

Pine River Library Program in a Bag: Grow a Flower Garden!



Why grow a flower garden?

- Flowers are mood enhancers!
- Gardening is an effective workout that uses many different muscle groups while also increasing flexibility.
- Gardening is also something that just about anyone can do at any age!
- Plants remove pollution from the air. Through photosynthesis, the plant's leaves absorb carbon dioxide and release oxygen.
- Planting flowers can help to hold soil in place, reducing erosion and flooding.
- Many flowers attract helpful pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and moths. Some types of flowers, such as bee balm, petunias, and hollyhocks will even attract hummingbirds!

Some tips for our local area:

- The best place to grow flowers is in a site that already is home to grass, wildflowers, or even weeds, which is usually a fairly sunny and open area. If there are weeds and/or grass growing in the area, get them under control before planting something new.
- Soil Prep: In general, it is good to add organic matter to any type of mountain soil. Incorporate 2-3 inches of organic matter (or 3 cubic yards per 1,000 square feet of garden), such as alfalfa pellets, compost, or aged manure, to a depth of 6-12 inches. NOTE: Native plants are often adapted to soils that are lower in organic matter, and may not thrive in well-amended soils like non-native plants.
- Try not to plant your seeds outside until after Memorial Day.
- Plant Choice:
 - Plants with smaller leaves will often require less water, and will also experience less hail damage.
 - Try to avoid late-blooming plants and heat loving plants- they probably won't bloom before frost.
 - In general, choose plants that are hardy to zones 2 to 4.
 - Native plants are some of the best plants for our mountain areas because they are already adapted to the harsh conditions.
 - For a list of plants native to our area and their growing needs check out www.extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/native/MountainsSm.pdf

Questions?

Contact the Pine River Garden Club on Facebook @Pine River Garden Club or by email at pinergc@gmail.com.

Helpful Resources

- La Plata County CSU Extension
www.co.laplata.co.us/departments/csu_extension_offices/horticulture.php
- Rocky Mountain Gardener's Handbook: all you need to know to plan, plant, & maintain a Rocky Mountain garden by Mary Ann Newcomer
- *The Xeriscape Flower Gardener: a waterwise guide for the Rocky Mountain region* by Jim Knopf
- *Rocky Mountain Getting Started Garden Guide: grow the best flowers, shrubs, trees, vines & groundcovers* by John L. Cretti

Sources

- www.hunker.com/12003756/what-are-the-benefits-of-planting-flowers
- www.durangoherald.com/articles/91381
- www.extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/yard-garden/colorado-mountain-gardening-basics-7-224/
- <https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/native/MountainsSm.pdf>

