

# "Lett-uce" Inform You



June 2009

## Come Learn with Us in 2009

### Saturday, September 19, 10 to 12 at the Simla Municipal Building in Simla

The Elbert County Master Gardeners are giving a fall seminar.

Topics to be covered are weed identification, as well as end of season topics for your garden.

- Do you want to prolong your vegetable production?
- How do you compost garden waste at the end of the season?
- Does a cold frame use for early and late season crops interest you?
- Should you cut back your perennial flower beds in the fall or spring?
- Is now the time to plant perennial flowers, trees and shrubs?

These and many other topics will be discussed as we close out the 2009 growing season. Seminar to be given in Elizabeth also, call the extension office for date, time and location.

**The following classes are being presented by the Elbert County Master Food Safety and Preservation presenter. There will be a \$10 per class registration fee that includes activities, samples and research-based handouts.**

### Saturday, July 11, 10 to 12 at the Simla Municipal Building in Simla

**Tips for Entering Fairs:** Learn how to evaluate your canning and drying efforts for successful entry into county and state fairs. Receive judging criteria for each type of product. Examine some prepared products and take home written reference materials.

### Saturday, August 8, 10 to 12 at the Russell Gates Building in Elbert

**Pickles, Fruits and Vegetables:** Learn how to make a variety of pickled fruits and vegetables, not just cucumbers. Sample some and receive approved recipes. Share ideas on pickling various fruits, vegetables, relishes with other canners.

### Wednesday, August 19, 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM at the Elizabeth High School FCS room

**Canning Fruits and Vegetables:** Learn the science behind whether you need to pressure can or water bath can various produce. Sample some products; receive reference information and recipes for a successful canning season. Kitchen-based class.

### Saturday, September 19, 10 to 12 at the Carlson Building in Elizabeth

**Freezing, Vacuum Sealing and Pantry Storage:** Learn to properly freeze various fruits, vegetables, and meats. Receive information on the recommended shelf life of various pantry staples. Learn how to use your vacuum sealer to keep your preserved food safe and nutritious. Receive information and recipes.

Please RSVP for all classes by calling the Elbert County Extension Office in Kiowa (303-621-3162) or Simla (719-541-2361).

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# Plants in Their Place

## Plants for your Garden: The Colorado 2009 Plant Select® Program

By Dianne White,  
Colorado Master Gardener

This year's Plant Select® offerings include two very different ground covers and one striking annual. A flowering ice plant offers summer and winter color while the silvery horehound offers round, shimmery foliage and great texture and the Denver Daisy which commemorates the 150th anniversary of the founding of Denver.



### Lavender Ice™ Ice Plant (*Delosperma 'Psfave'*)

The flowers of this variety are bright shimmery iridescent lavender with a darker center or eye. This perennial ground cover grows only 2 inches high and can spread up to 2 feet from each

plant. It is hardy in zones 4 to 9, up to 7000 feet. The mat-forming foliage tinges purple in the fall and winter.

Lavender Ice™ prefers well-drained soils in a full sun to partial shade environment. Keep it on the dry side when you water and the plant will thrive and present you with flowers all summer. Lavender Ice™ will return year after year unless subjected to prolonged snow cover in the winter.

Agastache, penstemon and salvia make good companions for Lavender Ice™ and they should do well in your Elbert County garden.

### Silverheels Horehound (*Marrubium rotundifolium*)

This vigorous mat-forming ground cover thrives in many sites and soils. A native plant in the dry mountain area of Turkey, Silverheels Horehound spreads up to 3 feet and grows 2 to 4 inches tall. It will thrive in almost any soil and likes full sun. It is hardy in zones 4 to 9 up to 8000 feet.



This is a great addition to the Western xeric garden. The soft leaves are green on top and white on the edges and backs.

The flowers are insignificant and you might want to trim them off in order to highlight the foliage.

Described as a vigorous grower (which can mean that it is somewhat aggressive in its growth habits), this plant will thrive in well-drained soils, requiring no amendments and little water once established. Silverheels should be a hit in gardens in this area.

### Denver Daisy™ ('*Rudbeckia*')

The Denver Daisy™ is a hybrid of the Colorado Native *Rudbeckia hirta* developed to commemorate the 150th



anniversary of the founding of Denver. It has bright yellow long-rayed flowers with a dark center and is hardy in zones 3 to 9, up to 9000 feet. Grown as an annual, this plant can reach a height of up to 2 feet, prefers moderate to dry soil conditions and full sun to light shade once established. Peak flowering is in July/August. The

seeds must be kept moist in order to germinate successfully. There has been varying degrees of success in growing these plants from seed, but when bought as a plant, it seems to do quite well.

For additional information or to find retailers that carry the Plant Select® plants visit their website at [PLANTSELECT.ORG](http://PLANTSELECT.ORG).

## Tips to Growing Healthy Roses

by  
Laurie Wasmund  
Colorado Master Gardener

Roses are a popular addition to Colorado gardens. Fortunately, the state's dry climate and high altitude help prevent the development of most fungal diseases. Yet many gardeners plant their roses close together, which produce an environment more conducive to the growth of fungi. Fungi cause most Colorado rose diseases.



Rose mosaic is a virus that is found worldwide. Its symptoms include mosaic patterns or splotches of yellow and green on leaves. Other symptoms are chlorotic ringspots and yellow vein banding. The coloration in flowers may be uneven.

Transmission of the disease is through rooting cuttings and root grafting, and the only way to control rose mosaic is to remove the infected plants. Many gardeners leave the plant and ignore the virus. However, infected plants may be more susceptible to winter injury.



Powdery mildew, late stage

Another disease of roses is powdery mildew, which occurs in both dry and humid weather. This fungus produces a white growth on the tops and bottoms of leaves and stems. Plants may become stunted, and leaves may curl and drop. To manage powdery mildew, remove and destroy infected shoots at the end of the season and rake up any infected leaves, or spray plants with sulfur dusts, neem oil, or other systemic fungicides. (Continued on page 3.)

# Plants in Their Place

## Tips to Growing Healthy Roses

(Continued from page 2.)



Rust affects the undersides of leaves and other plant parts. It appears as orange, powdery pustules that develop into orange-brown spots on the leaf surfaces. Rust can develop when temperatures are in the upper sixties and moisture is continuous for two to three hours. To control rust, remove infected stems and leaves when it first appears. Carefully prune old canes to help eliminate carry-over from season to season.

The best way to avoid these problems with Colorado roses is to buy and plant disease-free plants. Choose resistant varieties, and avoid wounding plants during transplanting. Plant roses in sunny areas with good drainage and ventilation. Do not place plants too close together, and avoid shady spots. Avoid overhead watering that leaves water on the leaf surfaces and increase the chance of disease. When using a fungicide, carefully read the label and follow all directions.

## Death Camas (*Zigadenus sp.*) Lily Family (*Liliaceae*)

By

Kay Kuhl

Apprentice Colorado Master Gardener  
and Raylene Owen  
Colorado Master Gardener



There are several species of death camas and all should be considered toxic. All parts of the plant are toxic including the leaves, flowers, bulb and pollen. The toxin in the plant is an alkaloid, zygacine. Death camas is often one of the first plants to emerge from the

ground in the spring before other forage is available, and is toxic to livestock, as well as people, if consumed. Sheep are most susceptible, followed by cattle, then horses. People have mistaken the bulb for wild onion, eaten the bulb, and died. Death camas is a native perennial found in the Western two-thirds of Colorado at elevations of 4500 – 8000 feet.

All parts of the plant are toxic. Seeds are the most toxic, but are rarely eaten as they are dry and unpalatable. Next toxic is the bulb, but it is rarely pulled out of the soil and eaten. The leaves are the next toxic and are most likely to



be eaten. Do not cut infested areas for hay, as dry leaves in hay are also toxic. Contaminated pastures should not be grazed by sheep until later in the spring when more forage becomes available. There are no good medicinal remedies, but poisoned animals that are cared for and kept quiet may recover.

Two of the common species in the Elbert/Douglas counties include:

Meadow death camas (*Zigadenus venenosus* S. Wats var *gramineus*.) This hairless herb has mostly basal, grass like leaves that are up to 12 inches long and an under-ground bulb. The plant grows 8-14 inches tall. The leaves are V-creased, parallel veined and flat, and not hollow. It blooms with racemes of green-white, yellow or pink blossoms. The bulb is onion-like with a dark colored outer paper-like coat.

Foothill death camas (*Zigadenus paniculatus* (Nutt.) S. Wats.) is showy in May-June. It has erect, stiff stems that often reach 8-24 inches high with smooth grass-like basal leaves on three sides. It grows from an onion-like bulb 6-8 inches below the ground. The creamy white to yellow blossoms have orange stamens that give them a soft, lacy quality.

Symptoms of ingestion include slobbering and vomiting, cyanosis, followed by weakness, staggering and convulsions, then coma for several hours or days followed by death.

Eradication: This plant is very toxic. Care should be exercised as contact with any part of the plant can irritate the skin. Wear gloves. Remove the plant by digging it up, making sure to remove the entire bulb. Remove all plant parts from the pasture.

Control: Apply 2,4-D (Dimethylamine salt of 2,4-dichlorophenoxyacetic acid) in the early bud stage. Always read the label and follow the application instructions.



**Enter your flowers  
and vegetables in the  
Elbert County Fair  
Open Class! Call the  
Extension Office for  
more information.**

# In Your Garden

## Grow Salads in a Portable Box

By  
Doris Smith  
Colorado Master Gardener



The best idea I've seen in a long time was described in a gardening magazine this winter. It was called a "Portable Salad Box", in the Organic Gardening Magazine, February/March 2008.

They screwed together a rectangle out of 1x4 cedars that measured 18" x 30" and stapled screen wire to the bottom, attached handles on two sides for carrying. Any scrap wood would work, except pressure treated. Since we have some cedar pickets left over from a gate we built, and we have a sliding screen door which had to be replaced because we have grandchildren, that is what we will use to build our box. What an innovative, clever way to keep your kitchen garden where you need it.

This idea is much like container planting. But plants like lettuce, spinach, radishes, bunching onions don't require deep root space; instead, they need space between plants above ground. This shallow box is perfect for placing your salad garden in sun, in cooler shade, out of the way of critters, or in the garage as conditions change throughout the season.

As with container plants, the potting soil should be premoistened. I'd add some fish emulsion to the mix because greens start off so well with it. Then sow the seeds sparingly in the box. Before leaving it outside permanently, be sure to harden off the plants. In other words, leave them outside for an hour the first day and then for longer periods until they're ready to be out overnight. If you can start the seeds indoors, they could be started mid-April and start hardening off in May or so, depending on our fickle weather.

But at least in a portable box, you can bring them inside when unexpected freezing temperatures come along. You can also bring it inside in the fall when we otherwise throw up our hands and say, "Well, the frost last night killed the last of the lettuce and that's the end of homegrown salads."

## Taking the Sting Out of Wasps

by  
Laurie Wasmund  
Colorado Master Gardener

Wasps can become pests in Colorado gardens, especially in late summer. Yet wasps are beneficial insects to have in the garden, as both pollinators and predators of pest insects.

Many kinds of wasps are social insects that live in a colony. Each spring, a single fertilized female, or queen, begins a new colony. A nest is constructed of paper, which the wasps produce by chewing on wood, paper scraps or cardboard. Social wasps tend to be banded, with alternating black and lighter markings. Yellowjackets have yellow bands, while the baldfaced hornet has white bands, and most paper wasps have orange-brown markings.

At first, the colony is small, but it rapidly expands as new wasps are raised. By the end of summer, a colony may include several hundred individuals. Some are fertile females and potential queens, and a few are males. In fall, the colonies break apart, never to be reused, and the fertilized females move to new locations. The remaining colony members die in the cold weather.



Unlike bees, which live on a diet of nectar or pollen, social wasps feed on a diet of live insects. This makes them important in the control of pests such as caterpillars and other soft-bodied insects. The exception is yellowjackets, which feed on carrion such as dead insects, earthworms and garbage. Yellowjackets are pests at picnics and other outdoor dining venues, and it is estimated that roughly 90% of all "bee stings" in Colorado are actually caused by yellowjackets.

Yellowjackets usually nest underground using existing holes. The entrance to the nest is small and not easily noticed. If disturbed, yellowjackets will avidly defend the nest and sting the intruder.

Hornets produce large grayish paper nests in trees, shrubs and under building eaves. Hornets feed their young on live insects, but do not scavenge like yellowjackets. They rarely sting unless the colony is disturbed.

Paper wasps build "honeycomb"-type nests under building overhangs. They are beneficial in pest control and will sting if provoked.

Hunting wasps, spider wasps and mud daubers do not produce a colony, but are, instead, solitary insects. The individual female wasps construct nests for young. Hunting wasps prey on small insects such as aphids or leafhoppers. Although these wasps appear ferocious, they will not sting unless directly handled or accidentally trapped. Their sting is also much milder than that of social wasps.

To control wasps, it is best to wait until the nest is abandoned in the fall. It can then be safely removed during the winter. Active nests can be destroyed with insecticide. Control with insecticides should be done during late evening, or on cool days in the early morning, when wasps are still in the nest and not foraging or flying from the nest. (Continued on page 7.)

# In Your Garden

## Worm Compost

By  
Steve Delgadillo  
Colorado Master Gardener



The worm composting process is a completely naturally occurring one which has been going on for millions of years. It was commercialized mainly in the United States, not for the purpose of processing organic waste, but to produce bait worms for sports fishermen. There was a lull during the eighties, but now vermicomposting is really back and booming, not only in the United States, but in Australia, Cuba, and India, among other places.

Work with compost worms is definitely on the way in, not only in schools and private households, but also in the industrial waste sector. Research into the uses of worm biohumus has produced some very exciting results which point to an interesting future for this process.

Worm composting is a process that uses earthworms to consume organic waste, producing castings (an odor-free compost product for use as mulch), as a soil amendment, and topsoil additive. Naturally occurring organisms, such as bacteria and millipedes, also assist in the aerobic degradation of the organic material.

Worms eat food scraps, which become compost as they pass through the worm's body. Compost exits the worm through its tail end. This compost can then be used to grow plants. To understand why vermicompost is good for plants, remember that the worms are eating nutrient-rich fruit and vegetable scraps, and turning them into nutrient-rich compost.

**Vermicomposting** is especially useful for processing food scraps, since the worms consume the material quickly and there are fewer problems with odor. Worm composting does not generate temperatures high enough to kill pathogens. For this reason, vermicomposting is more appropriate for food, paper, and yard waste.

Vermicompost is beneficial for soil in three ways:

- It improves the physical structure of the soil.
- It improves the biological properties of the soil (enrichment of micro-organisms, addition of growth hormones such as auxins and gibberellic acid, and additions of enzymes, such as phosphates, cellulose).
- It attracts deep-burrowing earthworms already present in the soil.

Now we must find the appropriate worm for the job. There are two types of earthworms that can be used with success. The first are the red wiggler composting worms (*Eisenia foetida*) and the brandling, or manure worm (*Lumbricus rubellus*). Other worms such as the dew worms or other common ground worms are not as successful as they will probably not survive the process.

For the more daring person there is always the option of digging through a manure pile to retrieve starter worms. I would recommend the red wiggler composting worm as they are available commercially and getting them is a lot cleaner.

Vermicomposting bins vary drastically depending on the system an individual composter wishes to create. Since there are many bins available on line, either with instructions on how to build them yourself, or where you can purchase bins, I will not show these but I will tell you about the different sizes. You can then choose the size that is right for your needs.

Small scale systems offer a wide variety of bins. Often, small-scale composters build their own bins. Companies also offer commercial models for sale. Commonly, bins are built out of old plastic containers, wood, Styrofoam containers, or metal containers.

Some materials are less desirable than others in bin construction. Styrofoam is believed to release toxins into the earthworms' environment. Metal containers often conduct heat too readily, are prone to rusting, and may release heavy metals into compost.

The design of small bins usually depends on where an individual wishes to store the bin and how they wish to feed the worms. All bins in general have holes for airflow in the sides and some form of drainage, either holes in the bottom to drain on to a collection tray or an actual spout that can be opened or closed to allow drainage. Plastic bins in general require more drainage than wooden because they are non-absorbent. Regardless of the material used to build the bin, most small bins can be grouped into three categories:

**Non-Continuous** – A non-continuous bin is an undivided container. A layer of bedding materials is placed in the bin lining the bottom and worms are added and organic matter for composting is added in a layer above the bedding. Another layer is added on top of the organic matter and the worms will start to compost the organic matter and bedding. These types of bins are often used because they are small in size and easy to build. They are relatively difficult to harvest because all the materials and worms must be emptied out when harvesting.

**Continuous Vertical Flow** – Continuous flow bins are a series of trays stacked vertically. The bottom-most tray is filled first, in a similar fashion to any other bin, but is not (Continued on page 6.)

# Insects and Other Creatures

## Worm Compost

(Continued from page 5.)

harvested when it is full. Instead, a thick layer of bedding is added on top and the tray above is used for adding organic material. The idea is that the worms will finish composting the bottom tray and then migrate to the one above. When a sufficient number of worms have migrated the bottom tray can be collected and should be relatively free of worms. These bins provide an easier method of harvesting.

**Continuous Horizontal Flow** – A continuous horizontal flow bin is another bin that relies on the earthworm habits of migrating towards a food source in order to ease the process of harvesting. The bin is usually constructed to be similar to a non-continuous bin but twice as long (horizontally). The bin is divided in half, usually by a large gauge screen of chicken wire. Only one side is used initially. When that half becomes full, the other half is filled with bedding and organic matter. In time, the worms will migrate to the side with the food and the compost can be collected. These bins are larger than a non-continuous system but are still small enough to be used indoors, with the added bonus of being easier to harvest. Most large scale vermicomposting or vermiculture systems do not incorporate an actual physical bin at all, because it is simply too impractical. A large system will usually use a windrow. The windrow simply consists of bedding materials for the earthworms to live in and acts as a large worm bin; organic material is added to the windrow and the worms perform the composting. Although the windrow has no physical barriers to prevent worms from escaping, in theory they should not die due to an abundance of organic matter for them to feed on. Often windrows are used on a concrete surface to prevent predators from killing off worm populations.

**How many worms will I need to do the job?** Experts vary on the number of red wiggler composting worms needed to do an adequate job. Some say that you need up to one pound of worms per square foot of surface area. Others say that you should use two pounds of worms for each pound of food provided daily. If you are operating on a limited budget or have trouble finding enough worms do not worry about it. The red wiggler composting worm is a prolific little creature and in addition to being proficient in garbage disposal it is also proficient in producing more worms. The population will expand to meet the food supply provided.

**What do I feed my worms?** Your worm bin is a living breathing garbage disposal. Food scraps such as fruit, or vegetable peels, egg shells, tea bags, and coffee grounds will be rapidly consumed by your red wiggler worms. Meats, dairy products, and oily foods are not recommended. When you feed them open the bedding a little and put your garbage in then recover it. This will control any odors that might be emitted from decaying

food. Bedding is made from scraps of paper or cardboard that has been wetted down. Now you will have another use for the paper from your shredder.

**Is there required maintenance?** Red wiggler composting worms are surprisingly maintenance free. If you keep the worm to food ratio at the right level and bury the worm food you should not have any problems. Keep your bin temperature in the 40-80 degrees F level and the bedding fresh and wet. In two and a half to three months your compost should be ready to harvest. The easiest way to separate the worms from the bedding is to move the food source to the other side of the bin. The worms will crawl over in a week or so and you can remove the old bedding which is now your compost.

**Bedding** in a worm bin is the living medium for the worms but is also used as a food source; it is material that is high in carbon and is made to mimic dried leaves on the forest floor, which is the worms' natural habitat. The bedding needs to be moist (often related to the consistency of a wrung-out sponge) and loose to enable the earthworms to breathe and to facilitate aerobic decomposition. A wide variety of bedding materials can be used including newspaper, sawdust, hay, cardboard, peat moss, aged manure (meaning the manure has to be pre-composted before use), and dried leaves. Most vermicomposters avoid using any glossy papers from newspapers and magazines, junk mail and shredded paper from offices, because they may contain toxins which will severely affect the system. Also some cardboard cannot be used if it contains wax or plastic, such as cereal boxes, and other boxes designed to hold food items. Newspapers and phone books printed on regular, non-glossy pages are heavily regulated by the FDA and use non-toxic soy and Canola based inks.

**Greens** – If too much kitchen waste is added for the worms to process, the waste will putrify. A balance between “green matter” such as kitchen scraps and “brown matter” such as shredded newspaper for bedding must be maintained in order for the worms to do their work. This balance should be approximately one part “green matter” for every two parts of “brown matter”. Covering the kitchen scraps with a layer of “brown matter” also has the added benefit of reducing odor and insect problems. Avoid grass clippings or other plant products that have been sprayed with pesticides.

**Meats** – Although proteins such as fats and meat scraps can be processed by a vermicompost bin, doing so tends to attract scavengers and should be avoided if this is a risk. Worms are unable to break down bone or synthetic material.

Over the long term, care should be taken to maintain optimum moisture levels and pH balance. In a non-continuous flow vermicomposting bin, excess liquid can be drained via a tap and used as plant food. A continuous-flow bin will not retain excess liquid and it

(Continued on page 7.)

# Insects and Other Creatures

## Worm Compost

(Continued from page 6.)

requires extra water to be added to keep the bedding moist. Too many citrus peels in the material to be composted can cause excessive acidity, but this can be mitigated by adding an occasional handful of lime.

Worms, as well as other microorganisms in the composting process, require oxygen, so the bin must “breathe”. This can be accomplished by regularly removing the composted material, adding holes to a composting bin, or using a continuous-flow bin. If insufficient oxygen is available, the compost will become anaerobic. This will provide a host environment for a different type of decay process which produces a strong odor offensive to most people. This type of decay is found in swamps and bogs and is responsible for the stench sometimes found in these environments.

The first method, known as top feeding, is when organic matter placed directly on top of the existing layer bedding in a bin and then covered with another layer of bedding. This is repeated every time the bin is fed.

The other method of feeding is known as pocket feeding. In this method a top layer of bedding is maintained and food is buried beneath. The location of the food is changed each time and often the bin is fed in more than one location. As bedding runs low more is added. Vermicomposters often use a combination of both methods. Sometimes, by not burying the food, it can attract fruit flies.

**Odors** – When this occurs it is usually due to the overabundance of “greens” in the bin, which is actually too much nitrogen combining with hydrogen and forms the ammonia. To neutralize the odors you want to add a fair amount of carbon to the mix. The carbon will instead absorb the nitrogen and form a compound that is not smelly. Paper and dried leaves are good sources of carbon. Take note; too much carbon added slows the decomposition process considerably.

**Pests** – Certain types of material, as well as odors from these, can attract pests such as rodents and flies. This is especially true if the loading contains lots of kitchen waste, especially meat. This problem is largely negated if a sealed bin is used where the pests cannot access the material. Most domestic vermicomposters are advised by local authorities to avoid the problem of pests by avoiding using materials that attract them rather than relying on special containers.

Worm compost is usually too rich for use as seed compost, but is useful as a top layer of soil or an addition to potting composts. Some types of pitted seeds are reportedly easier to germinate when placed in vermicompost for several months.

**Note: Red Wiggler worms are not native to North America. They are an invasive species and have become naturalized in most of the globe. Do not dump worm-containing compost in natural areas as they can have the effect of displacing the native worms.**

## Taking the Sting out of Wasps

(Continued from page 4.)

Several insecticides are sold for this purpose with active ingredients such as permethrin.

Social wasp nest can be controlled early in the season when the colonies are small. For nuisance wasps, such as yellowjackets, control is more difficult. Nests are inconspicuously located, and yellowjackets may fly as far as 1,000 yards to scavenge. It is important to eliminate potential food sources such as open garbage cans or pet food from around homes and doorways. Yellow jacket baits or traps work in June or early July, when colonies are small and still developing. These traps will not work on other social wasps, such as the paper wasps, or bees.



## It's "DIAMOND JUBILEE" Fair Time

Your Elbert County Master Gardeners will be at the Elbert County Fair again this year from July 30<sup>th</sup> to August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009. Master Gardeners will be available from 9am - 4:30pm on each day to help with your needs and answer your questions. Please feel free to stop by our booth to ask questions about gardening, such as those pesky weeds you just can't seem to get rid of or the bug eating your favorite flower or vegetable. You can also buy gardening or weed books and pick up free brochures.

Also while you are enjoying the fair, please take a minute to stop by the Extension Office to see how well the Plant Select® flower garden has grown this past year.

The Master Gardeners will once again be offering a silent auction of various items to be bid on to raise funds for this great program. As most of you know that have bid at our previous auctions, we will have a lot of nice things for you to bid on. Bidding will close at noon on August 2<sup>nd</sup>. See you at the fair!!!



### Are you controlling your leafy spurge?

For detailed information, review the Colorado State Cooperative Extension Fact Sheet [Leafy Spurge](http://www.ext.colostate.edu) at [www.ext.colostate.edu](http://www.ext.colostate.edu)



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***June 2009***

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Master Gardener Office Hours are Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, April through September from 1:00 to 4:30 p.m. Stop by the Extension Office at the Fairgrounds in Kiowa or give us a call at 303-621-3162 Kiowa or 719-541-2361 Simla. You may also email questions to [elbertmg@ext.colostate.edu](mailto:elbertmg@ext.colostate.edu).

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Do you have a friend or neighbor who might wish to receive this newsletter? Please call or email the Extension Office with their name and address. Also let us know if you wish to receive this newsletter electronically. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Kipp A. Nye  
Elbert County Extension Director  
Colorado State University

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## **The Elbert County Fair Open Class Exhibits**

*by Doris Smith  
Colorado Master Gardener*

A surefire way to see which flowers and vegetables grow well in Elbert County is to visit the Open Class Exhibits at the fair. Many people are unaware of the exhibits because they are housed at the far south end of the fairgrounds in Fellowship Hall.

On Tuesday, July 28, from 8:00 to 11:30 am, anyone of any age can enter their goods for judging. The Elbert County Master Gardeners help participants check in their items. Judging is in the afternoon and the Master Gardeners help clerk for the judges. Everyone is welcome to watch and listen to the judging so long as they do not interfere. The exhibits are then displayed from Wednesday morning until the last day of the fair.

Through the years we have seen beautiful varieties of petunias, gaillardia, coreopsis, columbines, and marigolds, just to name a few. After seeing all of the flowers and crops grown by others, it motivates you to grow them yourself.

The fair book rules and list of individual entries is available online at <http://elbert.colostate.edu/4HECF.shtml> or you can get a copy at the Elbert County Cooperative Extension office in Kiowa or Simla. Every flower, houseplant, vegetable, fruit and flowering shrub is eligible for judging in some category. In addition, the rules tell how to harvest and preserve flowers for maximum life.

A lot of effort goes into organizing the open class exhibits. It's an opportunity to show your best cultivars and excellent opportunity to see what others are growing successfully. We hope you will plan to stop by the exhibit hall during the county fair.