



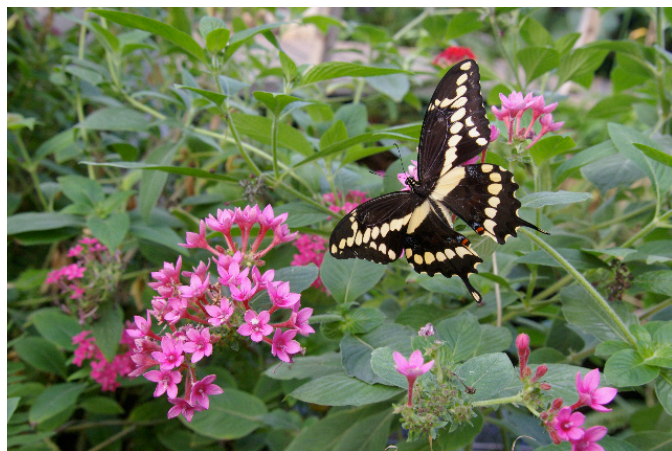
What's Sprouting?

February 2012

Due to greenhouse maintenance work now in progress, a start date for the February opening will be dependent on completion of the maintenance project. Watch for news in the media about our reopening or call 245-3288 to hear the recorded message with current status of hours.



Giant White Bird of Paradise



Giant Swallowtail

Bidding Farewell

To all of our Supporters,

Due to various professional and personal reasons, I have resigned as Executive Director for the Western Colorado Botanical Gardens. It was a difficult decision as I have been joyfully committed to the WCBG for just less than three years and had originally envisioned many years of continued service.

The Gardens have withstood many trials and challenges over the years and I am proud to have been a part of making a few positive changes that resulted in a better environment for whoever will be next to take the helm. I have enjoyed my experience working here and I have learned much.

I carry many great memories as I move forward...especially those of working with our amazingly committed volunteers. The Gardens cannot exist without you! You are what keeps the Gardens alive, in good times and bad. Your loyalty and dedication is beyond outstanding and there are no words to truly express my gratitude for all that you have done for the Gardens and for me over the years.

I am confident that the Gardens will not only survive, but thrive...however, I do not believe that is possible without all of you...volunteers, members, and donors alike. Whatever changes the future holds I hope that you will remain faithful in supporting the Gardens and carry the torch for such a worthy and important asset to our community.

I leave with many fond memories and will miss you all. Thank you for everything you do!!

With Sincere Gratitude,
Laura Stafford
Executive Director



Plant Show West

Come enjoy a show of unusual plants sponsored by five plant societies. Want to know how to grow and care for African violets, cactus, orchids, bonsai, herbs or garden plants? Experts will be on hand to answer all your questions. Do you have a mystery plant in your house you'd like more information on or even have it identified? Get your answers at this show.

See unusual specimens as well as everyday cultivars. See the diversity within a plant hobby. One will see there are many different classes of plants within a hobby. Some differences relate to size of plant, other differences relate to leaf type or growth habit. Blossom types add another interesting variable.

Beautiful flowers always brighten up a space. Learn how you too can have flowers all year long in your home and living space.

Plants can clean the air in your home creating fresher air. They thrive on the carbon dioxide we breathe into the air and transform it with sunlight into chlorophyll in their leaves releasing oxygen back into the air.

See how you can use your plants to decorate your home, cook new recipes, relieve stress by acting as a therapeutic just by working on potting, grooming, watering and admiring your plants.

Plant Show West takes place on March 3 & 4, 2012 at Bookcliff Gardens, 755 26 Rd, Grand Junction. Saturday hours: 8 am – 5 pm; Sunday hours 10 am – 4 pm.

Michelle Kolb, Office Manager & Volunteer Coordinator



Needed

Weeders
Gardeners
Butterfly Wranglers
Butterfly House Sitters
Fish Wrangler
Western Heritage Gardeners
Administrative Assistants
Newsletter Creator
Grant Writer/Researcher
Fundraiser volunteers
Committee volunteers

Wish List

Round Up weed killer
Laminator
Single-whole Punches
Telescoping Squeegee's
10-15 Gallon Black Pots
Potting Soil
Compost
Solar Lights
Watering Wands
Brooms
Small Garden Tools

Volunteer Meeting!
Thursday, February 9
12:00 p.m.
in the library.

Contact Michelle at
michellek@wcbotanic.org
with any questions.

Volunteers are still needed ALWAYS. Call Michelle at 245-3288 to sign up if you are not already a volunteer, and we'll see our regular volunteers on your shift. Be sure to check in with Michelle in the business office.

Our Plant Committee is in need of volunteers. They meet on the second Wednesday of the month at 5:30 p.m. in the Library to discuss and make decisions regarding The Garden property including the Rainforest and Butterfly house.

As Always Thanks to our VOLUNTEERS!

Thank you to all of the volunteers who have helped to clean out the attic, clean out and organize the furnace closet, the Library closet, the Castle storage and the sheds. We are still in the process of organizing the attic boxes. If you are interested please let Michelle know as soon as possible.

Thank you to the volunteers who have spent so much time and effort to repair the Greenhouses. It looks great!

The Herb Corner

by Lana Ferguson

“What’s so special about Herbs? “

As a true lover of everything that is green, I found growing herbs at the top of my list. Our climate and soil in the Grand Valley are a perfect match. Many of the woody herbs make them a good candidate for the Xeric gardener. Their natural habitat is the rocky soil of the Mediterranean area where sunshine is abundant and the water is scarce. Rosemary, sage, creeping and upright thymes and lavender thrive in this area. The green and silver, needle-like, leaves topped with purple flowers adorn both the rosemary and lavender plants. Sage can come in many forms. The culinary variety can often be found covered with bees enjoying the nectar of its light purple blooms. Thyme makes a great rock garden addition. All of these plants will fill your garden with an aroma that most perennials do not share. They all have medicinal properties which can be imparted in teas, tinctures, and essential oils. Culinary chefs around the world now include them to impart flavor and to decrease the use of salt. These are only a few of the many herb varieties, some of which are used in natural spa and cosmetic items.

The Colorado Desert Herb Society welcomes those interested in learning how to grow and use herbs for personal or gift items. Future meetings include a “taste fest” for lavender and herbal items, usages of essential oils, a trip to an herb distillery, a tea party and more. We meet the second Monday of every month at 6:30. For meeting place call: Lana 245-6159, Pam 242-4840, Flo 257-1718.

Join the Brown Bag Garden Talk Series

Present By
Grand Junction Parks & Recreation
Tuesday, February 21
12:00 pm-1pm
at the Library at
Western Colorado Botanical Gardens
\$5

Friends of the Gardens

Meeting Monthly at WCBG Children’s Library

Bonsai Society, 2nd Saturday, 9-11 am
Herb Society, 2nd Monday, 6:30 pm
Organic Gardening, 2nd Sunday, 2-4 pm

Why Doesn’t My African Violet Bloom?

by Florence Naylor

There are many reasons why an African violet does not bloom:

1. Needs more light. Test the light by placing your hand between the light source and the plant. If your hand casts a shadow, the light should be okay. Too much light is also not good for the plant. Protect it from direct sunlight with a sheer curtain.
2. Needs a cooler room. African violets prefer daytime temperatures between 68 and 75 degrees; night temperatures in the 60’s.
3. Needs fresh potting mix. Repot every six months, oftener for the miniatures. The mix breaks down and becomes too acid over time.
4. Needs a change in fertilizer. Select a fertilizer with a higher number in the middle like 12-36-14 or 10-30-20.
5. Needs less fertilizer. Too much fertilizer promotes leaf growth at the expense of flowers; ¼ tsp to a gallon of water for standard size violets and 1/8 tsp to a gallon of water for miniatures.
6. It has been over-watered. The soil should be kept damp, not soggy. When the pot seems light when you pick it up, it is probably time to water. Water only when needed, not when it is convenient.
7. Needs circulation of air but dislikes draft. Keep away from open windows or doors or the breeze of a fan directed on the plant.
8. Too many crowns. “Suckers” which develop into crowns will compete for space, food and water. They occur at the leaf axles where they attach to the trunk of the plant. Grown one crown to a pot.
9. Needs consistent care. Give your plant attention. Turn it every other day or so. Water when dry. Open the curtains on cloudy days, close them when the sun beats in. Pick off spent blooms. Dust the leaves with a soft brush; wash the leaves occasionally to remove house dust, and re-pot when necessary.
10. If you do all these things and the plant still refuses to bloom, get a variety which has a reputation for being a good bloomer. Some varieties are just sparse bloomers.

Western Colorado African Violet Society meets the second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm. For more information call Flo Naylor 257-1718, email: fanaylor@bresnan.net.

HIKE IN A BOTTLE MAPS
available at
Botanic Gift Shop
at The Gardens.

Greetings of the New Year,

As most of you already know, we are closed this month to make some much needed repairs to our greenhouses. Traditionally, January and February are very slow for us, so it's a good time to catch-up. We hope to be open on the weekends by February and back to a full schedule in March. In fact, there are many exciting things happening heading into the spring and summer, including educational offerings for school children, special events and some new activities to help keep our community engaged and participating in the Gardens. We currently have one paid staff person, Michelle Kolb, who is working full time as volunteer coordinator and office manager.

The Board is happy to announce some changes in our operation which could result in some exciting new opportunities and greater stability for our organization. We have been in discussions with Mesa Developmental Services, a local nonprofit supporting people with disabilities. For those of you not familiar with MDS, they are a large, successful Mesa County nonprofit with over 375 employees, five program sites and fourteen group homes around the community. A few months ago, we entered into discussions with MDS' CEO Jeff Nichols about how we could partner in a mutually advantageous manner. As of January 1, the Board agreed to a 90 day trial partnership with MDS to explore the potential of working collaboratively. MDS strongly believes the Botanical Gardens to be a community asset worthy of many community partnerships to assure its success and growth. The past few years have been difficult ones for us with inconsistent leadership, economic woes and expenses associated with aging facilities that have tapped our limited resources.

Through the month of March, we will be working closely with MDS' administration, who are serving in an advisory capacity to explore the viability of assisting us in budgeting, strategic planning, promotion and achieving financial stability. They have the backing of their Board in this venture and are also working to connect us with other community partners.

I will attempt here to address some questions you may have:

Who's officially in charge right now?

Per our agreement, we are asking MDS to assume operational responsibility. Any operational questions or concerns can be directed to Jeff Nichols at 256-8601; financial and IT questions to Ed Wieland, the VP of Finance at MDS, 256-8638; and public relations, fundraising, media relations and special events to Marilee Langfitt, 256-8640, who oversees these responsibilities at MDS. We are confident that MDS staff will work in conjunction with our Board for any issues that may arise.

What exactly does MDS have to offer?

First of all, they have the ability and capacity to let us participate in their business infrastructure and take advantage of their professional expertise. Currently, they are handling our accounting needs, which in spite of the small scale was a large expense for us. They are also letting us join in some of their operational services such as computer hosting, information systems assistance, and telephone services which have already resulted in cost savings to us. They are also offering assistance in public relations, media exposure and funding, primarily through grant writing.

How do we stand financially?

Our reserves are limited now but through these efforts, we have lowered our monthly operating costs to a manageable amount and have full confidence that operational income combined with donations and grant writing will put us in a solid financial position.

What's in this for MDS?

Besides their willingness to be more involved in the community and assist other nonprofits, which they feel is in the best interest of our community, they see potential for using the Gardens as a vocational training and community volunteer site for the people with disabilities to which they provide support services. They are also envisioning that perhaps this partnership could lead to related business opportunities which would employ the people they support. What will we be telling the community and when?

We felt strongly that our dedicated volunteers, members and donors should know about this before a public announcement is made and that you should have greater detail. We will be making a general announcement in the media soon, stressing the positive direction we are taking, which hopefully will in turn encourage investments in our growth and expansion. We hope all of you will join us in helping to restore confidence in the Western Colorado Botanical Gardens and its role in the arts, cultural and scientific enrichment of our community. We have a lot to be proud of and we have plans for many more activities that will touch a wider audience.

How else can we help?

Continue to be involved, help us promote the gardens, celebrate our successes and encourage your network of friends, family and business associates to be involved, as well.

Jon Schler, President of the Board