Our receding snow is a sure sign of the upcoming spring season at the Botanic Park! We had over 400 inches of high-water content snow, which will translate into big blooms throughout the Park. At this moment, I am watching the Yampa River from the Trillium House. The water is flowing with only a few white frozen spots remaining. The gardens are ready to begin their annual rebirth.

In this 22nd year, we invite you to visit us from May to October. We look forward to seeing you again as you wander through the gardens, attend concerts, practice yoga, paint, read and tour the Park with one of our experienced docents. There is always something to do, something to see and something to celebrate. Come often and bring your family and friends!

From opening at dawn to closing at dusk, the Botanic Park continues to be free. We do not charge daily admission thanks to the private donations from you, our members, and the continuous work of our Board of Directors and volunteers to raise funds to operate the Park.

Today, when you open this newsletter, we ask you to help us build the future. You can create a meaningful legacy that will reflect your passion for this place of serenity for generations to come. Your legacy gift will make a huge impact today and tomorrow. Please join the Park’s founders, and many other families, who have already included the Park in their legacy giving. If you have any questions, please give me a call to discuss this further (808)-255-1323.

A huge thank you to board members Carol Dowden and Georgianne Nelson who for many years have edited this newsletter. They are both retiring and we are looking for a new editorial team. Please see our Volunteer Ad herein and call us if you would like to help.

Thinking of having an event this summer? A Botanic Park wedding is a beautiful and truly memorable experience. We still have some openings, so call to reserve your date as soon as possible. If you have another event in mind, please call us. We have a new video available to help you get organized and to share with everybody attending your event.

We love to see children in the Park! If you visit with children, make sure to request the children’s activity book, made possible by a matching grant from Spencer Seaman and UBS Financial Services.

Are you a bird watcher? The Botanic Park is a fantastic place to view our area’s visiting and resident birds. Park founder and board member, Bob Enever, has just finished his book about birds in the Yampa Valley and we cannot wait to see it go to print.

Get your sunscreen and hats ready. We are opening soon!

Until then, we cannot wait to see you at the Botanic Park!

Sincerely,
Sonia Franzel, President

MUSIC ON THE GREEN PRESENTED BY STRINGS MUSIC FESTIVAL - A 2019 PREVIEW

By Karen Bomberg

What started as an idea over coffee between two friends, Bob Enever and Betse Grassby, in the winter of 1999 has become a much-anticipated annual summer event.

This season begins June 20 at 12:15 p.m. with Music with Vision, a student musician ensemble with a focus on giving at-risk young people an opportunity to connect, heal and grow through music.

Music with Vision was developed in collaboration with other non-profit organizations to address the root causes of addiction and depression that often plague our community.

Jay Roemer, local singer songwriter, returns on July 11 with his vibrant take on Americana and Bluegrass.

The 511 Brass Quintet, featuring the dynamic Juilliard School of Music students, will shine on July 25 and August 1. 511 Brass “gives back” through their relationship with the Harmony Project in Los Angeles, which provides tuition-free music education and social support to local youth.

With styles of music for so many diverse tastes, you will not want to miss any of the eight concerts this season!

So bring your hat and chair and join us for artistry in nature. See you on the Green!

“A place of serenity celebrating the trees, shrubs, plants and birds of the Yampa River Basin.”

PO Box 776269, Steamboat Springs, CO 80477 • Tel: 970-846-5172 • Email: info@yrbp.org • www.yrbp.org
BIRDS IN THE PARK: THE AMERICAN CROW

By Bob Enever

Crows are members of the worldwide corvid family. There are about 40 species of crows, which are found on every continent except Antarctica. Scientists who study them have found that crows share with parrots the distinction of being the most intelligent of birds.

Some think of American crows as noisy, ugly, destructive birds that eat the young of small birds. But they are also intelligent, they clean up our trash and they eat many nuisance insects. Nestcams have shown that snakes, chipmunks (yes, chipmunks), raccoons and hawks all eat more small birds’ eggs and young birds than do crows. Crows mostly feed on the ground and eat anything edible including seeds, fruit, insects, worms, aquatics and especially carrion and garbage.

American crows winter in all the lower 48 states except the far southwest, and many of them fly to Canada in summer to breed. Crows’ nests are hard to find because they are secretive and nest near the tops of tall coniferous trees with large nests hidden from view. Crows’ eggs hatch after about 17 days, when blind naked chicks emerge from their shells. In fewer than 6 weeks these chicks will be mature enough to leave the nest, but they may stay as part of their family unit for up to 5 years before they mate and leave the family.

In Steamboat Springs crows roost noisily and in large numbers in groups of deciduous trees in and near town. From there they fly out on a daily commute to find food, returning before dusk. At their roosts crows live in tight family groups, but when away from their roosts in a flock, they lose their family identity to become ‘one of the crowd’. Perhaps 100 crows fly over our house between Town and Mountain, morning and evening. Our yard is also the scene of dominance changes between crows and magpies, both of which are territorial. We don’t see them fight, but when a majority of crows are present the magpies disappear, and vice-versa. So we might be magpie territory for a while, then crow territory.

“There is no time like spring, when life’s alive in everything.”
– Christina Rossetti, English Poet
WHO’S IN THE GARDEN?
By Carol Dowden

You have probably noticed the increasingly beautiful and sophisticated rockwork appearing throughout the Park over the last few years. This is the handiwork of staff member Ryan Keating.

Ryan was born in Steamboat Springs but moved to Connecticut, with his family, at the age of three. After college he moved back to Colorado and managed to return to Steamboat in the winter of 2007.

His family always had vegetable gardens and he has always been into landscaping. He attended Nonnewaug High School, a vocational agricultural school focused on horticulture, greenhouse management, forestry and environmental sciences.

Ryan joined the staff of YRBP in 2010. With the exception of Jeff’s Garden, there is very little Ryan hasn’t touched in the Park. Alongside Gayle Lehman, Park Supervisor, he designed and built the Crevice Garden. Working with Gayle, Kerry Kaster and Kathy Olson, he has also had a hand in the Sundial Garden (tufa), the Arbor Garden, the Lily Garden, the Yin Yang Garden, the White Garden, the Medicinal Herb Garden, the Triangle Garden, the Eagle Garden, the Krumholz Garden, sections of the Water Wise Garden (steppe), the Windigo Garden, countless pathways, steps and patios, and the soon to be renovated Penstemon Garden. Whew!!

He says he enjoys all aspects of the job. Seeing the fruits of his labor is extremely rewarding, as is the endless opportunity to learn and discover something new every day. He says his appreciation and love of plants has grown exponentially over the past nine years. Ask a question about any plant and Ryan will likely know if it grows in the Park and where to find it.

In June and July Ryan travels to Alaska to fish commercially for salmon, which allows him the luxury of working at the Park without being totally impoverished. He also has been employed at the ski area for the past twelve years, as the gardening slows considerably when snow blankets the valley.

Inspired by the beautiful birds in the Yampa Valley, Ryan has become a fine painter. His use of a vibrant palette produces work that is beautiful, contemporary and exuberant. This is a hobby he has become passionate about that may be a possible budding career. You can find examples of his work at Mountain Tap in Steamboat.

A few random facts about Ryan, heard around the Park: he is a good person; he can work and talk at the same time (!!!); he is a Jets fan (NY football team); he really cares about his family! We are lucky to have Ryan here at YRBP! Next time you see him in the Park say hello. And thanks!!

GIANT FLEECE FLOWER
By Geogianne Nelson

A lovely, under-utilized perennial for your garden is the Giant Fleece Flower, Persicaria polymorpha. But a word of warning—give it room. It’s big! Growing up to five feet its first season it promises you lots of greenery and impressive creamy white frothy blossoms that will continue to bloom until fall.

It is not a fussy or needy plant. It is compatible to our planting zone. It can be used to naturalize or provide a striking border. It has the height and breadth to hide something unsightly from your view. Its abundant flowers appeal to pollinators and it is said to be “deer resistant”.

It is a native of China and Japan, but it is not invasive, as are its relatives in this family (knotweed).

You can see the Giant Fleece Flower for yourself this summer in its setting on the path between the High Country Natives Garden and the Painter’s Garden (Native Neighborhood on the handy brochure map). You very well may want one or two or even three to stand tall and bloom in your garden.
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FEATURED GARDEN
THE PENSTEMON GARDEN

By Carol Dowden

We have a Penstemon Garden here at YRBP because Audrey Enever, Park founder, learned that the beautiful, blue, spikey flower (Penstemon strictus, Rocky Mountain Penstemon) growing in ditches, construction debris and all over Steamboat, was part of a genus native to North America. This was a new family of plants to the Great Britain native. To celebrate this flower, she decided to create a garden at the Park devoted only to penstemons.

What are penstemons? They are the largest genus of flowering plants (over 270 species) endemic to North America. They are found from open desert to moist forests and up to the Alpine zone. Species are found in every state (except Hawaii) in the U.S. and in Canada, Mexico and Guatemala. They range from low growing mats to small bushes or tall spires. The Western species are drought tolerant, disease resistant and come in beautiful blues, red, white and yellow making them a great choice for the water-wise home garden.

The flower of any penstemon is a tube (hummingbirds rejoice!) that widens before it divides into two lips that have two lobes on the upper lip and three on the lower. It has four fertile stamens and one infertile stamen, called a staminoid.

As with any garden after twenty years, the Penstemon Garden is ready for a renovation. Gayle Lehman, Park Supervisor, and staffer Ryan Keating have been planning this for over a year. First they did an inventory of all the penstemons in the Park. Then they did considerable research on the specific habitats of most Colorado species and many from the Rocky Mountain region, as well as some from the desert southwest (CA, NV, AZ, and UT).

The next step was to source the chosen species. It turns out that not that many of them are available through the nursery trade (although LaPorte Nursery in Fort Collins carries a good supply). Alan D. Bradshaw of Alplains Seeds, located in Kiowa, CO (alplains.com) has 123 species of penstemon seeds available.

So Gayle has extended her Park horticultural tasks to include seed propagation. She currently has 24 species of penstemon seeds in trays at Trillium House. Some will take two years to germinate and some need a soak in Gibberellic Acid (GA3), a growth hormone, to germinate. She also found Bill Adams of Sunscape Rare Plant Nursery, in Pueblo, CO, who has agreed to propagate and grow species native in hot Southwest areas for her.

The plan is to organize the garden space into zones, creating vignettes that mimic the native habitats of given penstemons. Soils, rocks and companion plants will be determined species by species. Some tufa troughs will be added to create microclimates for difficult species. The resulting garden will be both aesthetically pleasing and an educational demonstration of one of North America’s most widespread native plants. The renovation is expected to take two years to complete.

When you visit the Park this summer, swing by the Penstemon Garden, located at the confluence of the Loop Road and Jeff’s Road, next to the Reflecting Pond. Expect to see changes as the zones, hardscape and soil prep begin. Next year expect to see beautiful examples of Western penstemons in their new home. We are very excited about this project! We think you will be, too.

DID YOU KNOW?
Text and photo by Sonia Franzel

Daisies are friendly flowers with white petals and yellow centers. They are considered the symbol of purity and innocence, the symbol of new beginnings, loyal love, patience and beauty. In early days, maidens wore daisies to decorate their hair, representing the simplicity and innocence of youth.

Daisies are the fifth most popular flower in the world. They are great flowers to give to people you truly care about. They are the April birth month flower. The name derives from Old English, meaning “day’s eye”.

Audrey’s Penstemon Garden | Photo: Jeff Morehead
P. Eriantherus | Photo: Gayle Lehman
**WINTER IN THE PARK**

*By Georgianne Nelson*

It’s whisper quiet in the Park during the winter months. There is no human activity, just the birds, some raccoon raiders, the Park mascot Oso the cat and one or two ungulates that slipped in through a gate left open briefly for a snowplow.

Snow piles up on the gardens and the Park is in quiet dormancy. This was a “three-wire winter”, a Routt County term that describes the depth of the snow on the wire fences in the hay fields. In the Botanic Park, the snow on the little bridge spanning the outlet was also passed its third slat and Peter, the sculpture near the pond, was buried to his waist. Some of the six-foot fences could be stepped over and the ten-foot birdhouse poles were like measuring sticks with the snow rising higher and higher. The osprey nest on the Core Trail wore a pointed cap of snow all winter.

For a short glimpse of wintertime in the Park, see staff member Jeff Morehead’s video as he checks on the snow load on roofs of the shed and the Children’s Playhouse. See it at our website yrbp.org and scroll down to and click on the “Winter in the Park” video.

The sign on the Core Trail gate says “See you in the Spring.” The snow that kept you out has melted. Come on in!

**SO WHERE CAN I PARK?**

This summer we will be sharing the parking lot at Emerald Park with more sports organizations. There may be times when you will find the parking lot congested. YRBP will have thirty reserved and signed parking spots. There are six ADA parking spots in the lot as well.

On busy weekends and during sport tournaments, Community Service Officers will be on hand to direct visitors to our reserved parking sections. There is additional parking along Ski Town Way the public roadway behind the Hampden Inn.

Please note there is no legal parking at the Chamber Resort building or on Pamela Lane. Cars parked there are subject to ticketing and possibly towing!

We encourage carpooling, ride sharing and public transportation. The new sidewalks allow you to be safe on your walk through the parking lot to the gardens. A walk or bike ride on the Core Trail along the river corridor is most enjoyable and will take you to our gate on the west side of the Botanic Park allowing you to avoid the parking lot altogether.

Come and enjoy the Botanic Park this summer. We welcome you!

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**HAPPENINGS ON THE GREEN**

**Music on the Green**

Presented by Strings Music Festival

- Thursdays 12:15pm – 1:00pm
- June 20 – Music with Vision – Student Musician Ensemble
- June 27 – Maroon Belles – String Quartet
- July 4 – NO CONCERT
- July 11 – Jay Roemer – Americana/Bluegrass
- July 18 – Tyler Crane
- July 25 – 511 Brass – Brass Quintet
- August 1 – 511 Brass – Brass Quintet
- August 8 – Chamberlin Birch – Singer/Songwriter
- August 15 – John Fog, Denton Turner and Darren Radach – Western Americana

**Yoga on the Green**

June 1 – Aug 31 • 9:00am – 10:00am

Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday & Saturday

– All levels welcome –

Qigong will be held every 4th Sunday of the month

Check our website for more details

**Guided Walking Tours at the Park**

May – Sept 15 • Sunday & Wednesday

10:00am – 11:30am • Meet at the Main Gate

**Glow in the Park**

August 18 • 5:00pm – 8:00pm

Check our website for details

**Storytime in the Garden**

June 14, July 12, August 9 • 10:30am – 11:30am

Meet at the Amphitheater

Stories and activities for kids

**Fairy Garden Contest**

June 16, Noon – 1:00pm

Follows Storytime in the Garden

**PikNik Theater Festival on the Green**

July 29 – August 1 • August 5 – August 8

5:00pm – 7:30pm

**Lulie Crawford’s Wildflowers and Watercolors**

June 15 • 10:30am – 11:30am
July 17 • 3:00pm – 4:00pm
August 2 • 9:00am – 10:00am

Meet at the Amphitheater
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www.yrbp.org

Membership Renewal Reminder

To donate with a credit card, please visit www.ycfc.org and click on “Donate Now”. Choose Yampa River Botanic Park Fund from the local non-profit funds list. Call 970-879-8632 with questions. To donate with a check, please send your check with this form.

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___ Gardening ___ Concerts ___ Trillium House ___ Other Duties

___ Check here if you would like us to contact you regarding other sponsorships or memorial/tribute giving.

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___ Sunflower - $1,000 - $4,999
___ Trillium - $500 - $999
___ Columbine - $100 - $499
___ Glacier Lily - $30 - $99
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___ Garden Sponsor - $900 and over
___ Capital Development Fund - $1,000 or more annually for 5 years
___ YRBP Endowment Fund - $500 minimum