We often dig up a bulb before the tops are completely yellow (in late June or early July) as some garlic types will be ready earlier. Careless harvesting can ruin a fine crop of garlic.

• To harvest, carefully lift the bulbs with a spade or garden fork. Pull the plants, carefully brush off the soil, and let them cure in an airy, shady, dry spot for two weeks. Do not rinse! We hang them upside down on a string in bunches of 4 to 6. Make sure all sides get good air circulation. Be careful not to bruise the garlic or it won't store well.

• The bulbs are cured and ready to store when the wrappers are dry and papery and the roots are dry. The root crown should be hard, and the cloves can be cracked apart easily.

• Once the garlic bulbs are dry, you can store them. Remove any dirt and trim off any roots or leaves. Keep the wrappers on - but remove the dirtiest wrappers. Remove the tops and roots.

• Bulbs should be stored in a cool (40 degrees F), dark, dry place, and can be kept in the same way for several months. Don't store in your basement if it's moist! Do not store garlic in the refrigerator!

• The flavor will increase as the bulbs are dried. Properly stored, garlic should last until the next crop is harvested the following summer.

• If you plan on planting garlic again next season, save some of your largest, best-formed bulbs to plant in the fall.

**Recommended Varieties**

What type of garlic should you plant? There are three types of varieties of garlic: Soft neck, Stiff neck, and Great-headed (Elephant). Most types are about 90 days to harvest, once growth starts.

• Hard neck varieties grow one ring of cloves around a stem, there is not a layer of cloves as there is in soft neck varieties. They are extremely cold hardy, but do not store as well or long as other varieties. Flavor is more mild than soft necks. Common hard neck types include Korean, Dujanski, Siberian, Music, Chesnock Red, German Red and Spanish Roja. These varieties produce tiny bulblets at the end of a tall flowering stalk in addition to a fat underground bulb of cloves.

• Soft neck varieties, like their name suggests, have necks that stay soft after harvest, and therefore are the types that you see braided. Especially recommended for those in warmer climes, as it is less winter-hardy than other types. Strong, intense flavor. They tend to grow bigger bulbs because energy is not being diverted to top-set bulblet like hard necks. Soft neck varieties include Silverskin, Inchelium Red, California Early and California Late.

• Great-headed (Elephant) garlic is not recommended if you're looking for a garlic taste. It's less hardy, and more closely related to leeks than other varieties. The flavor is more like onion than traditional garlic. Bulbs and cloves are large, with about 4 cloves to a bulb.

Garlic can be harvested in early spring like green onions and sautéed as a side dish. Or, you can allow them to mature until mid-July when they become the traditional bulb with cloves.

https://www.almanac.com/plant/garlic

For more information on storage of garlic, refer to the following article

https://nchfp.uga.edu/publications/uc_davis/uc_davis_garlic.pdf

# Community Critters

## *What to look for this month*

**Harlequin Beetles have been spotted in the garden - Please destroy unwanted cabbage family plants and any beetles you see.**

**Cane borers in raspberries**: Wilting symptoms are not most evident at this time of year due to cane boring insects.
**Grasshoppers**: As grasshoppers mature and vegetation dries out migration into yards intensifies greatly.
**Yellow jackets**: Nest size and nuisance problems greatly increase in September.
**Slugs**: Garden injuries increase with the return of cool, wet weather.
**Bumble flower beetles**: Beetles feed on flowers and visit bacterial ooze.
**Spotted wing drosophila**: Peak damage to strawberries and raspberries.

## *Pollinator news*

Pollinators include bees, wasps, beetles, flies, moths, butterflies, hummingbirds, and bats. However, just because an insect or a bird is visiting a flower, it is not necessarily a pollinator. Pollinators move between flowers of the same plant species in an orderly fashion, whereas flower visitors move haphazardly among flowers spending very little time within a flower. Even if it does happen that a flower visitor gathers pollen grains on its body, it will not necessarily move to the same flower species, therefore pollination would not occur.

## *Helping pollinators winter over*

By Debbie Marsh
RMC Communications Team

We see them buzzing and flying about all summer long, pollinating our garden vegetables and flowers as well as native plants. Aside from Monarchs and hummingbirds, which fly south for the cold season, what happens during the winter to all the bees, flies and beetles that are native pollinators?

If you are one of those gardeners who has felt inferior to your neighbors who fastidiously clean up every shred of plant debris and till the soil in November to be ready for spring, it's time to stand tall and proud for having a "messy" garden. Old bark, cane, leaves and especially undisturbed soil are the secret winter homes of pollinators. Some have gorged like bears to make it through the winter; others wait in suspended animation as larvae, pupae or eggs.

Charming Goliaths of the bee world, bumble bees winter over as adults in hibernation. Bumble bees are unusual in that they can still forage in very cold temperatures due to internal thermo-regulation. But in fall, all the males die off and the new queen searches for a log, tree root or other niche where she waits, already mated and fertilized, to emerge and begin a new colony when the weather warms.

Another bee that seeks out logs for winter is the bright green sweat bee, which prefers to nest under peeling bark. Dead logs are particularly attractive locales. Like her cousin the bumble bee, it's only the female that overwinters, and she must quickly rebound to raise a new brood in spring.

Some native bees snuggle into hollow twigs or the pathways dug by beetle larvae in trees. Mason and leaf-cutter bees count on these sources, as well as clumps of dried grasses or hollow canes from brambles or other woody plants, to provide shelter during the winter.

The majority of native bees nest in the ground, finding a sunny spot that won't flood. It may be a few inches of bare soil with one nest, or a colony occupying several feet. You may have mistaken them for anthills or spider holes. Usually, the mother bee dies at the end of the warm season, leaving her babies to emerge in spring.

Butterflies and moths also use leaf litter and plant matter to insulate them from the long, cold winter. Tiger swallowtails that hatch in the summer feed and molt five times, then pupate and hatch in as little as 15 days. But when the caterpillar pupates in the fall, the chrysalis is brown instead of green to match the woody brush where it hangs, and the butterfly won't emerge until spring.

So, now that you know how many species are counting on you to leave soil undisturbed, piles of leaves untouched, and shrubbery un-pruned over winter, you can feel good about being the untidy gardener! And if you'd like to fashion some homes for bees, that's entirely possible. Here's one plan http://www.nativebeeconservancy.org/projects/pollinator-houses/ that works well for the 30 percent of native bees that live in tunnels. A myriad of others are available; to see their diversity and artistry, check out "native pollinator houses" and click on "images". It's also possible to make butterfly and bat houses, and winter is a great time for woodworking projects!

https://www.sierraclub.org/rocky-mountain-chapter/helping-native-pollinators-winter-over

From an article by Beatriz Moisset at http://nativeplantwildlifegarden.com/pollintors-and-the-garden-in-winter/

# September Tasks

It is time to plant perennial plants, seeds and bulbs!

Scatter the seeds of wildflowers in rows or in open beds this month so that the young seedlings will be ready to be transplanted into their permanent spot next spring.

As the weather cools, perennials that have overgrown their space or become crowded should be dug and divided or moved to a new area of the garden.

New and replacement perennials should also be planted this month.

Tender bulbs like Dahlias should be dug up and stored in a cool, dark area after first frost.

Fall is an excellent time to shop for plants, trees and shrubs. *(not true for all plants)* Fall planting encourages good root development, allowing the plants to get established before spring.

If weather is dry, provide water up until the ground freezes.

Stop fertilizing your trees and flowering shrubs to allow this years growth to harden off before winter.

**Fruits and Vegetable Gardens**

If you may have produced much more of certain type than your family can consume, share the abundance of squash and tomatoes with friends and neighbors, and don't forget about **Longmont Food Share** donation cooler outside of the gardens that picks up ***every Thursday morning.***

Although most fruits and vegetables are best when eaten fresh on the day they're picked, you can extend the season by freezing, drying, storing, or canning.

Plum trees should be pruned right after harvest, to insure a bountiful crop next year.

Once the tops of onions have withered, the bulbs should be lifted and dried in a warm, dry, sunny location for about 10 days. Then they should be stored in a cool, dark, dry place.

Some root crops, such as carrots, onions, and parsnips can be left in the ground in cold climates and dug up as needed. Apply enough mulch to keep the ground from freezing, and the crop will be kept fresh until it is needed.

After you have finished harvesting summer veggies, plant a cover crop of clovers, cow peas, soybeans, or vetches for the purpose of plowing under next spring. These nitrogen producing plants will provide good organic matter and food for your garden crops next year, as well as helping to control weeds over the winter.

Remove spent tomato, bean, squash, cruciferous plants from the garden. They can overwinter diseases and pests that will re infest the garden next year!

http://www.thegardenhelper.com/shrubbyplants.html