

Parks & Public Landscaping Advisory Board

Agenda

**May 6, 2026
Library Meeting Room
951 Spruce Street
6:30 PM**

Members of the public are welcome to attend and give comments remotely; however, the in-person meeting may continue even if technology issues prevent remote participation.

- You can call in to **+1 408 638 0968 or 833 548 0282 (Toll Free)**, Webinar ID # 885 1622 9475
- You can log in via your computer. Please visit the City's website here to link to the meeting: www.louisvilleco.gov/pplab

The Board will accommodate public comments during the meeting. Anyone may also email comments to the Board prior to the meeting at AMcneal@LouisvilleCO.gov.

- I. Call to Order
- II. Roll Call
- III. Approval of Agenda
- IV. Approval of Minutes
- V. Staff Updates
- VI. Board Updates
- VII. Public Comments on items not on the Agenda
- VIII. Blue Sage, North Ends One and Two, and Coal Creek Village Resident Park Request- Public Comments/Submission – Discussion Item
- IX. Check-in on Flower Bed upgrades & more native plantings at Arboretum, Community Park Flower Beds

Persons planning to attend the meeting who need sign language interpretation, translation services, assisted listening systems, Braille, taped material, or special transportation, should contact the City Clerk's Office at 303 335-4536 or MeredythM@LouisvilleCO.gov. A forty-eight-hour notice is requested.

Si requiere una copia en español de esta publicación o necesita un intérprete durante la reunión, por favor llame a la Ciudad al 303.335.4536 o 303.335.4574.

Parks & Public Landscaping Advisory Board

Agenda
May 6, 2026
Page 2 of 2

- X. Invitation to Bee City/Xerces Webinar for Sourcing Pollinator-Safe Plants
- XI. Discussion of City Drought preparation and Review of Bee City Best Practices for Habitat Survival, included Denver Water Email attachment
- XII. Planning for PPLAB and Bee City Meeting with City Council, May 26
- XIII. Discussion items for next meeting
- XIV. Adjourn

Parks & Public Landscaping Advisory Board

Meeting Minutes

**April 1, 2026
Library Meeting Room
951 Spruce Street
7:00 PM**

- I. **Call to Order** – Co-Chairperson John Webb called the meeting to order at 6:30, April 1, 2026.

- II. **Roll Call** was taken and the following members were present:

Board Members Present:
Kathy Kelsey - present
Kelli Zimmermann – present online
David Pomeroy - present
John Webb – present
Jean Keil – present online

Board Members absent
Jody Ash - absent

Staff Members Present:
Chris David, Parks Superintendent
Erik Swiatek, Parks Supervisor

Public in Attendance:
Beth Armbruster
Students from Monarch High School

- III. **Approval of Agenda** – The agenda was approved by all members.

- IV. **Approval of Meeting Minutes** – The minutes from the March 4th, 2026, meeting were approved as written.

- V. **Public comments on Items Not on the Agenda**

Beth Armbruster provided a comment on the drought conditions developing in Louisville and the Colorado Front Range. Posed questions regarding how the City will address water conservation as we move into the growing season. How have water practices been adapted to climate change? We need to adjust water practices. Are there priorities that have been identified? Can low priority areas be watered less? Suggested use of “hardening” practices. Have mower blades been set to allow grass to grow taller, increasing shading and maintaining soil moisture? Can the board advise the city on how to reduce water, and post in public places along with the water bill? Can the board advise City Council on water use practices?

VI. Staff Updates

- Parks Department is now fully staffed; onboarding seasonal staff to start late April.
- Parks Dept. is gearing up for the summer season, getting equipment and irrigation systems prepared. Growing season needs are anticipated to come earlier this year.

VII. Board Updates

Bee City Committee updates:

- Bee City is now a sub-committee of PPLAB.
- Bee City is working on outreach scheduling and budget including “Earth Day Every Day” the first weekend of May and Bee City will participate in gathering in Memory Square Park, May 16.
- Garden tour will occur in June, likely June 13, trying to coordinate with Lafayette. June is pollinator month!
- Soil health outreach presentation in August or September, including composting and native plant gardening.
- Bee City events can use the registration system through the city
- Bee City will contribute to the PPLAB presentation to City Council on May 26, 2026.

VIII. Discussion Item – Review and Approve Memo to Budget Consideration

- Bee City is requesting \$1500 as a supplemental request in 2026 budget to support programming, educational outreach, pollinator friendly projects, training for community members, and modest support for guest presenters. This work builds on 2025 accomplishments.
- Motion to approve Memo to City Council – motion is passed, all in favor.
- Motion to approve the Budget from Bee City subcommittee – motion is passed, all in favor.

IX. Discussion Item – Water restrictions/Drought Considerations

- Chris: The Parks Department is advised on water restrictions by City Council, City Council heard from the Water Dept last week. Water Dept (Public Works) shared information on water storage and reserves.
- There is a priority list in place to determine which areas would be restricted.
- Irrigations systems are being checked as part of water-wise practices.
- There are no water restrictions in place right now. Parks will respond to directives from City Council.
- Parks Department can control its own best use practices.
- Resident Beth Armbruster – we need to be proactive not reactive.
- No irrigation after 6am in all parks throughout the city. Parks Department uses smart irrigation controllers.
- John Webb has a document to share and integrate with City’s Information Distribution structure; Tips and Best Practices.

X. Discussion Item – Review 2027 Budget Recommendations for PPLAB including Bee City

- Addressed in Item VIII.

XI. Discussion Items for Next Meeting-

- Preparing presentation for City Council, May 26
- “Markleville” Public Comments/Submission
- Introduce Bee City’s Habitat Survival Guide to PPLAB for distribution to the City and Public.

XII. Adjourn – the meeting adjourned at 7:20pm.



Picture-1
"Border Control"



Picture-2
"North End Rocks"



Picture-3
“Wes’s Sandpit
and more rocks”



Picture-4 “Chunkinson Park”

📍 Louisville, CO, 80027



Chunkinson Park, located in Louisville, CO, is a charming green space that offers a variety of recreational opportunities. With its well-maintained walking paths, playgrounds, and picnic areas, it's an ideal spot for families and outdoor enthusiasts. The park also features open fields perfect for sports and gatherings, making it a popular destination for community events and leisurely afternoons.

Generated from this place's information

^ Less

“Chunkinson Park”
Description from Mapquest
taken March 4th, 2026.

'MARKELVILLE

Established 2006

February 28th, 2026

Board Members, city staff

I am Mark Cathcart, I live in the north east of Louisville - in a small but growing "city" called Markelville.

We know you guard Louisville carefully, we see your staff at least twice per day as they drive past the border [Picture-1].

Markelville has four distinct neighborhoods, Blue Sage, North End Phase 1, North End Phase 2 and Coal Creek village was just approved. In total, there are some 650 homes and approximately 1500 hundred people.

In our "city", we don't have an elected mayor, we have a developer who has ruled since 2005. He is busy handing Markelville over to his eldest son. His son brought the Coal Creek plans to our city and they approved them with no park at all.

This would be irrelevant if our city had the vision and courage of your city.

It must be great to live in a city which not only has beautiful parks and established playgrounds but is planning and budgeting to update and replace expansive play scapes for their children.

In all four Markelville neighborhoods there isn't a single swing. Our developer doesn't like them.

[Picture-2]These are our playgrounds, rocks that you can skip from but no one does. "Wes"s sandpit" [Picture-3] with sand that hasn't had the sand changed in 15-years and is equipped with old toys donated by residents.

We have two traffic circles that were once designated parks - Chunkinson and Parkison and they were described glowingly. Mapquest still tells us that Chunkinson is a "charming green space that offers a variety of recreational opportunities" [Picture-4]

What's really weird is that the home owners of Markelville are contributing to your parks and playgrounds through their property and sales taxes and have been for the last 20-years.

As proposed by your top priority to “focus on existing parks” we will continue paying for your parks for the next 20-years. We are not looking to anything like the parks and playgrounds you are salivating about for the residents of Louisville, many of whom have already had the utility of those parks for thirty years plus.

Where is the equitability? - You can't blame the residents. None of us were here when the plans were approved for Markellville!

We would like a couple of toddler swings, maybe a slide suitable for 3-5 year olds. You know, somewhere for parents to take their young families, hangout and meet their neighbors.

What the residents of Markelville would like is a playground that doesn't require crossing one or both of the most dangerous roads in Louisville; alternatively getting in a car to drive to a playground. A 2-mile walk with toddlers isn't practical, yes I've measured it.

As laudable as your existig parks are, replacing them while other neighborhoods are not served at all; while our city council is so desperate to say yes to housing - they let developers off with rock chip parks as a public benefit, it's just not good enough.

I could complain to the council, they are busy and we all know they would just send me back to you. We've been through this before. In 2016, myself and neighbors met in this very room to discuss a park, many signed on and myself and another made visit to the Parks Dept. to discuss. I followed up in 2020, everyone makes polite noises, says they'll look at it for the next budget cycle and then nothing.

In 2025 I asked again, I asked Parks Director Adam Blackmore who asked Abby McNeal Parks Parks Superintendent and then nothing.

“We are willing to consider adding a playground improvement project to the next six-year Capital Improvement Project (CIP) request cycle. This would then be reviewed and considered as part of the 2027-2028 budget process.”

Do I have to mount a public protest, stand outside City Hall with placards? Submit a petition? Campaign for a recall vote? What will it take, because Markelville doesn't exist, we are Louisville residents!

Supporting Habitat Resilience while Preparing for Drought
By Kristine Johnson, Wild Ones Front Range Chapter, and
John Webb, Louisville Bee City USA Committee, contact us at:
kristinejohnson@icloud.com and johnwebb20@comcast.net

Snowpack in Colorado was far below average https://www.weather.gov/bou/co_snowpack and is melting quickly; we are not having or expecting normal stream flows this spring and summer. Temperatures have been very high this winter, with records for temperatures at or above 60F, and new high for average temperature for winter in Boulder County, <https://bouldercast.com/a-complete-failure-of-winter-across-the-west-and-what-it-means-for-the-rest-of-2026/>). All of Boulder County is in severe drought, with southeast Boulder County and much of the Denver Metro area recently classified as extreme drought: <https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx?CO>. These data indicate that we should take measures to preserve and protect our landscapes. Colorado has seen drought in the past, so we have some good strategies for getting through it.

We are both based in Boulder County, but the information in this article is relevant to much of the Front Range of Colorado.

Message: Just because it's dry doesn't mean that habitat has to suffer. Drought is both natural and induced.

Outline of this resource:

- **Watering restrictions coming? Water conservation and drought planning links.**
- **Top tips for managing your landscape through a hot, dry growing season and possible drought restrictions.**
- **Regenerative agriculture principles.**
- **Water capture principles.**
- **Habitat principles.**
- **Sustainability principles.**
- **Trees and shrubs.**
- **Lawn.**
- **Pollinator/flower gardens.**
- **Vegetable gardens.**

Watering restrictions coming?

The last time Boulder County municipalities enacted watering restrictions was in 2002. Decisions on watering restrictions generally happen in early May after the accumulation of winter snowpack. Various municipalities provide information about drought and water conservation. Some cities along the Front Range are already issuing watering restrictions.

- **City of Boulder water conservation and drought planning:**
<https://bouldercolorado.gov/services/drought-watch-program#:~:text=Questions%20Toggle%20Menu->

[.Annual%20Water%20Supply.recommend%20additional%20measures%20if%20needed](#) and <https://boulder.colorado.gov/services/water-conservation>

- City of Louisville water conservation and drought planning: <https://www.louisvilleco.gov/living-in-louisville/residents/sustainability/waste-reduction-and-circularity/water-conservation-new> and <https://www.louisvilleco.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/28659/63736365841060000>
- City of Lafayette water conservation and drought planning: <https://www.lafayetteco.gov/1419/Water-Efficiency> and <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62102d32cbc97713f25c3099/t/672e67d7aa77bf3e4470ea45/1731094487389/Lafayette+CWP+Grant+summary+SPBRT.pdf>
- City of Ft. Collins water conservation and drought planning: <https://www.fortcollins.gov/Services/Utilities/Programs-and-Rebates/Water-Programs/Residential-Water-Conservation> and <https://ourcity.fcgov.com/water-shortage-planning1>
- City of Denver water conservation and drought planning: <https://www.denverwater.org/residential/rebates-and-conservation-tips> and <https://www.denverwater.org/your-water/water-supply-and-planning/drought>
- City of Colorado Springs water conservation and drought planning: <https://www.csu.org/water-wise-rules/> and <https://www.csu.org/hubfs/Document-Library/2022WaterEfficiencyPlan.pdf>
- Numerous water conservation programs at Resource Central: <https://resourcecentral.org/>
- Numerous water conservation programs at Northern Water: <https://www.northernwater.org/environmental/efficient-water-use>

Top tips for managing your landscape through a hot, dry growing season and possible drought restrictions:

- Don't start a lawn.
- If you must have a Kentucky blue grass lawn, shrink its size this year.
- If you must start a lawn, particularly if it is in a low traffic area, consider using native grasses: <https://coloradonativegrass.org/>
- Carefully consider the new plants you establish this year; it may be challenging if watering restrictions ratchet up. All plants need at least some watering to get established, but native and xeric plants will require less.
- Prepare your soil to increase infiltration and storage: apply plant-based compost, judicious use of the appropriate type of mulch, avoid compaction.
- Prioritize how to "spend" the water you have: trees and shrubs should be top of the list
- This is a good time to kill your lawn! Consider sod cutting, solarization, sheet mulching. Huge opportunity! Make lemonade! <https://resourcecentral.org/lawn/> check out the Turf Removal Grants from Resource Central and Terra Foundation at <https://www.landscapingwithcoloradonativeplants.org/grants> (grants may be closed for the season, but they are offered every year, with the grant application processing

opening in March). Other grants may be available from local sources, so don't be afraid to Google "Turf Removal Grants!"

- If in an HOA: a good time to join landscaping committee and to advocate for reducing nonfunctional turf, replace with native plants (Northern Water grants <https://www.northernwater.org/environment/efficient-water-use/grants> Colorado Garden Foundation grants <https://www.coloradogardenfoundation.org/about/grants/> link to Kristine's grant article: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Y0Iq36wub67HZKlgh_UmNJ6Pf63bBBbS2m_-ngj_fxA/edit?usp=sharing)
- Explore on-line resources at Resource Central about water conservation <https://resourcecentral.org/>
- Sprinkler audits, turf replacement, subsidized "Garden in a Box" program in many municipalities, programs for HOAs and larger properties.
- If we have not listed your municipality or county, search "town/county + drought planning" or "town/county + water conservation" to find out about local programs, rebates, grants, and possible restrictions.
- Consult the resources at CSU Extension, based on local climates and ecosystems. <https://extension.colostate.edu/resource/watering-a-home-landscape-during-drought/#:~:text=Xeriscape%C2%AE%20principles.-,Water%20Wisely%20and%20Efficiently,are%20established%20in%20the%20soil.>
- Mosquitos could be low this year or may arrive early. Don't create habitat for them in your yard through your watering: <https://bouldercolorado.gov/news/its-mosquito-season>

Regenerative agriculture principles:

- Tilling disrupts life in your soil, can further erosion and loss of soil organic matter, can bring dormant weed seeds to the surface, and breaks up existing soil structure and pores. In general, it is better to top dress with an amendment like compost and to allow soil life to work the material down into the soil.
- Use plant-based compost, top dressing rather than tilling (application rates and information <https://extension.colostate.edu/resource/soil-amendments/>); use as a top dressing and disregard the information about tilling in.
- Feed your microbes with compost, saved autumn leaves, and chop 'n' drop weeding!
- Instead of wood-based or gravel mulches, consider a cover crop of living mulch; dense planting of your native plants or planting in a matrix of native grasses. <https://frontrange.wildones.org/mulch-for-your-colorado-native-plant-garden/>
- Diverse plants in your garden ensure that something is active and growing as much of the year as possible to help crowd out weeds, provide forage and habitat for beneficial insects and birds, and help to infiltrate precipitation.
- Avoid synthetic inputs like fertilizers and pesticides; these can harm soil life, beneficial insects, birds, and other wildlife and pollute surface water.
- Regenerative agriculture includes grazing, which is hard to incorporate in our yards. If you have a native grass lawn, consider mowing it once every year or two (or mowing one third to one half per year).

Water capture principles:

- The soil is your best storage site for precipitation, and it stores more when it has more organic matter; <https://www.harvestingrainwater.com/2020/08/cool-yourself-your-neighborhood-and-the-planet-with-the-water-harvesting-soil-carbon-sponge/>
- “Soil is your tank”: soil organic matter and roots soak up and hold water to extend availability for plants.
- Where are your downspouts going? You want every drop of water that falls on your lot to stay on your lot and benefit what you are growing. Redirect downspouts to planted areas.
- In general, get in the practice of shoveling snow back onto your yard where it can soak in slowly.
- Links to precipitation harvesting resources by Brad Lancaster: <https://www.harvestingrainwater.com/>, and https://www.youtube.com/@Brad_Lancaster_Water_Harvester, Watershed Management Group <https://watershedmg.org/>, Wild Ones Front Range articles <https://frontrange.wildones.org/rainwater-harvesting/>, <https://frontrange.wildones.org/connecting-native-plant-gardening-and-rain-gardening/>, <https://frontrange.wildones.org/rain-gardening-thinking-about-next-steps/>, <https://frontrange.wildones.org/multi-stem-native-trees-and-large-shrubs-for-colorado-landscapes/>, and Wild Ones webinar <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZIWaYtgV-4E>
- Consider common sense, legal, practical “greywater”: fill a bucket with the water that pours out when you are waiting for shower water to be hot enough; pour water you’ve used to rinse organic produce onto houseplants or landscape plants, etc.

Habitat principles:

- Choose xeric (low water), native plants. These resources can help you choose the right plant species for your area:
Wild Ones Front Range <https://frontrange.wildones.org/toolkit/>.
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation: <https://xerces.org/pollinator-conservation/pollinator-friendly-plant-lists>,
The National Wildlife Federation: <https://www.nwf.org/Native-Plant-Habitats/Plant-Native/Why-Native/Keystone-Plants-by-Ecoregion>.
Audubon Rockies Habitat Hero: <https://www.audubon.org/rockies/get-involved/habitat-hero-resources>.
- Visit the Butterfly Pavilion in Westminster, <https://butterflies.org/exhibit/gardens-trails>, Rocky Mountain Botanic Gardens in Lyons, <https://rmbg.org/>, Denver Botanic Gardens, <https://www.botanicgardens.org/>, or one of the many xeric and native plant demonstration gardens in our area.
- Join your local garden club or native plant organization.
- Use locally-produced (and often free) arborist mulch rather than shredded bark products.
- Stay away from big box store plant sources (neonics and other “-icides”): <https://frontrange.wildones.org/resources/purchase-native-plants/>.
- Plants which bloom early are really important; in Colorado, a lot of these are trees and shrubs: <https://csfs.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Native-Trees-for->

[Colorado-Landscapes-Fact-Sheet-7.421.pdf](#) and <https://extension.colostate.edu/resource/native-shrubs-for-colorado-landscapes/>.

- Leave last year's stems cut to 12 or 14 inches for stem-nesting insects: https://www.pollinatorsnativeplants.com/uploads/1/3/9/1/13913231/stemnestingbeesweb_1.pdf.
- Bunch grasses—xeric, and they are host plants for butterflies and skippers: <https://frontrange.wildones.org/wp-content/images/sites/105/2021/08/Cool-Warm-Season-Colorado-Native-Grasses-Sheet1-1.pdf>.
- Promoting soil health: don't fertilize! Compost your leaves, use plant-based compost, preserve the existing roots in the soil; consider chop and drop for weeding and try "living mulch" techniques (planting densely, planting in a matrix of native grasses): <https://coloradonativegrass.org/resources/>.
- Provide water for birds and insects, remember to change out the water regularly for wildlife health and to reduce mosquito habitat: <https://www.xerces.org/blog/if-youre-thirsty-theyre-thirsty-make-simple-water-source-to-support-pollinators>.

Sustainability principles:

- Conserve water outside: don't overwater onto sidewalks and hardscape. Don't water in the heat of the day. Don't water if there's been any recent rain. CHECK YOUR LOCAL GUIDELINES.
- Save time by not mowing: Coloradoscaping and native grass lawns conserve water and require little to no mowing.
- Slow your watering down to allow infiltration.
- Hand watering and drip irrigation are more efficient; targeted, you generally won't overwater, and it may not be restricted.
- If there is a storm and you have an irrigation timer—pause it!
- Conserve water inside the house; now is a good time to buy aerators for faucets and to replace inefficient high output showerheads and toilets with large tanks. Identify and fix leaks!
- Consider an irrigation system tied into a soil sensor but make sure to check it periodically (poke a finger into the soil).
- Consider a sprinkler audit (Resource Central, Northern Water), also Louisville, other municipalities.
- Use a mulching mower—over time you will save water and not need fertilizer. Go electric for better air quality and less noise!
- In choosing ornamental landscape plants: consider xeric native plants which are best adapted to our climate-related stresses. The Wild Ones Front Range toolkit has many plant lists for many situations: <https://frontrange.wildones.org/toolkit/>.
- Do NOT fertilize native plants, do not fertilize a mature lawn. Too much fertilizer causes eutrophication in surface drainages, pollution, overgrowth of plants, and increased water demand. It's not good for soil health; consider organic, slow-release options like plant-based compost. See the lawn section for more ideas.
- NO on pesticides (herbicide, insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides, etc.), they can be persistent and mobile in the environment. Systemic pesticides like neonicotinoids are

present in plants long after they are applied. Nonchemical means of control are generally nontoxic and safe around people and pets. Plant for diversity and use trap plants in your veggie garden.

- Dealing with stinging insects: These are the wolves of the garden and native habitats, they are mostly harmless and clean up dead critters. You might trap yellowjacket queens early for more pleasant outdoor dining.
- Join iNaturalist or Seek and start learning about the food webs in your yard.
- Ditch that bug zapper. They don't kill mosquitos, which seek out warm bodies that are exhaling CO₂. Bug zappers only kill night-flying moths and other insects that have better things to do than entertain (or horrify) your BBQ guests!
- Turn off your porch lights, install motion detecting lights, and replace older outdoor light bulbs with yellow bulbs or Dark Sky certified fixtures.
- Make a mosquito bucket trap (pages 202 - 205) in Douglas Tallamy's book **How Can I Help?**
- Read the rest of Douglas Tallamy's book, **How Can I Help?**
- Join a conservation organization or a community science project!
- Buying organic produce supports soil conservation and environmental health somewhere else.

Trees and shrubs:

- We ask a lot of our long-lived members of our landscapes. Accordingly, watering trees and shrubs is the highest landscape priority during drought.
- Follow recommendations from CSU Extension, which include recommendations for dormant periods (fall and winter) and the growing season:
<https://extension.colostate.edu/resource/fall-and-winter-watering-of-plants-and-trees/>
<https://extension.colostate.edu/resource/watering-mature-shade-trees/>
- In Winter: water once a month, with a slow trickle in the warmest part of the day. The way to remember is to use holidays: the week of a holiday (Thanksgiving! Valentine's Day!), think trees! Choose the warmest day that week, and water trees and shrubs when the temperature is at least 45F and it's at least two hours before sundown.
- Drought stress makes trees more susceptible to disease and pests.
- Consider planting native trees, adapted to our climate and soils and winds (see above); consider native shrubs—they are tough, some have edible fruit, support pollinators, birds (see the CSU links above; consult Wild Ones Front Range for plant lists).
- Mulch with arborist mulch, but do it appropriately: 3" from trunk, 3" deep, 3' out, no mulch volcanos around the trunk, no landscape fabric.
- If you remove your lawn: your tree had been watered when your lawn was getting watered; you must provide supplemental water for trees.

Lawn:

- Consider reducing your bluegrass lawn, particularly in areas where it's not being used for recreation (front lawns, hell strips, etc.). Resource Central, local water providers, and municipalities have good rebate programs and many offer sod removal services, as well as garden in a box and pre-planned collections for less thirsty, beautiful plants you can plant instead.
- Check out the Colorado Native Grass guide: <https://coloradonativegrass.org/>.
- Follow best practices: mow your lawn as high as you can—it will be healthier. Adjust your watering for your soil type (sandy vs. clayey) and the season/temperature. If you have programmable controls, break your landscape and garden watering into multiple short applications instead of one long one period, and water between 10 pm and 8 am (but be sure to check it once in a while to make sure everything is working properly and not filling your street gutters). Leave your clippings; they build healthy soil, which holds more water. Mature lawns do not require fertilization: <https://extension.colostate.edu/resource/lawn-care-basics/>.
- If watering restrictions come, be aware that Kentucky bluegrass will go dormant during hot and dry weather but will bounce back in cooler weather and when watering or precipitation resumes. Per CSU, fescues may not recover well from zero watering through intense drought and no watering: <https://extension.colostate.edu/resource/fine-fescues-for-lawns/>.

Pollinator/flower gardens:

- Water perennials planted last year; they are not fully rooted in (water by hand if necessary).
- Check your municipalities for opportunities for free compost or mulch. Use the local branch and tree recycling site or commercial (Western Disposal) opportunities, check out chipdrop.com, see above for best practices for mulching around trees.
- Leave a little bare ground for ground nesting bees. Landscaping fabric is especially problematic for ground-nesting bees (so many reasons to skip it!): <https://www.xerces.org/blog/clear-space-for-bees-why-pollinators-in-your-yard-need-access-to-bare-ground>.
- Remove the last of that landscape fabric or plastic. The soil, plants, ground nesting bees and other beneficial insects will thank you. It sheds microplastics, impedes water infiltration, and negatively impacts soil health.
- Take care of the plants you plant this season: optimal planting time is normally April or May; but also consider late August through early October for planting perennials.
- Consider and plant for seasonal bloom coverage; plant more than one individual of a species, try to have something blooming from spring through fall (trees and shrubs count). Look at the many articles in the Wild Ones Front Range Coloradoscaping toolkit: <https://frontrange.wildones.org/toolkit/>. Consider covering new plantings for several days to a few weeks (floating row cover, lawn chair, laundry basket, cut or ventilated milk jugs, etc.), especially if it is unseasonably hot when you plant. Remember to water to help the plants get established; even xeric plants need watering at the beginning.

- Consult Xerces, NWF, Audubon, to find high impact “Keystone” plants, Wild Ones Front Range has copious information about easy to grow plants, shade plants, xeric plants, and gardening info: <https://frontrange.wildones.org/toolkit/>, and plant data cards <https://frontrange.wildones.org/native-landscaping/native-seed-swaps/native-plant-data-sheets/> (see links listed above).
- Sources for plants: High Plains Environmental Center (Loveland), Harlequin’s Gardens (Boulder), look on Wild Ones Front Range website for more sources <https://frontrange.wildones.org/resources/purchase-native-plants/>. In the winter and spring, check with the Colorado State Forest Service Nursery and other regional and county conservation programs. Resource Central Garden in a Box collections are all xeric, not all are native, but do have native and Pollinator collections: <https://resourcecentral.org/gardens/>.
- Consider host plants for butterflies and moths that live in your ecozone. Check the resources elsewhere in this document (Wild Ones Front Range, Xerces, Audubon, NWF). Other organizations and resources exist, including from Environment for the Americas, the Boulder County Nature Association, CSU Extension, and the Butterfly Pavilion.

Vegetable gardens:

- Spread compost early; when used as a topdressing, it acts as a mulch, and it provides nutrients slowly; helps the soil hold more moisture.
- Use plant-based compost, <https://extension.colostate.edu/resource/soil-amendments/> over time the added compost will increase soil organic matter; don’t add salts from composted manure (read ingredients or make your own).
- If you think you need to fertilize, get a soil test done so you know what your soil needs and you don’t add fertilizer unnecessarily (pollutes water, affects soil biota).
- Understand your soil texture so you can water properly; slow and intermittent works well for most soils.
- Try to water the base of plants early in the day; saves water from evaporation, avoids powdery mildew.
- Consider planting “cold season” plants a little early (spinach, beets, radish, chard, cabbage family plants, snow and snap peas); these tolerate colder temperatures.
- Consider buying locally adapted seeds; <https://masaseedfoundation.org/>.
- Buy locally grown starts: MASA <https://masaseedfoundation.org/>, Growing Gardens, Harlequin.
- Limit or eliminate your use of pesticides and chemical treatments; consider floating row covers, blast of hose, picking off bugs (Squash and Japanese beetles), Japanese beetle traps can be effective if monitored and located away from target plants.
- Plant choices can impact Japanese beetle visits: they love roses, raspberries, grapes, Virginia creeper, etc., their larvae feed on the roots of turf grass in pristine lawns.
- “Chop and drop” weeds in the garden that aren’t going to seed or sprout new growth from scraps (bind weed) as added mulch.
- Plant densely to shade the soil.
- Mulch between rows/beds.

- Companion plant with native plants to increase fruiting; if you plant native flowering plants which host and attract native pollinating insects, you will get increased yield from your fruiting plants and host beneficial insects; provides a refugia for when the annual veggies aren't there (feeds and houses beneficial insects in off season).

Fire:

- Keeping your trees healthy is important!
- Remove leaves from around foundations and against fences; consider using them in your flower beds for the best quality and free mulch; can also be composted: <https://www.coolboulder.org/news/give-leaf-mold-a-go>.
- Create a 5 foot gap from your foundation with no wood mulch, and no plantings: <https://www.iafc.org/docs/default-source/1fire-prev/bookletguidetofirewiselandscapingandconstruction.pdf?sfvrsn=badfdd0d>, and the YouTube videos from Resource Central: <https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?q=firewise+landscaping&mid=0C590774DF3B76218C3E0C590774DF3B76218C3E&churl=https%3a%2f%2fwww.youtube.com%2fchannel%2fUC7tGRt78mo38awkR3Lt1uQ&FORM=VIRE>
- Because it's been so warm and snow free, we can do some of these activities early to hopefully store any precipitation that may come in our wettest months, April and May.
- Wildfire Partners has a lot of resources to start with: <https://wildfirepartners.org/>. Also check CSU Extension resources, and the Idaho Firewise list of low flammability plants <https://idahofirewise.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/FireXResistanceXofXPlantsXMasterXDatabase.pdf>.
- Spring is a great time to clean gutters.
- Consider replacing your wood privacy fence now or eventually. At the very least, replace any wood fencing within 5' of your home or other structures (it can act as a fire wick to your home). Tightly spaced boards on wood fences restrict movements of small pollinators, consider building bee/insect homes or birdhouses with your leftover fencing material and tree branch trimmings.
- Wildfire is now a year-round hazard, it's smart to be practicing good habits year-round.
- Keep your "habitat" areas far from homes, fences, structures; consider strategic placement of home-protecting elements like brick/stone/concrete patios and walkways, lawn, rock and crevice gardens closer to your home.
- Keep your compost moist (so it will break down and not become fuel for wildfire).

Share with:

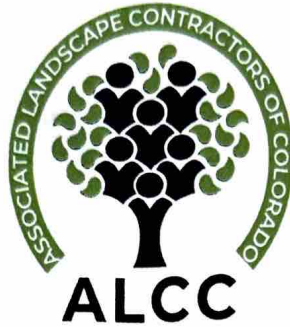
WOFR, Bee City USA, Cool Boulder, Xerces... local garden clubs, HOAs, landscape cos, Harlequins, HPEC, any others? CSU Extension? Boulder Water Utility, Front Range Water, Northern Water, OSCAR, ask people to share? Parks and public landscapes, blooming seniors, open space, Resource Central, Xerces, EFTA, Audubon, PPAN, BCNA, KGNU, other media.

Clarifications from Denver Water for ALCC member questions

1 message

John McMahon, ALCC <alcc@memberclicks-mail.net>
Reply-To: jcmahon@alcc.com
To: wildheritagegardens@gmail.com

Fri, Mar 27, 2026 at 3:18 PM



- also should address indoor use
- what is Parks plan?
- Handwatering uses more Water than drip!

Dear ALCC Members,

We have been in close contact with Denver Water and have clarity to questions members have sent me, as proactive efforts to ensure both **compliance and responsible service to customers**. Here is the **approved Stage 1 drought resolution** adopted by the Denver Board of Water Commissioners.

Per the resolution, annual and perennial flowers are treated the same under Stage 1 restrictions.

When irrigated using hand watering or drip irrigation, **annuals and perennials may be watered now**. However, given one of the lowest snowpacks in nearly 50 years, Denver Water is asking customers to **keep automatic spray irrigation systems turned off until mid- to late May**, and potentially later if conditions warrant. That means that if annuals or perennials are watered using spray or **overhead irrigation systems, we are asking that those systems are not turned on yet**, and when they are, that vegetation will be subject to the two days per week watering schedule, in addition to the **standard time-of-day restrictions**. Supplemental drip or hand watering will be allowed.

For newly established landscapes, there is a **21-day establishment variance available for new sod or seed**. For now, the variance application form is available in the drop-down menu here: [Customer Care Contact Form | Denver Water](#).

Regarding system testing, an irrigation system **may be operated outside the watering schedule for installation, repair or reasonable maintenance as long as the system is monitored throughout the period of operation and there isn't water waste**. All irrigation control systems must be reprogrammed for operation in compliance with the watering day schedule or must be operated manually.

Denver Water appreciates the ALCC members working to understand and follow the rules set by the resolution and ultimately hope that you can help find as much water savings as possible!

It's important to note, Denver Water is also **looking at drought pricing this summer**, which would ultimately set a premium on higher/outdoor water use. So setting up systems efficiently as possible will also help landscapers save their customers money. Denver Water is dealing with conditions never seen before, and are doing what they can to help avoid needing to take further actions later this summer, especially if conditions continue to get worse.

Please also reference the [ALCC Drought Resources](#) page as you navigate this critical time.

From: [Sharon Selvaggio](#)
To: ayarger@butterflies.org; amcneal@louisvilleco.gov; gcross@louisvilleco.gov; hmoshak@gmail.com; jhcooperman@gmail.com; mdornfeld@louisvilleco.gov; johnwebb20@comcast.net; missjeanbee322@gmail.com; parksandrec@louisvilleco.gov; susanlmceachern@gmail.com
Cc: [Laura Rost](#)
Subject: How Your Bee City Can Source Pollinator-Safe Plants
Date: Tuesday, April 14, 2026 10:46:41 AM

Hi Louisville Bee City Committee Members / Chairs!

Hello from Sharon and Jacqueline at Xerces' pesticide reduction team! Laura shared your information with us. We'd like to invite you to a meeting to learn and share with the Xerces Society and your Bee City and Campus neighbors near Denver and the Front Range, Colorado.

Do you ever wonder if the plants your city purchases for pollinator and wildlife habitat might actually contain pesticides harmful to bees or butterflies?

Would you like to make sure the plants your affiliate purchases are safe for pollinators?

Join us for a free 1-hour virtual learning & networking session on **May 15, 2026 01:00 PM Mountain Time.**

We'll discuss:

- How you and your neighbor BCUSA affiliates are sourcing plants
- Exploring partnerships with other nearby affiliates to expand your purchasing power
- How Xerces is securing pollinator-safe plants for its own restoration efforts, and
- Key ways you can ensure you are buying plants that are pollinator-attractive, no matter how or where you buy plants.

You'll leave with:

- A "contract grow" template you can adapt for your affiliate's plant purchases
- Ideas for potential nurseries in your area, including those voluntarily avoiding a wide range of harmful insecticides, and
- Free outreach materials to bring to your city or campus purchasing office (digital and hard copies available).

Please RSVP here.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/QfPnw7XZQuqi8BJuYJfNZw>

We look forward to seeing you there!

Sharon Selvaggio, Xerces Society, Pesticide Reduction Program, Nurseries and Natural Lands Lead

Jacqueline Buenrostro, Xerces Society, Pesticide Reduction Program, Urban Policy Lead

p.s. Later this year we will also be hosting a webinar, featuring the experiences of other affiliates who have started their own nurseries to provide the plants they need. Stay tuned for more information about this opportunity!

--

Sharon Selvaggio
Pesticide Program Specialist
The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation
503.704.0327 | sharon.selvaggio@xerces.org
xerces.org