



APRIL
2025
Newsletter

APRIL MEETING – THURSDAY, APRIL 10
IDAHO SPRINGS ELKS LODGE
1600 COLORADO BLVD.
12:00 LUNCH AND MEETING
“All About Rain Barrels”

Presented by Jennifer Cook from Gilpin County Extension

Lunch cost is \$13.00, payable at the meeting

If you “plant” to attend, please RSVP not later than **Sunday, March 30th** to Linda Yowell at 303-898-8017 or via email, rickyowell7682@msn.com.

MEETING TOPIC FOR MAY 2025

Thursday, May 8 – Rock Painting with Larrice Sell and Wendy Binniger AND the Club’s Annual Meeting.

MARCH MEETING RECAP

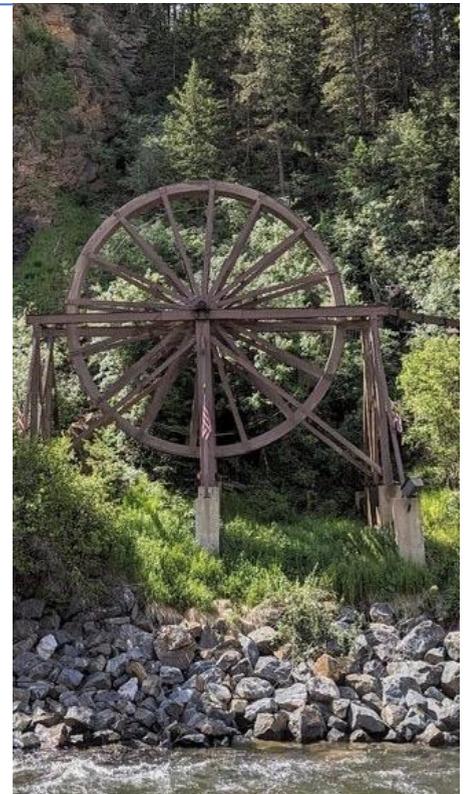
Welcome to new member Ileana Lavender.

The 125th Social Ethics Club Anniversary is May 3rd at the Castle at noon.

Monetary or plant donations are needed for the Elks Lodge Garden redo. Let Tobi Howell know if you can donate to the project.

County Clean Up Day is May 17th. Volunteers are needed to help along paved path at the waterwheel area. If you can help, please let Nancy Spletzer know.

Historical Society of Idaho Springs is having a gala on May 16th at the Blackstone Rivers Ranch. Save the date – more info to come soon.



APRIL 10th CGC MEETING
"RAIN BARRELS"
BY JENNIFER COOK, MASTER GARDENER
& DIRECTOR OF THE CSU EXTENSION OFFICE FOR GILPIN COUNTY

Do you hesitate to turn on the hose due to the cost of water? No water where you need it? How do you get the water in and out of the barrel?

Join us for the April meeting!

[CLICK HERE](#)

For an article from Garden Gate magazine on
"How to DIY a Rain Barrel."

PLANT GIVEAWAY AND BAKE SALE WITH THE SOCIAL ETHICS CLUB

Saturday, May 10

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Project Support Senior Center

1402 Miner Street, Idaho Springs

Start some seeds or take some cuttings now! 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 to work the sale, contact
Kris Miller at 303-567-9653



CGC PLANT SALE

June 5-7, 2025

June 5 – 8 a.m. (or so) - Plants arrive.
Volunteers are needed to help unload
June 5 – 4 p.m. - Members (and guests)
Only shopping and happy hour
June 6 – Public sale from 10 a.m. to 4
p.m.
June 7 – Public sale 10 a.m. to sell out
Volunteers will be needed during the
sale hours – shopper's helpers, water
faeries, cashiers. The sale will be held
in the Elks Lodge parking lot.

CORAL BELLS/HEUCHERA

Coral Bells sport airy flower spikes on wiry stems above low-growing, often dramatic foliage. Varieties with variegated or dark purple leaves make stunning ground covers, and the delicate flower spikes won't obscure the plants behind them, making them a good choice for the front of the border. Another common name is alum root. Most coralbells sport clouds of tiny, bell-shaped pink, coral, red, or white flowers in late spring or early summer. However, varieties grown primarily for their foliage may have insignificant blooms. Foliage colors include red, purple, silver, as well as green, and some varieties sport marbled or patterned leaves. Foliage height ranges from 6 to 18 inches; flower spikes can reach 24 inches tall.



Georgia Peach



Citronelle



Palace Purple

Ongoing Care

Remove dead foliage in early spring, then apply a thin layer of compost, followed by a 2-inch layer of mulch to retain moisture and control weeds. Water plants during the summer if rainfall is less than 1 inch per week. Cut back flower stalks after blooms fade. Divide plants in early spring every three or four years or when the stems become woody or the plant falls open at the center. Lift plants, divide the rootball into clumps, and replant.

Choosing a site to grow coral bells

Select a site with full sun to light shade and well-drained soil. In areas with hot summers, light shade is preferred.

Planting Instructions

Plant in spring or fall, spacing plants 1 to 2 feet apart depending on the variety. Prepare the garden bed by using a garden fork or tiller to loosen soil to a depth of 12 to 15 inches, then mix in a 2- to 4-inch layer of compost. Dig a hole twice the diameter of the plant's container. Carefully remove the plant from its pot and place it in the hole so the top of the rootball is level with the soil surface. Carefully fill in around the rootball and firm the soil gently. Water thoroughly.

WHAT IS VERMICULITE?

Excerpted from an article by Nashia Baker, Martha Stewart Online

Vermiculite is a micaceous, (containing, resembling or relating to mica), naturally occurring mineral that looks like small brown flakes, It is commonly used as an ingredient in soilless growing mixes, says Niki Jabbour of SavvyGardening.com and the author of *Growing Under Cover*. "Once mined, vermiculite is heated so that it expands into a lightweight material," says Jabbour. "These gold flakes hold and release water, as well as nutrients, which is why vermiculite is prized as a component of potting mixes."

Vermiculite holds moisture and nutrients, improves the structure of soil, and adds loft to lightweight growing mixes," she says. It also keeps your soil light and fluffy, says Jeana Myers, a North Carolina State horticulture extension agent. Pure garden soil is too dense for houseplants and doesn't support ample airflow like a vermiculite-based soil can. Commercial potting mixes typically contain vermiculite in the blend, but you can grow plants in a mix that stars this mineral. "I would typically blend 2 gallons of peat moss with 1 gallon vermiculite, 1 gallon of perlite, and 1 gallon of compost," says Jabbour. "I'll also include a cup of a complete granular fertilizer." Jabbour likes this recipe for a few reasons: "It results in a well-draining, nutrient-rich growing medium that, thanks to the vermiculite and perlite, is light and airy and holds water well," she says. "This mix is perfect for flower and vegetable containers, as well as starting seeds."

Bulb Storage

Vermiculite can be used to store flower bulbs over the winter. "Tender bulbs like gladioli, dahlias, and cannas won't overwinter outdoors in my Zone 5 garden, says Jabbour. "Therefore, I need to lift them in autumn and store them for the winter."

To care for these plants, she waits until they naturally die back before carefully digging the bulbs or tubers from the soil; she then stores them in a cool, dark, and humid environment. It's important to store the bulbs or tubers in stable conditions (between 40 and 50 degrees), as temperature extremes can cause rot or damage. "I use ventilated cardboard boxes or large nursery pots to winter over bulbs and tubers," says Jabbour. "I add several inches of vermiculite and carefully nestle the bulbs or tubers into the material."

From there, she covers the bulbs or tubers with more vermiculite and tops the container with a loose plastic cover to ensure ample airflow. It's important to check on the bulbs and tubers every month to assess the moisture levels in the container. For tubers that appear shriveled, Jabbour recommends spritzing them with water. And if the vermiculite is moist, she suggests leaving the plastic covers off the boxes so the mineral can dry out.

WHAT IS VERMICULITE, CONTINUED

Using Vermiculite for Root Cuttings

Gardeners can also put root cuttings from houseplants, annuals, and perennials in vermiculite, where they will establish new roots. "For annuals like geraniums or coleus, I take a 3- to 4-inch-long stem cutting, cutting just below a node (the spot on the stem where leaves emerge)," says Jabbour. "I remove the lower leaves and slip the cutting into a 4-inch diameter pot filled with moist vermiculite. "This can be topped with a clear plastic bag to hold humidity. Place it in a bright spot, but away from direct sunlight. Depending on the type of plant, it should start to form new roots in a couple of weeks," says Jabbour. "Gently tug on the cutting after two weeks, and if you feel resistance, it's likely rooted." Gardeners can continue by transferring rooted cuttings to containers of potting mix and harden them to prepare them for outdoor growth.

Perlite vs. Vermiculite

Another mineral often compared to vermiculite is perlite, a mined underground volcanic rock. "Perlite is the white, often spherical, particles we see in potting mixes." Perlite's surface allows water to set in, which allows for added moisture to plants. Lightweight perlite is often used in potting mixes to help aeration and drainage.

When to Use Perlite vs. Vermiculite

Perlite and vermiculite are both used in potting mixes—and both minerals can be used to root cuttings. Perlite is better for propagating plants, since it's more lightweight, says Jabbour. However, she uses vermiculite for seed starting, as this mineral is easier to add to the soil surface. "Plus, it holds moisture, which most flower and vegetable seeds need to prompt germination," she says. No matter which material you use, Jabbour recommends wearing a mask when working with these minerals, as they are both dusty.

Can You Reuse Potting Soil?

Consider using fresh potting soil in your annual planters each year. This helps avoid future pest problems caused by insect or disease populations that may be building in the soil. Try composting the soil instead. Soil contains wonderful microorganisms that help with decomposition. It's a great way to recycle potting mix back into the landscape.

To see a short YOUTUBE video about some of the newest Plant Select plants for 2025, [CLICK HERE](#)

Plant Select® – durable, resilient, unique and vibrant plants for western gardens and beyond.

BEHIND-THE-SCENES GREENHOUSE TOURS AT ECHTER'S GARDEN CENTER

This is your opportunity to learn more about our Echter's-grown plants and meet the staff responsible for starting seeds, growing, and stocking the plants you see on the benches of our greenhouses! Our growing team will take you behind the curtain to the growing areas located behind the retail store and on the north side of 52nd Avenue.

TOUR SCHEDULE - APRIL 12-20

Monday-Friday at 2pm
Saturday & Sunday at 11am and 2pm

APRIL EVENTS AT ECHTER'S

Echter's offers classes every weekend in April! Upcoming topics include:

Landscaping Your Colorado Garden – April 12, 1-2 p.m.

A Rose is a Rose – April 12, 3-4 p.m.

Bonsai for Beginners – April 13, 10 – 11 a.m.

Ornamental Grass – April 13, 1-2 p.m.

[CLICK HERE](#) for more classes and info.



Anne English, Peech Keller, Amy Tomlinson, Alora Knight, Tobi Howell and Michelle Tyler at Echter's Gals Night Out in November 2024.

Spaces are limited, so gather your friends and get your tickets today for a night of fun, community, and celebration.

ECHTER'S GAL'S NIGHT OUT – THURSDAY, APRIL 17, 4-8 P.M.

On this unforgettable evening, Echter's Garden Center will transform into a vibrant spring market, featuring over 50 local vendors and artisans offering unique treasures, handmade goods, and delightful finds. Sip on exquisite wines and refreshing beverages as you explore the market, enjoy live music, and sample delicious food products or purchase bites from select vendors. With a lively and welcoming atmosphere, it's the perfect way to shop, connect, and support a meaningful cause.

Get 20% off all shopping at Echter's during the event. Enjoy convenient event parking. Tickets are \$45.00 through April 12th, then they are \$50.00. Proceeds benefit Hope House.

[GET TICKETS HERE](#)

**Cool Season Vegetables
are Easiest and Most Productive**
Excerpted From CSU Extension Fact Sheet No. 7-248,
“Vegetable Gardening in the Mountains”

Mountain gardens excel (and perhaps do even better) than lower elevation gardens with cool season vegetables.

Below are vegetables recommended for the mountains:

Lettuces, arugula, kale, spinach, Swiss chard, mâche, collards, cabbage, endive, radicchio, turnip greens, beet greens, garden cress

Root vegetables: carrots, beets, radishes, turnips, kohlrabi, rutabaga, potatoes, leeks
Other vegetables: peas, broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts



Selecting Varieties

Within each vegetable/herb species are many different cultivars or varieties. Some will work better for the mountains than others. In general, look on the back of the seed packet or in the catalogs for the ‘days to harvest’ and choose the ones with the least number of days to harvest or maturity. Be aware that the actual days a plant needs to mature may be considerably longer in the mountains, because the ‘days to maturity’ number was usually established in a warmer climate. Other desirable mountain characteristics to look for on a seed packet include “cold-tolerant,” “reliable in cool weather,” ‘easy to grow’, ‘vigorous’, ‘productive’, and ‘great flavor’.

Site Selection

In general, try to find a site that gets 6-8 hours of full sun per day (for leafy greens, only 4-6 hours are necessary). A south-facing, slightly sloped area is ideal for warming soils in spring and staying frost-free later in the fall. The site should be near your house for easy tending and watering. In windy areas, find a spot on the lee side of the house, or put up windbreaks. If you are attempting some of the warm-season vegetables (longer time to maturity), find the warmest microclimate available near your house (often on the south side). Try to plant close to the house or a rock wall so the plants can benefit from the thermal mass.