

LETTUCE INFORM YOU

2022 ELBERT COUNTY SPRING ISSUE

MASTER GARDENER NEWSLETTER

Spring is almost here!

Winter is the time for nature to rest. Trees, flowers, and insects rest during winter. It is so amazing to hear and see the beautiful birds in the trees covered in snow.

It is time to start planning our vegetable gardens, our native gardens, and our pollinator gardens. It won't be long before the bees and butterflies become active. We will start tilling and amending the soil, ordering and starting seeds, and planting cool weather vegetables such as lettuce, spinach, and snow peas.

It is such a fun time of year!!! The Colorado Master Gardeners of Elbert County are starting our Spring Seminars. These classes are offered at a suggested donation of \$5 per class. Please come join us at the Ag Barn at the Elbert County Fairgrounds! We would love to see you.

Last but definitely not least, we are offering our "Weed Walk" on July 8, 5:30 pm. Join us at Reuter Hess Open Space. It will help you learn how to identify both native and non-native "weeds" here in Elbert County. These are really interesting and educational walks.



**2022
Elbert County
Extension Presents**



February 19th 10 am- 3 pm Bees the Basics and Beyond Virtual option only \$5/ person Register at: www.eventbrite.com/e/bees-the-basics-and-beyond-tickets-245884425937



March 19th 10 am- 1 pm Dr. Whitney Cranshaw presents "Gardening for Insects - or Not!" how to landscape a yard to make it more used by "beneficial insects". Ag Building 95 Ute Ave Kiowa, CO

April 30th 10 am- 12 pm Elbert County Master Gardeners present Native Plants Suitable for Extreme Elbert County Habitat. Ag Building 95 Ute Ave Kiowa, CO

May 21st 10 am - 12 pm Elbert County Master Gardeners present "Walking Amongst the Natives", a walk and talk exploring native plants. Western Elbert County, details to be provided after completed registration.

Register for the in person events at:

**<https://forms.gle/hyW5VB2Y9m7Cq9sy9>
Or call (303) 621-3162**

Elbert County Master Gardener (ECMG) Photo Contest.
Win a \$25 Gift Certificate to Tagawa Gardens in Centennial.

All nature and garden subjects are allowed including but not limited to: vegetable, flower, landscape, trees, and insects. The photograph(s) must be taken in Elbert County.

How to Enter: Comment on the post on the Colorado Master Gardener Elbert County Facebook page and upload your photo. The most recent contest ended on January 31st, 2022. The photo with the most "likes" by the end of the day January 31st wins! So get everyone you know to participate and "like" their favorite photo.

It is fantastic to get a look at Elbert County's gardens. The current winner is Jacquelyn Grosheider Cugliat for her daisy photograph. We will be holding more photo contests this summer, so keep taking photos, and keep an eye on our Facebook page for more information.



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Spring is on the way....honest!

By Lesley Roper - Colorado Master Gardener, Elbert County



Many of us are gearing up for the gardening season and the Colorado Master Gardeners of Elbert County can assist you with a wide variety of gardening topics. Most of the information you will receive is derived from research and science from Colorado State University, so you can rest assured the information is current, local, as well as scientifically accurate.



The Elbert County Master Gardeners are trained in and can assist with questions related to:

- Diagnosing Abiotic Tree Disorders - Insects and diseases account for only 20% of tree problems. The other 80% are abiotic disorders (soil compaction, planting problems, restricted root growth, weather, etc.). Due to rather generic symptoms, abiotic disorders are difficult to diagnose and are best diagnosed by working through a systematic evaluation of the tree.
- Diagnosing Insects and Diseases Trees – Not sure what is going on with your trees, let us help you take a look.
- Diagnostics and Plant Health Care – A holistic approach to plant health care can remedy many plant problems.
- Herbaceous Plants: Right Plant, Right Place - Hot, dry, windy, clayey or rocky soils, and short growing seasons are just some of the challenges faced by the Colorado gardener. Few catalog or plant descriptions directly apply to the unique growing conditions found in Colorado's high plains or mountain communities. What should the gardener interpret when the catalog describes the flower as "...requires little irrigation...", "...needs a normal soil..." or "...spread readily..."?
- How Plants Grow – Information on plant structures including roots, stems, leaves, flowers, seed and related growth factors.
- Identifying Trees and Shrubs
- Entomology – Of the 750,000 species of insects, only a small portion are actually pests to humanity and crops. Integrated pest management strategies are the most effective.
- Plant Pathology - Plant disease management concepts.
- Lawn Care - Basic lawn care issues faced by home gardeners.
- Pruning - The research base on pruning has added a lot of clarity in how to prune, basic pruning cuts and pruning options to keep shrubs natural looking.
- Small Fruits - Small fruits are easy and fun to grow for the home gardener.
- Soils, Fertilizers and Soil Amendments - Eighty percent of landscape plant problems relate to soil and root conditions. We can provide information on best soil management practices, soil amendments, composts, and fertilizers.
- Tree Selection and Planting - Primarily due to problems arising from planting techniques, the average life of a tree in the landscape is only eight years.
- Vegetables - For gardeners, there is nothing more fulfilling than a dinner from your own garden. We can suggest techniques to maximize yields and quality from home grown produce.
- Water Wise Landscape Design - Xeriscaping has had a lot of attention in Colorado's gardening circles. If you want to take a new approach to water wise gardening landscape design theory we can help.
- Weed Management - Weeds are a common frustration for gardeners and we can suggest weed management techniques for the home garden and landscape.

We would love to talk gardening with you, and if we don't have the immediate answer, we will research it and get back to you....we love to learn too. Master Gardeners are in the office (95 Ute Ave. Fairgrounds in Kiowa) on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. (May - September) Phone 303-621-3162 email elbert.extension.colostate.edu



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Colorado Native Plant & Seed Sources

(Excerpted by Cathy Ramsey - Colorado Master Gardener, Elbert County)



Retail Nurseries

Bath Garden Center & Nursery	https://www.bathgardencenter.com	Fort Collins, CO
Brady's Garden & Spa Center	http://www.bradysgardencenter.com	Canyon City, CO
Colorado State Forest Service Nursery	https://csfs.colostate.edu/seedling-tree-nursery	Fort Collins, CO
Creek Side Gardens	https://www.plantsbycreekside.com	Littleton, CO
CreekSide Tree Nursery	http://www.creeksideboulder.com	Boulder, CO
Fort Collins Nursery	https://fortcollinsnursery.com	Fort Collins, CO
Fossil Creek Nursery	https://www.fossilcreeknursery.com	Fort Collins, CO
Front Range Landscape & Nursery	https://www.frontrangelandscape.com	Franktown, CO
Gulley Greenhouse & Garden Center	https://www.gulleygreenhouse.com	Fort Collins, CO
Happy Life Gardens	http://www.happylifegardens.com	Evans, CO
Harding Nursery	https://hardingnursery.com	Colorado Springs, CO
Harlequin's Gardens	https://harlequinsgardens.com	Boulder, CO
Heidrich's Colorado Tree Farm Nursery	http://www.coloradotreefarmnursery.com	Colorado Springs, CO
High Plains Environmental Center	https://high-plains-environmental-center.square.site	Loveland, CO
High Plains Nursery	http://highplainsnursery.com	Allison, CO
Highlands Garden Center	https://www.bigtoolbox.com/highlands-garden-center-nursery	Centennial, CO
Holly Acres Nursery	https://www.hollyacresnursery.com	Elizabeth, CO
Jared's Nursery	https://jaredsgarden.com	Littleton, CO
McCord's Garden Center & Landscaping	https://www.mccordgardens.com	Monument, CO
Phelan Gardens	http://phelangardens.com	Colorado Springs, CO
Pine Lane Nursery	https://www.pinelanenursery.com	Parker, CO
Rick's Garden Center	https://www.ricksgarden.com	Colorado Springs, CO
The Sprucery Garden Center	http://thesprucery.com	Franktown, CO
Sunset Greenhouse	http://sunsetgh.com	Colorado Springs, CO
Tagawa Gardens	https://www.tagawagardens.com	Centennial, CO

Specialty Nurseries

(by appt only)

The Cactus Man/ Prairie Storm Nursery	https://coldhardycactus.com	Lakewood, CO
Colorado FruitScapes	https://www.facebook.com/Colorado-FruitScapes	Castle Rock, CO
Colorado Native Plants	http://www.coloradonativeplants.com	Lakewood, CO
Desert Canyon Farm	https://desertcanyonfarm.wordpress.com	Cañon City, CO

To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow. – Audrey Hepburn

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Colorado Native Plant & Seed Sources con't

Mail Order: Seeds

Alplains	http://www.alplains.com	Kiowa, CO
American Meadows	https://www.americanmeadows.com/wildflower-seeds/native-rare-wildflower-seeds	
Beauty Beyond Belief Seed (BBB Seed)	https://bbbseed.com	Boulder, CO
Buffalo Brand Seed	https://www.buffalobrandseed.com	Greeley, CO
Douglass King Seeds	https://www.dkseeds.com	San Antonio, TX
Everwilde Farms Inc.	https://www.everwilde.com	Fallbrook, CA
Grand Prismatic Seed	https://www.grandprismaticseed.com	Fruit Heights, UT
Granite Seed and Erosion Control	https://graniteseed.com	Denver, CO
Miss Penn's Mountain Seeds	https://www.pennandcordsgarden.com/more-wild-mountain-seed.html	Westcliffe
Pawnee Buttes Seed Inc.	https://pawneebuttesseed.com	Greeley, CO
Plants of the Southwest	https://plantsofthesouthwest.com	Santa Fe, NM
Roundstone Native Seed	https://roundstoneseed.com	Upton, KY
Sharp Bros. Seed Co.	https://sharpseed.com	Healy, KS
Sheffield's Seed Company	https://sheffields.com	Locke, NY
Southwest Seed Inc.	http://www.southwestseed.com	Dolores, CO
Western Native Seed	https://www.westernnativeseed.com	Coaldale, CO

Quick Facts for Growing Plants from Seed

(excerpted from CSU Fact Sheet 7.409)

- Some annuals are best seeded directly in the garden in spring.
- Cold frames allow starting plants as much as six weeks before planting-out time.
- Do not start plants too soon — they may become crowded and spindly before they can be planted safely outdoors.
- Plants grown early indoors or in cold frames need to be exposed to the outdoors gradually to avoid shock.
- Use good, viable seed.

Preparing the Soil for Seeds

(excerpted from CSU Fact Sheet 7.409 by Cathy Ramsey, CMG, Elbert County)

Before seeding, spade the garden area 6 to 10 inches deep. Thoroughly mix in coarse peat, compost or aged manure if the soil is too heavy (clay type) or too sandy. Use 3 cubic yards of organic matter per 1,000 square feet or enough to cover to a depth of 1 inch.

The organic matter helps keep the soil from becoming too compact and holds moisture needed for seed germination. Rake the surface smooth and remove or break down clods larger than the size of a pea. Plant seeds in rows and cover with a fine soil to the depth indicated on the seed packet. Mark the seeded rows with identifying labels.

Use good, viable seed. Seed collected from last year's garden rarely results in the flower colors desired because of interbreeding of varieties. Old seed, unless carefully stored in a cool, dry location, often germinates poorly. It is usually more satisfactory to buy fresh, new seed when growing garden annuals and vegetables. Most seed packets are dated using phrases such as 'Packed for (Year)'. Sow seed directly in the garden for the simplest way to start plants. It is usually safe to sow the seed outdoors when trees are beginning to produce leaves. See Table 1 for when to start seeds of specific plants.

Keep the seedbed moist at all times. When seedlings appear, thin plants to half the height they are supposed to attain, except for tall, spike-like annuals such as snapdragons, larkspur and foxglove. Thin these to one-fourth their mature height for a fuller, more showy effect.

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Starting Seed Indoors

(excerpted from CSU Fact Sheet by Cathy Ramsey - Colorado Master Gardener, Elbert County)

If space is available near a sunny window, start seeds four to eight weeks before the plant-out date in your area (average date of last killing frost). Starting too early usually results in spindly plants due to crowding and lack of sufficient light. Almost any container with drainage holes in the bottom will work for planting. Paper milk cartons cut in half, Styrofoam cups, tin cans, plastic trays and pots are common containers used. For convenience, however, you may wish to start plants in the plastic trays and pots available at garden supply centers.

Use a rich, well-drained soil. Potting soils made for African violets and other house plants usually are suitable and do not have weed seeds. They are, however, more expensive than soil mixes you can make at home. If you use soil from the yard, it should be top soil that is well drained and blended with organic matter. The best soils are often found around established shrubs and trees. Add sphagnum peat and sharp sand to the soil in a ratio of about one-half volume of each, and mixed thoroughly.

To kill weed seeds and some damaging soil fungi, place the soil mix in shallow trays or baking pans in an oven for 45 minutes at 250F. For best results, the soil should be moist.

After the soil has cooled, fill containers firmly but do not pack. Allow about 3/4 inch from the soil surface to the rim of the container. Place seeds on the soil surface. Use a piece of window screen or old flour sifter to sift soil over the seeds to the depth indicated on the seed packet.

If you use compartmentalized trays or individual peat pots, place two or three seeds in each pot. Do not cover too deeply, as this may reduce or prevent seed germination. As a general rule, cover no more than four times the diameter of the seed.

Apply a fine spray of water to avoid washing the seed, causing them to float to the soil surface. Household spray bottles are suitable. Cover the containers with plastic sheets or panes of glass and place in a cool room (60 to 65F) away from direct sunlight until germination.

When seeds germinate, move them gradually (over two or three days) into brighter light. When the seedlings have developed the first true leaves (the leaves above the cotyledons or 'seed leaves'), thin to one plant per container if using partitioned trays or peat pots. Use tweezers to pinch off un-wanted seedlings rather than pulling them, to avoid disturbing the remaining seedling.

If seeds were planted in larger containers, transplant into individual peat pots or other small containers. An alternative is to thin the seedlings so they are spread about 1 1/2 to 2 inches apart and leave them in the larger containers. This method, however, makes inefficient use of seed and space.

Water seedlings carefully. Small containers used for starting plants dry out quickly. On the other hand, soil kept soaking wet inhibits seedling growth and may kill the plants.

About one week prior to planting-out time, gradually expose seedlings to longer periods outdoors unless temperatures are below 50F. At the same time, reduce watering to a minimum as long as plants do not wilt. This will help the plants adjust to full exposure without undergoing undue shock at planting time.

I.S.E. Newman, Colorado State University Extension greenhouse crop specialist and professor, horticulture and landscape architecture and L. Langelo, Horticulture Coordinator, Golden Plains Area. Original author, J.E. Feucht, Extension landscape plants specialist and professor. 9/92. Revised 11/18.

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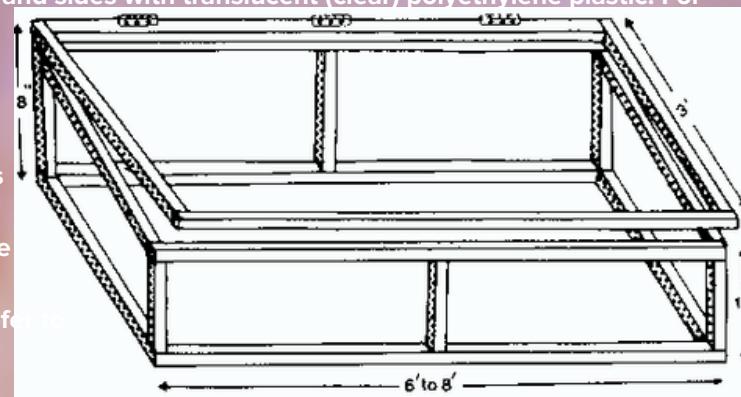
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Cold Frames

For an early start, sow seed in a cold frame and transplant it into the garden later (see Figure 1). Seed may be started as much as six weeks earlier than outdoors. Locate the cold frame on the south side of a garage or dwelling. If built with a tight-fitting lid, the cold frame will hold sufficient heat from the sun to keep seed and seedlings warm at night. On warm, sunny days (50F or warmer), prop the lid open to prevent buildup of excessive heat. Close the lid in the late afternoon to trap enough heat for cold evenings.

A simple cold frame made with 2-inch x 2-inch lumber. Cover hinged lid and sides with translucent (clear) polyethylene plastic. For better insulation against cold, cover both inside and outside to leave an airspace between layers of plastic. An 8-foot frame requires 10 pieces 2 inches x 2 inches, each 8 feet long.



As the season progresses, gradually expose the plants to longer periods of outside temperatures, as long as the air temperature does not go below 50F. Treated in this way, they develop into sturdier plants that are better able to adapt to fully-exposed garden conditions at transplant time. This is particularly true of the hardy annuals and biennials that prefer to develop in cooler temperatures: petunia, ageratum, lobelia, verbena, cabbage, broccoli and lettuce. (CSU Fact Sheet 7.409)

GEESE GALORE

Colorado Division of Wildlife Fact Sheet page B-65

By Raylene Owen, Colorado Master Gardener, Elbert County

One of our most familiar and abundant waterfowl are Canada Geese, *Branta canadensis*.

There is a long-standing myth that they were named after an ornithologist named Canada.

It is more likely that the name is geographically derived. Geese were imported into England from Canada in the 1600's and were, hence called Canada Geese.



Canada comes from an Iroquois word, "Kanata", meaning village. Canada Geese are native to North America and are Canada's national bird. By the early 20th century, over hunting and loss of habitat had reduced their numbers to near extinction levels. Historically, only a small, dwindling number of Canada geese wintered on the eastern plains, mostly on reservoirs east of the Front Range. Some nested along rivers in the northwest part of the state and in the high mountain parks.

So, what happened in the last 60 years? Why does the Front Range now have an abundance of Canada Geese?

In 1953, the Division of Wildlife (DOW) began a Canada Goose Restoration Project to establish a resident population of geese in the "Goose Triangle", an area from Greeley to Fort Collins and south to Denver. Nesting boxes were put up and geese imported from other states. Through protective hunting closures, predator control, goose nesting structures, and additional releases, the nesting flock grew rapidly. The resident geese attracted large numbers of migrating geese that formerly wintered farther south. Human development provided ponds, plentiful food and protection from hunting. This was the right kind of habitat for wintering geese, as well as the now established resident flocks. This restoration project was "wildly" successful, more so than had been anticipated.



People contribute to artificial concentrations of birds by feeding geese. Landscaping of yards and parks, with expansive areas of bluegrass lawns and numerous ponds, create ideal conditions for resting, molting, brood rearing and foraging. Hunting closures in urban areas create a safe refuge for geese. For the most part, the presence of geese is a welcome reminder of Colorado's rich wildlife heritage. However high numbers of geese can create problems.

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The Irritating, the Toxic, and the Ugly: Prostrate Weed Problems

Excerpted by Cathy Ramsey from an article by Kara Harders. CSUE and NRCS from the Small Acreage Newsletter - CSU Extension

[Dictionary definition for prostrate: BOTANY- growing along the ground.] Common Purslane, Spotted Spurge, Prostrate Knapweed and Puncturevine . Can you tell them apart? These four have much in common, but where they differ is very important. All four are annual weedy forbs (non-grasses). They enjoy many of the same conditions, such as hanging out in lawns, gardens, and sides of roads/paths. You may wonder "If they are so similar does it matter if I can tell them apart?" Read on to learn why!

Prostrate spurge - *C. maculata* L. Prostrate spurge is the only toxic plant of the four, its stems produce a milky latex juice when broken, and it is the only plant of the four which is native to North America. This plant has a slight variant within the species, Spotted Spurge, which looks the same but with a small purple spot on each leaf. Leaves are ovate, slightly hairy, and generally dark green. The flowers are tiny and pinkish, which will go unnoticed to an untrained eye. Seedpods are 1/16 inch or less long and the oblong seeds are about 1/25-inch-long. Be sure to wear gloves when hand weeding this plant! below, and notice the milky sap!



Prostrate knotweed - *Polygonum aviculare* L. Also a non-native annual, growing 1 to 3 feet tall, with wiry corrugated stems. The leaves of this weed are hairless, alternate, and lance-shaped to oval, 1/2 to 2 1/2 inches long and 1/8 to 1/3 inch wide. Flowers are small and pink, occurring in clusters along the flower stems at leaf axils. Flowering stems compose about half of the height of a mature plant. It was likely introduced to North America with the first colonists and was first collected in Canada in 1821.



Common purslane - *Portulaca oleracea* A non-native, fleshy weed with succulent like leaves, this prostrate annual was introduced in the Americas as early as the 16th century and has made its way around the world. A possible reason for its wide distribution is its historic role as a medicinal plant and edible plant, meaning it was likely, at times, spread intentionally. High in a variety of nutrients, this plant is grown intentionally in some places, but its ability to easily reproduce and visual similarity to the toxic Prostrate Spurge has made it undesirable in many lawns, gardens, and fields. Small yellow flowers will produce many small black to brown seeds within a brown seed pod. *Please note that this article does not contain enough information to teach or instruct people to consume weeds or other herbs for culinary purposes, please do additional research if that is something you are interested in.



Puncturevine - *Tribulus terrestris* Another non-native annual, Puncturevine is mat forming, with trailing stems, each can be 1/2 to 5 feet long. With small, hairy, oval leaves, it can look similar to the prostrate spurge. A key identifying figure are its flowers, which are yellow, 1/3 to 1/2 inch wide with 5 petals, And of course, its seed pods. These seed pods develop as a larger pod of 5 sections that break at maturity into tack-like structures with sharp, sometimes curving spines. These seeds will remain dormant in the soil for 4 to 5 years, so even when they appear controlled one year, they may come back the next. This is one of the later flowering weeds, with blooms not coming on until July to October.



These four plants do not make up all of the prostrate weeds we have here in Colorado but they should help you distinguish between the most common problematic ones. When you are trying to identify a weed and are unsure of what you have, try to identify what time of year it grows, the flower size, structure, and color, and other factors so you are better able to research it, or present your problem weed to another person to try to get an ID. Remember, you can't properly control a weed until you know what kind it is!

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Evergreen Trees for Dry Sites

by Amy Lentz, CSU Extension Horticulture Agent- Weld County (submitted by Cathy Ramsey)

Even with recent snowfalls, many of us are still in some sort of drought in Colorado. It's been unseasonably dry over the past fall and winter so far and our trees could suffer if they don't get moisture during these dry winter months. We've talked before about the importance of winter watering, but I also wanted to take a moment to cover just a few evergreen trees that can better withstand drier conditions, whether you create those conditions through xeriscaping or you just want to choose the right evergreen tree for your dry location.

Pinyon Pine Tree



Pinyon pine (*Pinus edulis*)

This is a great option for those living along the Front Range and lower elevations and if you are dealing with a steep slope where water runs off frequently. However, they don't like to be wet, so placing a Pinyon pine in the middle of your lawn where it gets watered three times a week is not ideal the tree will likely suffer. It's a smaller evergreen tree with two needles per bundle and attractive smaller cones. These cones are where we get pine nuts.

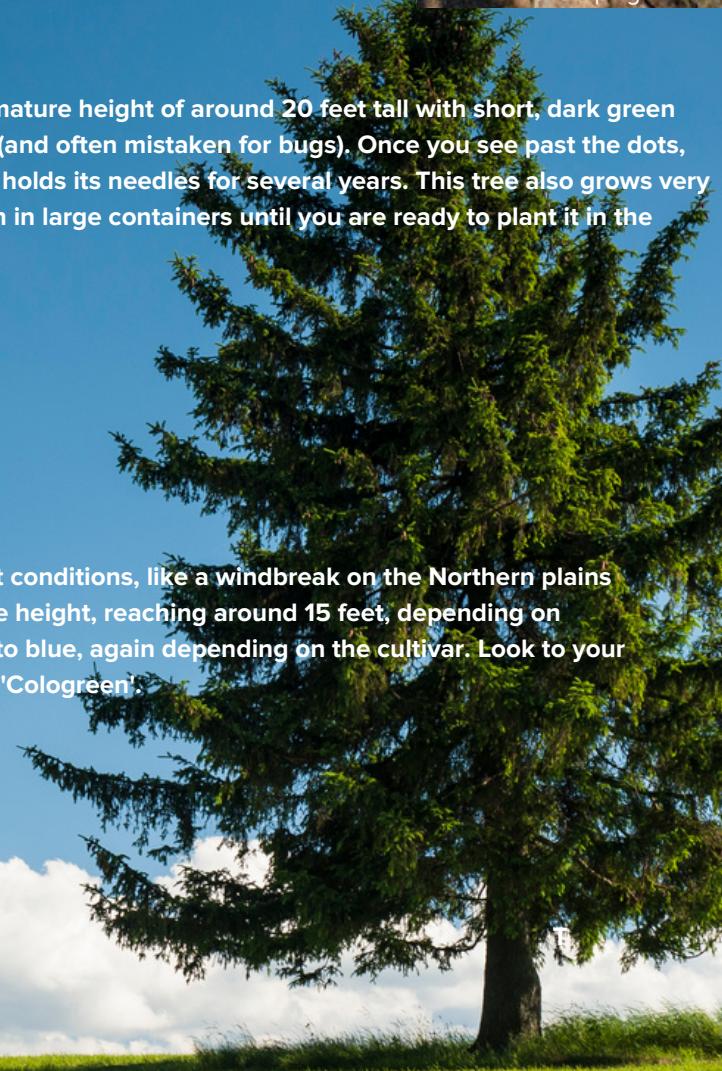
Colorado Springs Utilities
Xeriscaping

Bristlecone Pine Tree



Bristlecone pine (*Pinus aristata*)

Bristlecone pine is a unique tree with a smaller mature height of around 20 feet tall with short, dark green needles that have tiny white resin dots on them (and often mistaken for bugs). Once you see past the dots, you will notice that this tree has a nice form and holds its needles for several years. This tree also grows very slowly, so you can even use it on your front porch in large containers until you are ready to plant it in the ground.



Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*)

This is one tough tree! Rocky Mountain junipers are often utilized in the worst conditions, like a windbreak on the Northern plains where the wind never stops. They are pyramidal in shape and small in mature height, reaching around 15 feet, depending on what type you choose. The overall color of these trees can range from green to blue, again depending on the cultivar. Look to your local nurseries to find specific cultivars such as 'Wichita Blue', 'Woodward' or 'Cologreen'.



Rocky Mountain Juniper, Oregon State University



The list of good evergreen trees for dry sites doesn't stop with this blog, there are plenty from which you can choose. For a more complete list of all evergreen trees for Colorado landscapes (including those on moist sites), check out our CSU Fact Sheet #7.403.

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Attracting Birds

(Excerpted from nwf.org, Attracting Birds, submitted by Cathy Ramsey - CMG, Elbert County)

There are a number of ways to attract birds to your garden, from planting native plants to providing safe stopover areas for them to eat, drink and nest.

1. Provide water year-round

A simple birdbath is a great start. Change water every 2-3 days in summer and use a heater in the winter. Place the water container about 10 feet from dense shrubs or other cover that predators may use.



2. Install native plants

Select a variety of native plants to offer year-round food in the form of seeds, berries, nuts, and nectar. Try to recreate the plant ecosystem native to your area. Evergreen trees and shrubs provide excellent cover through all seasons, if they are part of your local ecosystem. The Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center has lists of recommended native plants by region and state.

3. Support insects in your yard

Following organic practices helps wildlife. Insects are the primary source of food for many bird species and are an important source of protein and fats for growing juvenile birds. Caterpillars, for instance, are the solitary diet for some baby bird species.

4. Keep dead trees

Dead trees provide cavity-dwelling places for birds to raise young and as a source to collect insects for food. Many species will also seek shelter from bad weather inside these hollowed out trees.

5. Put out nesting boxes

Make sure the nesting boxes have ventilation holes at the top and drainage holes below. Do not use a box with a perch, as house sparrows are known to sit on a nesting box perch and peck at other birds using the nesting box. Be sure to monitor the boxes for invasive animal species known to harm or out-compete native species.

6. Build a brush pile in a corner of your yard

Start with larger logs and top with smaller branches. Some birds will hunt, roost or even nest in brush piles.



7. Offer food in feeders

Bird feeders are great sources of supplemental food during times of food scarcity, and also enhance bird viewing opportunities.

8. Remove invasive plants from your wildlife habitat

Many invasive plants out-compete the native species favored by birds, insects and other wildlife. Check with your local U.S. Department of Agriculture Cooperative Extension System office for information on plant species to avoid. Find your local Cooperative Extension System office

9. Reduce your lawn area

Lawns have little value to birds or other wildlife, and they require more energy for mowing, applying fertilizers and watering.



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Feeding Honey Bees in the Spring

Excerpted from CSU Extension Fact Sheet 5.622 by Cathy Ramsey - Colorado Master Gardener, Elbert County

Pollen and nectar are the source of protein and carbohydrates for the developing brood in the hive. Nutritional requirements for a honey bee colony changes depending on the season. During the spring and summer seasons when the colony is actively growing, honey bees require a mixture of pollen and nectar. Pollen is the protein source necessary to maintain healthy larval development. Availability of pollen ensures that honey bee foragers progress normally through the age-based division of labor from young nurses to middle-aged builders to old foragers. Lack of access to sufficient pollen breaks down the normal age-based task transitions, leading to colony failure. Prolonged pollen limitation can cause queens to stop egg laying.

During the fall and winter months, the colony is not actively growing but the bees need to generate enough heat to keep warm during cold winter days. Honey bees do not hibernate but instead form a tight cluster where the bees vibrate their wing muscles and shiver to generate warmth on the coldest of winter days. This requires a lot of carbohydrates and therefore it is important for the colony to have adequate stored honey and access to sugar solution to make it through the cold winters in Colorado.

Honey bee colonies are active and growing in the spring and summer seasons. In the winter season, the colonies do not produce new adult bees but remain active. So, the nutritional requirements vary between seasons. It is important to understand the different feeding requirements associated with each season to sustain healthy colonies.

Colonies must have sufficient (80 – 100 pounds) stored honey going into the winter. In addition to this stored honey, feeding colonies during the winter months is common practice. Supplementing colonies with sugar solution (2 sugar: 1 water) in the early months of fall will give the bees enough time to ferment the syrup and turn it into honey reserves for the winter. In Colorado this is very important because the winters tend to be harsh. Forcing bees to delegate some of their energy to search for nectar instead of clustering decreases the hive's chances of survival, as there are no flowers in the winter months.

In spring, supplemental feeding is seen as a measure to get the bees "back on their feet" to start foraging and get the colony growing. Colonies begin to consume more of their honey stores. Supplemental feeding in March is important as they begin to build their brood. After a long winter of buzzing around the queen to keep warm, the workers and newly-emerged drones can quickly exhaust available in-hive honey reserves. Beekeepers can feed colonies with sugar solution (1 sugar: 1 water). Note the change in proportion of sugar to water from winter to spring feeding.

Spring feeding stimulates the foraging process and gives the bees enough energy to forage for naturally available pollen and nectar from flowers. Bees collect pollen from early blooming spring plants including crocus, hyacinth etc. Bees can also be seen collecting pollen from sugar maple, ash and other early blooming, wind-pollinated trees. Dandelions are one of the early blooming spring flowers that is a bone of contention among gardeners and beekeepers. Bees prefer other flowers over dandelions but will forage from dandelions in the absence of better food sources (Larson et al., 2014). Provide alternate early flowering plants (FactSheet 5.616) or supplement pollen to the hive to reduce bee activity on dandelions in regions when dandelions are actively being controlled by herbicide application.

During spring, with longer days and the warming temperatures, bees can be seen collecting water from any nearby sources including creeks, pools and bird baths. Provide water near the hives to reduce their time spent searching for water (FactSheet 5.615).

BEESWAX FACTS:

from an article written by TOM THEOBALD in The Fence Post December 28, 2015, excerpted by Raylene Owen - Colorado Master Gardener, Elbert County

Honey bees have different jobs at different stages of their lives. Their bodies also change to take on these new jobs. Beeswax is a by-product of honey production. Young worker bees, in the first few weeks of their lives, produce new beeswax from their wax glands. Young bees consume honey and convert it into wax in these glands. It takes about 7 pounds of honey to produce a pound of wax. These wax glands will become inactive later in life when they progress to being field bees.

Bees use this wax for honey comb and cappings of the comb chambers. The wax will be varying shades of yellow and orange, depending on the color of the incoming pollen. Since the cappings are new each year they are fairly free of impurities and are most desirable for making candles. These candles are great because they burn brighter, longer, and cleaner than any other candle. The flame essentially emits the same light spectrum as the sun. Beeswax candles are naturally scented by the honey and produce a subtle fragrance as they burn.

For more information go to <http://www.beeswaxco.com/beeswax-facts>. And there you have some beeswax facts on beeswax.

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