



**ELBERT COUNTY
MASTER GARDENER**
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY
EXTENSION

Lettuce Inform You Quarterly Newsletter

Love is to the heart what the summer is to the farmer's year. It brings to harvest all the loveliest flowers of the soul.--Billy Graham

[Visit our Website](#)

What's Happening at the Extension



We have seemed to have shifted from busy to BUSY!!!

Update from Trena Smith on the admin. front; she is working through her list of Buckle Donors and securing awards for the Elbert County Fair. Trena has been busy with getting animal tags out for upcoming weigh-ins (May 15th and open scale June 12th). We are still seeking award and Buckle Donors for Elbert County Fair. Please contact Trena if you are interested. The season of campers is upon us, with new arrivals daily and the

campground is filling up.

Our 4-H update from Lore Denton is that we hit the hectic/busy season, which will continue to intensify through August. Lore has been working on fair prep, updating fair book and fair entry as well as planning Cloverbud Camp. Also Fair related, she has been ordering awards and finalizing judges. The Elbert County Fair is July 27th through August 4th. Lore is entrenched in 4-H programming including prepping for the Cake Decoration contest June 2nd and Cloverbud Camp June 3rd through June 6th.

Willie Wilkins, from the natural resources and horticulture front, reports that

springtime in Colorado is here, 75 degrees one day and 40 degrees the next. The Colorado insectary is seeking nursery sites for the gal wasp, which is bio-control for Russian knapweed. If you think you have Russian knapweed (RKW) please contact Willie. We have been receiving daily calls about native grasses and pasture management. The Franktown Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) folks are a great source for pasture and range management information. The calls for plant identification are coming in and Willie has been sending these to our Elbert County Colorado Master Gardeners.

Kali Benson, our County Director reporting on the horse and livestock front, has been hopping with multiple events, including weigh-ins and Ride Nights. Lore, Willie, and Kali have all attended shooting sports trainings within the last month. As a result, we have been working with shooting sports leaders to ensure we are meeting state and national shooting sports standards. Kali has been facilitating state horse projects, and prepping 4-Hers for Hippology and Horse Bowl. The 4-H State Conference in Fort Collins is June 17th through June 22nd, Kali will be working with the horse and livestock judges throughout the week.

What's Happening at the Hive



Spring into gardening by getting started on Pollinator...

Pollinators (like bees, butterflies, birds, bats, etc.) have a huge impact on us! They play a role in our agriculture, economy, wildlife, and plant diversity. Bees are the most important of all these pollinators because of a key part of their...

[Read more](#)

csuhort.blogspot.com

Taking a Stand on Clover

Why clover?: It provides nitrogen for your lawn. Great for pollinators. Attracts earthworms and other beneficial soil microorganisms. Is drought resistant and helps your lawn resist disease. Can deter rabbits from the garden. It smells great!

[Read more](#)

beyondpesticides.org

A Message From Food Safety



Fermented Foods

Click here for print friendly version. Sauerkraut is a naturally fermented cabbage product made with cabbage and salt. It is most commonly used as a condiment, but can also be used in recipes-from main dishes to desserts.

[Read more](#)

farmtotable.colostate.edu

Critters of Elbert County

“The daffodils tossed and reeled and danced, and seemed as if they verily laughed with the wind, they looked so gay and glancing,” Dorothy Wordsworth

Why Deer and Other Animals Don't like to Eat Daffodils

by Raylene Owen, Elbert County Colorado Master Gardener



Whether you call them daffodils, narcissus, or jonquils the good news is that generally the wildlife don't eat them. The reason is that the mucilaginous sap of daffodils contains sharp calcium oxalate crystals which are an irritant to the mucus membranes and the skin. Please call the Elbert county Master Gardener office at 303-621-3162 for more information on deer resistant plants.



Predator Control for your Small Flock | University of...

One of the chicken lovers worse fears is losing a beloved chicken to a predator. It can happen to the best of us. This webinar will identify patterns of predation and how to keep your small flock safe.

[Read more](http://extension.umd.edu)
extension.umd.edu

Gardening Challenges in Elbert County

Making use of Native Grasses in Your Landscape



DAN JOHNSON
Denver Botanic Gardens

SUMMERTIME GARDENING HINTS FOR ELBERT COUNTY GARDENERS

by Rachel Lee, Elbert County Colorado Master Gardener



Summer, it's finally here, the season gardeners dream about all the rest of the year. From fresh, homegrown salads, to juicy ripe tomatoes picked fresh off your tomato plant; what's not to love about a summer garden?

Find ways to make gardening enjoyable; it is often a challenge because we all know that when your lettuce is in season, in the garden, that's when it's cheapest at the grocery store. I'm always looking for ways to make growing easier and more successful for my family and myself.

There are some chores that you should do as a gardener to keep your garden healthy. That involves keeping the garden area and the one to two feet surrounding your garden clean. Cleanliness will go a long way to ensuring that your garden will be disease free. As simple as picking up around your garden any plant debris, or keeping weeds out of the garden, will foster your plants' health. Making sure that the tools you are using for pruning and harvesting are properly sharpened and disinfected. I keep some alcohol handy for this. Each time I take a cut to prune or harvest, I will dip my cutters in some alcohol to kill any viruses that may be on one plant, and I don't want to transfer this to another plant. This is very important when you are dealing with any plant viruses that may have inadvertently come into your garden. You may have a plant that may get sick; you can prevent the spread of this through sanitary practices.

It is also important to spend time in the garden on the lookout for beneficial as well as unwanted insect visitors. By getting to know the life cycles of the most common insects that visit your garden, you will be able to take care of them sometimes. I have also observed that during certain times of the season, I will find infestations of certain insects. For example, in my garden in late July and early August, I will inevitably find aphids on my tomatoes and peppers. If I am being diligent to get out and look for them, I can spray them off with the hose in the morning, which allows that plant to dry off during the day and not be affected by any fungus that might splash up on the plants. If ladybugs are close by, they will take care of the aphids for me. I know that it's a matter of time, if they are close by, that the ladybugs will take care of the aphids for me.

Mulching around your plants is an important step in keeping the moisture close to the roots, and helps to discourage weeds growing. Let's face it, we didn't get into gardening because we wanted to spend our entire time doing maintenance. If you use organic mulch like pine needles, or straw mulch, these will also slowly decompose in the garden during the growing season, and can be spaded into your garden bed at the end of the season.

As far as our climatic changes go, I try to keep frost cloth on hand, which I wrap around my tomato cages. This helps to keep the temperature constant, and it acts as a windbreak for the plants. At my gardening elevation of 6,600 ft above sea level, the weather tends to be 5 degrees cooler than the Denver Metro Area. I have found that using frost cloth does a good job of keeping the plants warmer, and I tend to get a better harvest.

[For more information on gardening in our county](#)



Succession Planting - Organic Gardening - Heirloom Gardener

The goal of succession planting is simple - to enjoy a continuous and uninterrupted supply of fresh vegetables. This type of planting is particularly important in small backyard gardens, where space is at a premium. Many of my favorite crops for...

[Read more](#)

www.heirloomgardener.com

Hardening Off Your Plants Before Planting



Herbs Make Good Companions in the Garden

By Suni Mills, Elbert County Colorado Master Gardener

Planting with a wide variety of herbs will produce essential oils that other plants take up and insects don't like (see the Herbal Companion Chart in this newsletter). The scents of herbs will also discourage or control pests and disease. Not only are they beneficial, but they will add color and scents that enhance your garden experience and can attract insect eating species.

Here are some herbs that may add that special quality to your garden that make you want to go out and just sit and take in the ambience of nature. Marigolds, with their strong scent, control white flies. Spearmint, tansy and pennyroyal control ants. Spearmint and garlic repel aphids. Borage repels tomato worms and attracts bees. Elderberry repels gophers. You have probably heard of garlic being a deterrent to most insects. Thistle actually attracts birds that are omnivores. Fava beans protect tomatoes from wilt organisms. Use these herbs liberally through out your garden.

Predators of harmful insects can be attracted to your garden too when you use herbs. Hummingbirds are attracted to red flowers and eat an amazing amount of mosquitoes each day. Red flowers are not only beneficial, but your garden will be beautiful as well! Bees are attracted to hyssop, thyme, catnip, lemon balm, pot marjoram, sweet basil, summer savory, borage, mint and blue flowers. Bees are great pollinators, of course. The small, sweetly scented flowers on herbs also attract native pollinators.

There is much more to learn and it can be a daunting task, but with practice, you'll become a pro.

[Herb garden companion plant chart](#)

Resources:
content/uploads/2016/10/JohnJeavons-
HowtoGrowMoreVegetables6thed2002.pdf

[https://foodabundance.com/wp-](https://foodabundance.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/JohnJeavons-HowtoGrowMoreVegetables6thed2002.pdf)

Heading Here

Herbal Companion Planting for the Garden

(This is a list of herbs, their companions, and their uses, including some beneficial weeds and flowers)

The In's and Out's of Container Gardening



Container Gardens - 7.238 - Extension

Container gardens are one of the fastest growing segments of gardening. Containers can be grown where traditional gardens are not possible including apartment balconies, small courtyards, decks, patios, and areas with poor soil. They are an ideal ...

[Read more](http://extension.colostate.edu)
extension.colostate.edu



Plant a Row for the Hungry Connects Gardeners with Pantries

Plant a Row for the Hungry is a people-helping-people program to feed the hungry in communities across the country. Just one gardener



donating home-grown garden produce to a community food agency makes a big difference. All you have to do is...

[Read more](#)

westerngardeners.com

Planning for Drought for Livestock and Forage Producers

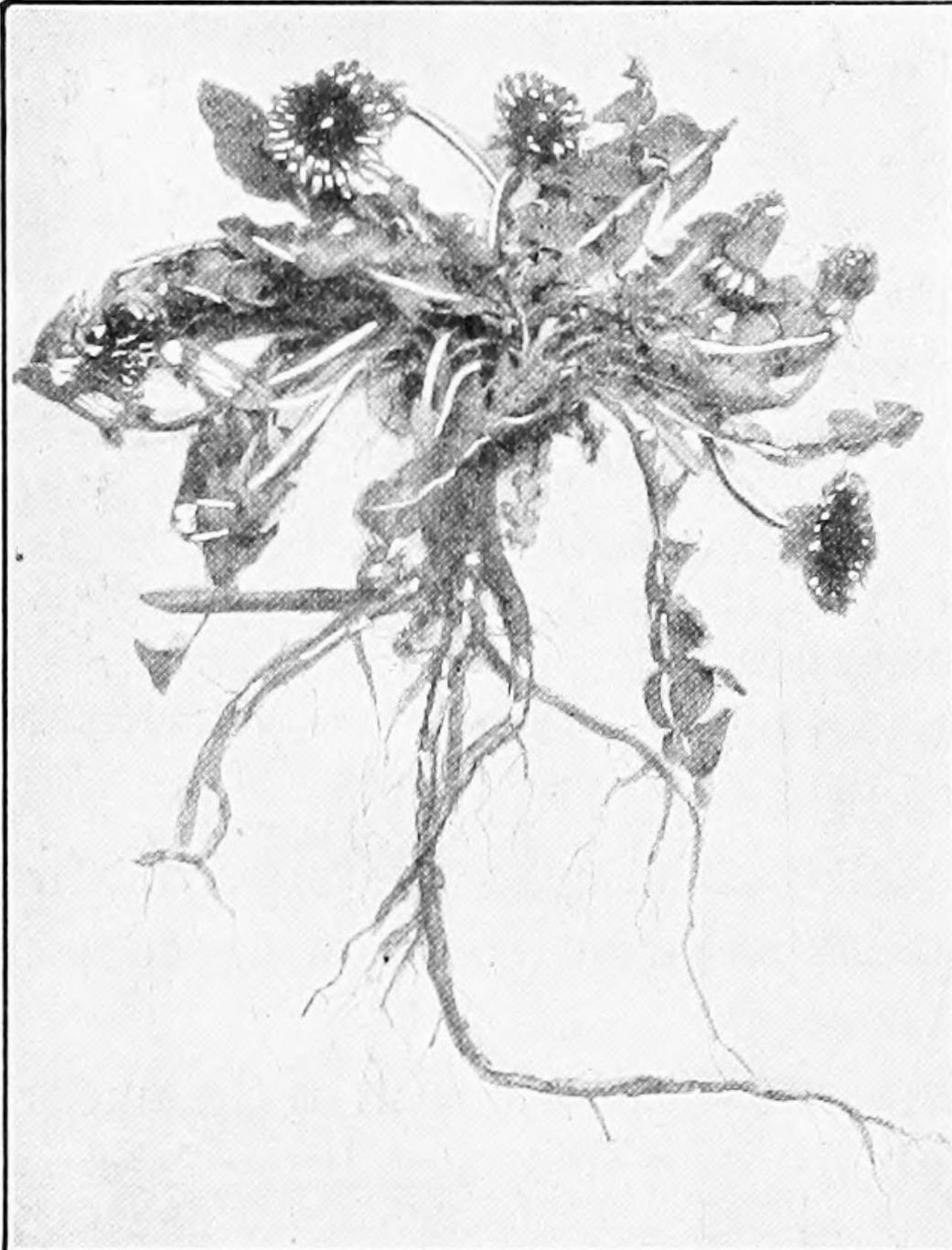
Drought is a natural part of climate in nearly every region on Earth. It has occurred in the past and will do so again. Livestock and forage producers can reduce their vulnerability to drought. Drought will always be a nemesis for the range...

[Read more](#)

drought.unl.edu

Two Methods of Dealing with Nuisance Weeds





Organically Controlling Weeds with Taproots on a Small Plot

Posted by: Kara Harders, Small Acreage Management Specialist for the Peaks and Plains Region - CSU Extension/NRCS Weed control is a constant battle but some are easier (in theory) than others. Some of the more difficult weeds to control are those ...

[Read more](#)

csuhort.blogspot.com



1552 - Bindweed Control in Lawns - PlantTalk Colorado

Field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*) is a common problem in Colorado lawns. Bindweed and other common weeds don't like the competition they face in a dense, healthy, well cared-for lawn. But this deeply-rooted perennial member of the morning...

[Read more](#)

planttalk.colostate.edu

Helping Your Lawn Stay Healthy all Summer



Lawn Irrigation Self Audit (LISA) - Extension

Arid climates like we have in Colorado require us to learn more about our lawns and how to water them. You can use the LISA toolkit to help you use your water more efficiently when irrigating your lawn. Landscape irrigation audits have been...

[Read more](#)

extension.colostate.edu

Native Plants Spotlight

PRAIRIE PAINTBRUSH: ELBERT COUNTY'S LESSER KNOWN PAINTBRUSH

By Raylene Owen, Colorado Native Plant Master



Colorado Flora: Eastern Slope, Weber and Wittman

Photo: Eastern Colorado Wildflowers.com

Most people are familiar with our blazing red and orange paintbrush, *Castilleja integra*, that create bright spots in Elbert County prairies through out the spring and summer. But, Elbert County is also home to the prairie paintbrush or downy painted cup, *Castilleja sessiliflora*. This paintbrush is our only strictly plains paintbrush. This genus was named in the 18th century for a Spanish botanist, Domingo Castillejo.

Prairie paintbrush is a leafy perennial, covered with dense, soft hairs. It grows in bunches, 6 to 10 inches tall. In dry areas with poor soil, prairie paintbrush will grow as small tufts of plants, but in better habitats, they will be more robust.

The bract and flower heads are cream and green, often tinged with pink and form dense spikes. The flower parts (corollas) protrude from the bracts like long, pale, curved beaks. The lower lip of the flower is 3 lobed. Bloom time is from April to July. The flowers are pollinated by queen bumblebees and possibly butterflies and hummingbirds.

Paintbrush are hemiparasitic and will often attach to the roots of a host plant to extract water and nutrients. This makes these plants difficult to transplant, as they must have a suitable host nearby. Some good host plants for the hemiparasitic paintbrush are blue grama grass, buffalo grass, elk sedge, and June grass.

The *Castilleja* species were formerly classified in the *Scrophulariaceae* (figwort) family, but have been reclassified to the *Orobanchaceae* (broomrape) family with other parasitic plants.

Death Camas (sand corn):
***Zigadenus* sp. (formerly**
***Toxicoscordion*) LILY FAMILY**
(LILIACEAE)

By Raylene Owen; Elbert County Master Gardener



500 × 400 - thepoisondiaries.tumblr.com

This spring may see a greater incidence of livestock poisoning due to ingestion of Death Camas. The reason stems from our very dry winter, causing the grass to be slow to start growing, providing little green forage for livestock. An exception to this is Death Camas that is relying on food stored in its bulb and is able to put up green shoots in contrast to the dry, short, brown grass.

Death Camas is a native perennial found in the Western two-thirds of Colorado at elevations of 4500 – 8000 feet. There are several species of death camas and exact species identification may prove difficult. All species should be considered toxic and all parts of the plant are toxic including the leaves, flowers, bulb and pollen. The toxin in the plant is a steroidal alkaloid, zygacine, which causes cardiovascular failure. Seeds are the most toxic, but are rarely eaten, as they are dry and unpalatable. Next toxic is the bulb, but it is rarely pulled out of the soil and eaten. Even though Death Camas does not have an onion odor, and leaves are flat, not hollow, cases have been documented where people have mistaken the bulb for wild onion, eaten the bulb, and died. The leaves are the next toxic and are most likely to be eaten.

Death Camas is often one of the first plants to emerge from the ground in the spring before other forage is available. Sheep are most susceptible, followed by cattle, then horses. It is assumed that alpacas and llamas are also susceptible. Symptoms of ingestion include slobbering, vomiting, cyanosis, followed by weakness, staggering and convulsions, then coma for several hours or days followed by death. One way to prevent ingestion by livestock is to make sure that the animals are well fed prior to turning them out on pasture. A hungry animal is much more likely to eat anything available, especially a plant like Death Camas, that is green.

Do not cut infested areas for hay, as dry leaves in hay are also toxic. Sheep should not graze contaminated pastures until later in the spring, when more forage becomes available. There are no good medicinal remedies, but poisoned animals that are cared for and kept quiet, may recover.

The taxonomy of this genus has and is still, puzzling taxonomists. One common species on which there appears to be some agreement for the species in the Elbert and Douglas Counties is, Foothill Death Camas *Zigadenus paniculatus*

(formerly, *Toxicoscordion venenosus*). The grass like leaves are a yellow-green color, V-creased, with parallel veins, and 4 to 12 inches long. The flower stalk ranges from 5 to 14 inches tall. It blooms with compact racemes of green-white or creamy yellow blossoms. The bulb is onion-like, stark white, with a dark colored outer paper-like coat.

Eradication: This plant is very toxic. Care should be exercised as contact with any part of the plant can irritate the skin. Wear latex or rubber gloves. Remove the plant by digging it up, making sure to remove the entire bulb and all other plant parts from the pasture.

Chemical control is difficult as the plant is waxy and chemicals run off. In the early 3-leaf stage, some kill may be achieved by applying 2,4-D, making sure to use an agricultural surfactant to make the chemical stick better. After flower stalks appear, spraying is not effective. Always read the label and follow the application instructions. The label is the Law.

Sources include: Weeds of the West, Weeds of Colorado, Poisonous Grassland Plants, 2004 Weed management guide, CSU, WAEDU, UTEDU, NMEDU, USDA Poisonous Plant Research, Ackerfield, *Flora of Colorado*.



Native Plants for Garden and Landscape Use in Colorado

The Colorado Native Plant Society (CoNPS) recommends the use of native plants in landscaping, both because of their adaptability and because Colorado has a unique regional horticulture worth promoting and protecting.

[Read more
conps.org](http://conps.org)

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EXTENSION Programs are available to all without discrimination. If you have a disability for which you seek an accommodation, please notify us one week prior to the event.

