



APRIL 2024
Newsletter

**SPEED DATING WITH
LOCAL GARDEN EXPERTS**

SATURDAY, APRIL 20, 2024

10 A.M. – 1 P.M.

IDAHO SPRINGS ELKS LODGE

This is your chance to learn about gardening at our altitude! The topics will include Pruning, Weeds, Soils, Native Plants, Pollinators, Growing Veggies and a new topic – “Terracing the Mountain”.

[Click here](#) to register

or call 303-898-8017 before April 17th.

Seats are limited. \$10.00 per person.

2024 CGC

MEETING SCHEDULE

**Second Thursday of the month at noon at
the Elks Lodge in Idaho Springs**

Thursday, April 11

Air Plants by Kris Miller

Please RSVP by Sunday, April 7th by calling

Linda at 303-898-8017 or via email –

rickyowell7682@msn.com

There was no meeting in March
due to the epic snowstorm.

Thursday, May 9

A Guest Speaker from Sundance Gardens

Columbine Garden Club/Social Ethics

Plant Giveaway and Bake Sale

Saturday, May 11, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Project Support Senior Center



This event is held in conjunction with Social Ethics. Contributions of plants and baked goods are needed. Houseplants, vegetables, succulents, seeds, perennials or other plants are welcome contributions. Bake sale items should be cut or plated and wrapped or bagged for our grab-and-go buyers. To volunteer on the day of the sale, contact Kris Miller at 303-567-9653. We will take two hour shifts.

CGC PLANT SALE

Thursday to Saturday

June 6-8, 2024

Thursday, June 6th is Members Only Day!

More info coming soon but plan on getting beautiful hanging baskets, color bowls, herbs, tomatoes, peppers, perennials and more!

7 Tips For A Bird-Friendly Garden

1.Clean Water Provide a clean source of water for birds. The sight and sounds of moving water in bird baths or water features will attract birds much more effectively than standing water, and helps keep the water clean. Water only needs to be a couple of inches deep for drinking and preening.

2.Organic Practices When creating your bird habitat, only use organic fertilizers and skip herbicides and pesticides. This is essential for providing safe foods for birds. Instead of trying to prevent bugs in your garden, welcome them as delicious food for your winged friends.

3.Habitat & Shelter Plant ornamental grasses, shrubs, and small trees to provide shelter for birds. These perennials also provide habitat for insects, which offer another food source for birds -- especially when raising their young. Providing hiding and nesting places for birds protects them and makes your garden very attractive to visiting wildlife.

4.Bird Houses & Bird Feeders Bird houses are a wonderful way of attracting a nesting pair of birds. Make sure to match the house style and entry hole to the type of bird you wish to attract. Be sure to prevent predators and pests from taking over, for example, by including a baffle on the pole to keep critters out of your birdhouse.

5.Nesting Material Leave plant standing through the fall and winter, or if you cut them down, leave the plant material in place. Seeds provide a food source for birds, and stems provide nesting materials. Plant material also makes good insect habitat, another important food source for birds.

6.Bug Out Did you know that one nest of baby birds can eat up to 6000 caterpillars per day? Caterpillars and insects are essential for nourishing birds in our backyards. Avoid pesticides and plant as many native plants as possible to create a healthy habitat.

Binoculars Some of the best bird-watching can happen right from the comfort of your window. Enjoy watching and listening to your garden visitors!

Planting Wildflowers For Birds

If you'd like your garden to buzz and hum with birds and pollinators, grow the plants that they're naturally drawn to. Birds eat fruit, nectar, seeds, and insects such as moths and caterpillars. Our Regional Pollinator Wildflower Mixes feature flowers that are known to attract birds and beneficial insects in your area.

Wildflowers will provide both nourishment and shelter for birds, as well as provide a gorgeous show for you, both with their beautiful blooms and having the delight of watching the birds outside your window.

- When planting wildflowers that will attract and feed birds, look for flowers that form large seedheads, such as Sunflowers, Echinacea, and Black Eyed Susan. This enables birds to easily snack on seeds when they ripen without struggling to break seed pods open.

- Once flowers have finished blooming for the season, you can leave plants standing, or cut everything down and leave the debris on the ground. Leaving plant material over the winter will offer pollinator habitat and provide material for birds to use in building shelter and nests.

Colorful Flowers to Attract Hummingbirds

<https://www.birdsandblooms.com/gardening/plants-and-flowers-to-attract-hummingbirds/top-10-colorful-flowers-hummingbirds-love/>

Hummingbird flowers have three things in common. Their blooms are tube-shaped, brightly colored, and they grow where it's easy for hummingbirds to hover and sip. If you want to attract more of these beautiful birds, plant these flowers that hummingbirds like in your yard or garden.

1. Bee Balm

Zones 4 to 9. *1 to 4 feet tall and wide*

Full sun, starts flowering in midsummer. Bee balm needs sun, moist soil, and plenty of air circulation to ward off powdery mildew.

Seed heads add beauty in fall and winter and may self-sow.

2. Penstemon

Zones 3 to 9, 1 to 4 feet tall

Need full sun and soil with excellent drainage; they hate wet feet, especially in the winter. Colors include white, yellow, blue, purple, red and orange.

3. Catmint

Zones 3 to 9, 1 to 3 feet tall, often wider than it is tall

Catmint is easy to grow, long-blooming, heat-tolerant, and deer- and pest-resistant. After the hummingbird flowers fade, shear off the spent blooms and about a third of the stalk for a second round.

Hummingbirds especially like Siberian catmint's blue blooms (*Nepeta sibirica*). Just be aware that this variety can be an aggressive grower.

4. Salvia (All types)

Annual to perennial, Zones 3 to 10, 1 to 6 feet tall

The tubular blooms are just right for hummers. Salvias grow best in full sun to part shade. Annual salvia is a garden favorite, but don't forget the power of the perennial variety. Almost continuously blooming, especially in hot, dry conditions, salvias come in a huge selection of colors and plant habits. Many gardeners grow these hummingbird flowers because they're a good drought tolerant plant in summer. Grow it in well-draining soil for best results.

5. Coral Bells (*Heuchera*)

Zones 3 to 9, Varying heights but foliage is generally lower, with flower spikes taller.

Coral Bells are valued for their colorful foliage and shade tolerance. In late spring, the plant sends up attractive, long-lasting wands of tiny flowers that hummingbirds like all summer long. Spend time getting to know the different cultivars, which have some of the garden's most diverse and colorful foliage options. It won't be long until you have your own favorites.

How and When to Prune Lilacs



Excerpted from an article by Gardening Expert Melinda Myers

With any type of lilac, you should only prune branches right after the flowers fade to enjoy maximum spring color the next year. New lilac buds form on old wood. So if you start snipping in summer, fall or in spring before they bloom, you'll cut off the forming buds and the plant will not bloom. **How to Prune Lilacs**

To make your plant a little shorter, remove several of the larger stems to ground level. This will encourage new growth at the base of the plant. Reduce the height by no more than a fourth of the plant each year.

Here's exactly how you should do it. Make cuts above an outward-facing branch or healthy buds. Repeat this process over the next few years and you will have a shorter plant with greenery from the tip of the stem to ground level. Cutting the whole plant back to the ground can result in a larger plant than you started with, and that means even more pruning to achieve your desired results.

Shade and improper pruning can prevent lilacs from flowering. Lilacs flower best with at least six hours of direct sunlight. Consider moving the bush to a sunnier location. Too much high-nitrogen fertilizer and improper pruning can also result in a lack of flowers. Go easy on the fertilizing, and prune only if needed right after the lilacs should have bloomed. These plants develop their flower buds in the summer, and the buds open the following spring.

To learn about "Bloomerang", a new lilac that re-blooms and is suitable for our climate zone, [Click Here](#).

To stay up to date with club activities,
go to www.columbinegardenclub.com