



CENTER FOR ReSource Conservation

Garden In A Box

Garden In A Box eNews

February 2015

Love Your Garden In A Box?

Add your name to the 2015 pre-sale list and we will include you in our exclusive early-bird sales.

[Sign up here.](#) or [visit our website](#) for more information.



Ask Miss Jean!

Jean Lovell, long-time CRC

With February comes the shortest month of the year, time to celebrate our sweethearts, commemorate our nation's presidents *and* it's Black History - quite an eclectic mix! Spring is right around the corner, and it sometimes feels like it's already here, especially with this seventy degree weather we've been having. This newsletter offers a glance at our 2015 gardens that will go on sale in *less than a month*, tips for starting your own seeds, and so much more!



Please send any questions, comments, or concerns to gardeninfo@conservationcenter.org.

Happy Gardening!

Turf Replacement, Xeriscape,

volunteer and former Master Gardener, tackles your questions!
Submit your question here:
gardeninfo@conservationcenter.org

Q. When should I start seeds indoors?

A. Starting seeds indoors gives you many more choices of [cultivars](#) and a jump start on reaping the fruits of your garden. BUT, the process can be challenging if you don't know what you're doing. Here is my list of tips, curated over years of trial and error:

1) Plan Your Garden and Select Your Seeds. Because the seed packet does not always include germination information, be sure to ask your supplier the following questions:

- Do the seeds need to be started indoors?
- Do they need to be soaked, chilled or scratched before planting?
- Do they need darkness or light to germinate?
- Do they transplant well?

2) Buy New or Use Well-Stored Seeds. If you are using stored seeds, think dry, cool and dark. Humidity, light and warmth shorten a seed's shelf life. If you're in doubt, find an organic supplier and order some new seeds.

3) Start Smart. Some types of plants and veggies do better as seeds. If you're new, try germinating basil, tomatoes, or marigolds! Start with only a few varieties and take notes about what works and what doesn't.

4) Timing is Everything. Make sure your seeds hit the ground running by transplanting them at the right time. Use a [seed starting chart](#), like this one from You Grow Girl.

5) Keep Seeds Warm. After planting your seedlings, cover them gently with canvas or plastic to keep them warm at night. Seeds thrive when the temperature hovers around 70 degrees.

Veggies: There are several references for when to start vegetables, the most

and Water Conservation!



The word Xeriscape, coined in Colorado in 1981, describes a water conservation concept for landscaping developed in the wake of a major drought in 1977. As a result of this drought, Coloradans began to take a closer look at where they were using the most water and discovered that nearly half of their home water usage was going to turfgrass and landscaping. Replacing turf with [Xeriscaping](#) and irrigating effectively can save 50 to 75 percent of the water used in your yard!

XERIscape is not to be confused with ZEROscape! It does not mean replacing all of your turf with rocks and your flowers and shrubs with cacti. Quite to the contrary, a good Xeriscape design enhances the beauty and comfort of your lawn by replacing large areas of turf with beautiful plants, ornamental grasses, shrubs, and trees. This type of landscape design is not only visually stunning. It also cuts back on your water usage and requires far less maintenance than turf. You might think of Xeriscaping as providing an oasis, with a small lawn in a lush area close to the house, surrounded by a blossoming meadow of low water use plants.

Want more information? Check out this [Xeriscaping fact sheet](#) from Colorado State University. It contains valuable links and information on "Xerigation," how and where to remove turfgrass, selecting plants, and much more.

Considering a lawn re-design? While you do the work, remember the [Tool Library](#) at ReSource is there for you to borrow those tools you need but don't own.

SNEAK PEEK! 2015 Garden In A Box Gardens!

Tantalizing details about our gardens...

For those of you who can't wait until Garden In A Box's 2015 catalog is released in March, here is a "sneak peek" of some of CRC's favorite plants in this year's Garden In A Box Kits! Except for the veggie garden, all of our gardens include at least one grass along with a wide variety of colorful water-saving flowers.

helpful one for our area can be found [here](#).

Flowers: A number of sites state most perennials should be sown indoors and generally six to eight weeks before the last frost. In Boulder, that average date is [May 4](#).

Old Farmer's Almanac: is a good source of information on the planting process and management of your growing seeds, and includes a related site about transplanting the seedlings.

Note: As a volunteer, Miss Jean is one of our most precious resources! She may not have time to answer each question personally, but she recommends the Boulder County Extension Service as a great resource as well. Or, check with your own local Extension Service - they're there to help!

FEBRUARY Xeric Plant of the Month!



The February "Xeric Plant of the Month Award" goes to *Sporobolus heterolepis*, or [Prairie Dropseed](#). Prairie Dropseed is a beautiful grass with foliage that changes from green to orange to bronze throughout the growing season. Its highly nutritious seeds attract birds to the garden, and were traditionally ground up into a flour by the Plains Indians. Recently, the Prairie Dropseed has become a staple of rooftop gardens, or "[living roofs](#)" in urban areas because of its drought-resistance and ability to thrive in harsher environments. Living roofs are an innovative and aesthetically pleasing method of providing insulation to a building, reducing rainwater runoff, and creating a habitat for wildlife.

The **Greatest Hits of Xeriscape** plant selection, new this year, includes seven time-proven favorite flowers and grasses that thrive specifically in our area. These individual Xeric plants can be used in many places in your garden. [Mexican Feather Grass](#), also called "pony tail" grass, has delicate and feather-like leaves and produces silvery flowers in June. [Blanket Flowers](#), loved for their continuous and colorful blooms, are a favorite because of their drought-tolerance and resistance to deer.

This year's **Colorful Chef** vegetable garden contains 27 plants including several [heirloom](#) and other unusual varieties, such as [garlic chives](#) and '[Bloomsdale Long Standing Spinach](#)'. [Brandywine Tomatoes](#) are a universal crowd-pleaser and are considered by many to be the best-tasting of all indeterminate tomato varieties. For those of you with a flair for the colorful, try adding [nasturtium flowers](#) to your salads for a delicious and "radishy" kick!

Morning Sunrise Garden's 27 full sun plants will be colorful from late spring through summer. [Husker Red Penstemon](#), winner of the 1996 Perennial Plant Association Plant of the Year Award, is a Xeric favorite with its reddish leaves and open spires of creamy white flowers. The '[White Swan](#)' [Coneflower](#) with its orange-bronze cone and large, white daisy-like flowers is an unexpected delight.

The **Native Roots Garden**, also with ten varieties (27 plants), brings the native history of the United States to life with plants that promise to enhance the [full to part sun garden](#) from late spring to early fall. Not only did the Native Americans enjoy these plants for their beauty, but for their usefulness and practicality as well. For example, they used the orange [Monro's Globemallow](#) to make paint and the pink [Dotted Blazing Star](#) for food and medicine. Other highlights such as [Fringed Sage](#), provide year-round appeal in the garden.

Pollinators' Paradise brings fifteen plants to entice pollinators to your sunny garden from late spring to early fall. Among the nine varieties are two favorites: [Stark's Early Hybrid Torch Lily](#) with its striking yellow and orange flowers and the [Dark Knight Spirea](#) whose dark blue late summer blooms last until a hard frost.

Once again, our professional designers have come up with excellent choices. Which garden is calling to you? Be sure to get first pick on our 2015 gardens by adding your name to the [pre-sale](#) list now!

Water-Wise Landscape Seminars

Interested in learning more about Xeriscaping? We are excited to announce that starting in April, the Center for Resource Conservation will be hosting a [Landscape Seminar Series](#) throughout the Boulder and Denver areas! Each informative seminar will focus on a different and applicable Xeriscape topic such as "Edible Xeriscaping," "Xeric Natives" and "Creating a Pollinator and Water Friendly Landscape". Stay tuned for information on the Landscape Seminar Series dates, locations and topics in next month's newsletter and on our [website](#)!



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More About CRC:

Garden In A Box is a Water Conservation program of the Center for ReSource Conservation (CRC). CRC empowers 65,000 community members annually to protect our non-renewable resources and to live more sustainably. To learn more about the ways CRC puts conservation into action, please visit www.conservationcenter.org.



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