



Our in-house horticulturist/arborist, Craig Miller, dispenses practical advice for those seeking to simultaneously conserve water and grow thriving, high-visual-impact, drought-tolerant (xeriscape) gardens and landscapes. Please email your questions to craig@cpnmd.org.



WINTER GARDENING



Winter gardening doesn't require as much from us as gardening during the growing season, but there's still some work to do.

Many gardeners may have cut back perennials and shrubs during the course of fall cleanup. It is preferable to let your perennials shelter each other. Nature encourages grasses and shrubs to fall all over one another as a winter blanket. This preserves moisture and insulates plants during even the harshest of winters. The birds appreciate this as well, since seed heads provide winter food.

Leaving your perennials to catch snow is like installing snow fencing in your garden. Snow will collect on the foliage and melt down around the base of your perennials, allowing water harvesting. Wait until spring to do your major cleanup, including cutting back roses.

Winter watering is crucial, especially with evergreen trees and shrubs. Well-timed fall and winter watering may allow a plant to survive on less water than plentiful water applications during the growing season. Tree, shrub and perennial roots

continue to grow throughout the winter and need moisture to survive. During a dry winter, water one to two times per month October through March on a warm day when the ground is not frozen.

Now would also be a good time to freshen the mulch in your gardens. You can apply wood mulch throughout the winter in areas with no snow cover. A natural shredded cedar fiber mulch is preferred, as it is slow to breakdown and not so prone to blow away as decorative bark mulch is.

XERIC PLANT OF THE MONTH

Fernbush (*Chamaebatiaria millefolium*), also known as Desert Sweet or Tansy bush, is an attractive aromatic shrub producing a profuse amount of small showy white five-petaled flowers in the middle of summer. The leathery fern-like leaves and fragrant flowers are clustered at the ends of the branches. Although it is considered a semi-evergreen, most of the older leaves typically drop during winter, revealing a smooth to flaky russet bark.

This long-lived shrub grows to 4-feet tall and wide, and is extremely drought tolerant once established. After flowering, large brown seed heads are formed. These can be removed for a cleaner appearance. This plant is native to the western United States at elevations of 4,000 to 7,000 feet, and makes an excellent specimen or accent plant. Fernbush is cold hardy to minus 30° F and prefers well-drained soil and full sun.



BOARD UPDATE: A few weeks ago, Stonecroft residents, **Marilyn & Blair Marsden**, urged us to mobilize volunteers against the insidious invasion of trash and graffiti plaguing the community. We extend a warm and sincere 'thank you' to the Marsdens and the fourteen other residents who joined us in Coyote Ridge Park for our first **Clean-Up Castle Pines Day** at 7:30 a.m. on October 21st. Altruism, neighborly companionship, and clarity of purpose collaborated with coffee, hot chocolate, and mini-Bundts to take the edge off the brisk air that fall morning. As Knightsbridge resident **Dave Celecki** wrestled an armload of heavy-gauge industrial wire and a mangled bike from the swamp, a team of volunteers cleaned out rotting furniture and debris vagrant campers had abandoned. Others fanned out in groups of two or three throughout the park and adjacent areas. From decomposing sports balls and clothing, to countless cigarette butts, cans, bottles, plastic wrappers, Styrofoam, and shards of broken glass — after the glorious band of insurgent volunteers finished their ninety-minute task, our own **Natalio Maldonado** schlepped four truckloads of trash from Coyote Ridge Park and a stretch of Monarch Boulevard to CPNMD dumpsters. Special shout out to two-year-old Castle Valley resident **Haisley**, who joined her mom, **Melissa Kastenek**, filling a garbage bag with debris they found near the gazebos.

PUBLIC NOTICE: Our next regular board meeting will occur at 6:00 p.m., November 16th, at 7404 Yorkshire Blvd., during which we will consider amending CPNMD's existing 2020 budget **and** adopting CPNMD's 2021 budget. You are welcome to join us for our masked and socially distanced meeting or watch a live video stream of the proceedings via our website homepage at cpnmd.org.



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