

Gardening in Our High-Elevation Paradise

By Claire Hanson

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Whether you are an experienced gardener or a newbie, there is always something new to learn about how to grow things, especially here in our dry, windy, high-elevation paradise. You can learn from many sources - gardening friends, from the Master Gardeners at the Farmer's Market, from books and even from seed catalogs. The Estes Valley Community Garden website has lots of articles and links to information in response to our own community gardeners' questions and requests. Click on evcg.org/resources to see what's there.

Meanwhile, here are some books from the Estes Valley Library that might inspire you to go dig in the dirt. You'll find a treasure trove of other great gardening books at the Library, if you go looking for these four on the shelves. As the Roman statesman Cicero stated a long, long time ago, "If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need."

Small-Space Vegetable Gardens: Growing Edibles in Containers, Raised Beds, and Small Plots (Andrea Bellamy, Timber Press, 2014). This is a wide-ranging guide to starting from scratch (so to speak!) in all aspects of gardening in small spaces. If I were a new gardener, I'd like to have this as a guidebook to the complete process of small-scale gardening.

With specifics for our high-elevation, cool and dry climate, *The Colorado Gardener's Companion: An Insider's Guide to Gardening in the Centennial State* (Jodi Torpey, GPP, 2nd ed., 2015) is also an excellent resource for beginning or experienced gardeners. Colorado challenges including soil, water, weather and pests/diseases are addressed. Chapters on veggies, annuals, perennials, trees/shrubs and lawns provide good information on prep needed before planting, selecting appropriate varieties and growing techniques suited to the nine separate hardiness zones (3a – 7a) in our state. There's a list of special Colorado gardens open to the public, such as Aurora Water Xeriscape Garden (now called Aurora Water-wise Garden), Denver Botanic Gardens at Chatfield, and many others. Finally, a five-page listing of resources – from CSU Extension to Bat Conservation International (batcon.org) – is helpful if you are seeking more specifics on any topic.

Good Garden Bugs: Everything You Need to Know About Beneficial Predatory Insects (Mary M. Gardiner, Quarry Books, 2015). Please don't squash every bug you see in your world, or particularly in your garden! While this book is a detailed treatise on these insects, just paging through would give you a new appreciation for what is out there helping gardeners, as well as an incentive to identify any insects you see on your plants or in your soil, before you panic. The excellent photos will help with identification, although you may want to start with bugguide.net (recommended by the author) if you have no idea what's crawling around on your green bean leaves.

And just for fun, as well as to help nurture a new generation of gardeners, check out *Gardening Lab for Kids: 52 Fun Experiments to Learn, Grow, Harvest, Make, Play, and Enjoy Your Garden* (Renata Fossen Brown, Quarry Books, 2014). This presents quite a varied and nice collection of projects for kids of all ages, with clear materials lists and pictures to supplement the clear directions. Paint a rock to decorate your garden, or build a rain gauge – there are projects for all ages.

See you at the Library! If you are looking for more information about Estes Valley Community Garden, explore our website at evcg.org or email the Board at evcg@evcg.org. We'd love to hear from you.

Claire Hanson will grow salad greens at the Community Garden for the 5th year this coming season, having gardened with her mother and grandmother in New Jersey and then having to relearn everything in Boulder, then all over again on moving to Estes Park. She also volunteers at the Library.