

## How to Keep Growing in Winter?

### From the President and Vice-President



As this lingering and beautiful autumn succumbs to the chilly grip of winter, it is time for the indoor thrills of plant lovers. This year many of our potted plants have been telling us it is time for a new pot. We have been learning the ins and outs of repotting and dividing indoor plants to make new plantings. One of the most outstanding results of dividing and making new starts is the sheer volume of plant material one ends up working with and potentially creating. Whether one is taking a sharp knife to a root ball or teasing tubers apart with her hands, sticking fresh starts into dirt, or laying branches out to callous or heal over, the results are worth it and so satisfying.

There are many theories about not repotting in the fall/winter because that is when plants go dormant. That makes perfect and practical sense. However, most rules need bending if not breaking! So, here's some suggestions on how best to bend repotting rules. Right now a snake plant is repotted because it is beyond root bound and a jade plant because some rowdy dogs broke off most of its limbs.

## Repotting Three Plants



1. Snake plants LOVE to be root bound but when there is no room for water, you must carefully pry out the whole plant and hopefully just cut or saw the whole plant in half from the top down and repot ½ of the plant back in its original pot with nice healthy new moist dirt. Try to keep the snake plant roots as intact as possible and try to bury the roots to the same depth. Repot the other half for a friend. Let the plants recover by putting them in a spot with less light for a week or two.

2. Jade plants and all succulents need to be cut back to a manageable size and allowed to callus over at the cut marks. Callus over just means letting the cuttings sit for a few days or even a week before replanting them. After

Repotted snake and jade plants.



they callus over, repot in a nice moist, but not wet, soil. You might need to stake the cuttings, but it is not recommended.

3. The easiest plants to repot are those that easily form new roots in water. This includes geraniums, creeping Charlies, wandering Jews, pothos, philodendron, spiders, coleus and many more including snake plants. Just pick 3-7 healthy stems, trim off all bottomleaves put stems in a clean glass jar, fill with clean water (I always de-chlorinate my water) put in a bright spot and wait. When the stems/cuttings have many long roots, plant them in moist but not wet soil.

A Swedish ivy plant is ready for cuttings. Photos by Annie Worley.



Have a lovely holiday season and keep growing!  
Your President and Vice President,

*Annie & Lisa*

# Seasons and Cycles in an Evolving Garden



Sara Preston explains her gardening philosophy. Photo by Deb McCanne

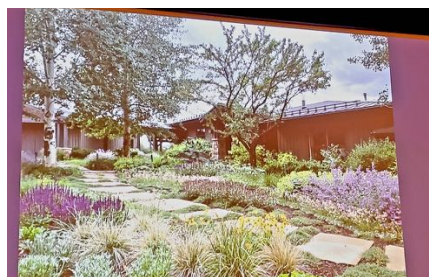
On October 23, 21 Valley Gardeners were greeted at the Crystal Theater in Carbondale with popcorn, soft drinks and tea served by Adam, the very welcoming manager. The Crystal has recently become a non-profit and is experimenting with holding community events. Valley Gardeners was a guinea pig for the project. However, they were not there for a movie but for a presentation on landscape design.

Sara Preston, owner of Sara Preston Sustainable Landscape Design, gave an engaging and informative Power Point presentation about her work in landscape and garden design. Along the way, she included ideas and tips for gardeners. Sara's background with a degree in ceramic art before studying landscape design gives her a special focus on color and creative materials. Her passion, though, is ecology and sustainable garden design. She believes we should all be stewards of the land. When planning a project, she studies the topography of the land and the current vegetation as well as asking about the client's preferences. Sara stressed that she valued "having a close relationship with the landscape around you."



A slide states Sara's philosophy. Photo by Meg Ribotto.

Sara described four of her projects, one of them for Valley Gardeners' member, Deborah Bradford, who lives on Missouri Heights. Sara is always conscious of the cycle of the seasons and the cycle of life, and she embraces the idea that a garden will change and evolve over time just as the gardener's interests and values will. Her gardens are intended to follow the cycle of life and be equally beautiful in summer, spring, and fall, and even hold winter interest. "Seed heads are beautiful too." She noted that death is a part of life. Her slides showed gardens in the different seasons. Sara looks for plants that thrive in their environment—natives and near natives as much as possible. Her first example was a front yard garden has evolved to be all gardens and pathways with no grass. The use of hardscape—non plant material—is important for structure in the garden. One garden featured flowers for cutting and vegetables mixed together. Sara concluded her presentation by reminding everyone that gardening should bring joy, not anxiety.



After the presentation, everyone gathered at the Brass Anvil for lunch.

**Above left: This front yard is all garden on both sides of the walk way.**

**Left: Deborah Bradford's garden includes planting vegetables in metal tubs to deter deer. Photos by Meg Ribotto.**

**Below: Guests gather in the lobby of the Crystal Theater.**

**Guests enjoy lunch at The Brass Anvil. Photos by Deb McCanne**



## Tips from Sara



- Soil is the foundation of the garden.
- Composting is important, especially in the fall. All types of composting are good--grass clippings, leaves, healthy debris from cutting back plants.
- Containers:  
Use at least part potting soil rather than garden soil which can be too heavy for adequate air and water circulation.  
Plants only need about eight inches of soil. Fill the rest of the pot with debris like broken ceramics, empty soda cans or plastic bottles.





# Build a Bouquet



25 valley Gardeners gathered at Morgridge Commons in Basalt on November 24 to practice their design skills in creating a Thanksgiving floral centerpiece. Marti Barbour brought appropriate containers and buckets of fresh flowers and greens. Several members contributed dried pods and stems from their gardens. The result was 25 varied and artistically beautiful professional style arrangements.

Marti is a self-taught flower arranger who started her career by selling bunches of flowers to workers, primarily men, as they left at the end of the day who apparently needed an apology gift for a wife or girlfriend. She built on requests for arranging the flowers to develop her career and expertise.

Following the workshop, everyone enjoyed a delicious and hearty lunch of three kinds of chili, three kinds of bread, and seasonal cupcakes, apple cake, and pumpkin squares. Apple cider and flavored Pellegrino were served throughout the morning.



Above: Marti Barbour explains the basics of flower arranging. Photo by Deb McCanne.



Leelee Harriman and Gayle Shugars select their flowers. Photo by Meg Ribotto.



From left: Susie Atwood selects flowers. Photo by Deb McCanne.

Guests serve themselves chili. Photo by Deb McCanne.

The enticing array of desserts. Photo by Meg Ribotto..



## How to Create an Arrangement

1. Soak a block of oasis overnight.
2. Using floral tape, secure the oasis to the bottom of the container. Add water to the bottom of the container when the arrangement is finished.
3. Poke small pieces of greenery into the oasis to hide it from view.
4. Consider three factors: proportion, balance, and color.
5. Place a featured flower in the center of the oasis.
6. Add coordinating flowers to the ends or corners of the container.
7. Fill in with greens, flowers, and dried pods or stems. Note: a floral pick can be wired to a pine cone or a flower with a weak stem to secure it to the oasis.



Above: Marti gives some tips to Lori Wells. Photo by Deb McCanne.



Debbie Hanson and Katherine Reppa plan to place a sunflower in their arrangement. Photo by Meg Ribotto..



Lynne Uhl shows off her finished centerpiece. Photo by Deb McCanne.



Carol Kirschner finishes her arrangement. Photo by Deb McCanne.



Above: Sandy Franklin begins her construction.



Joyce Harris finishes her arrangement. Photos by Deb McCanne.



# How Does Your Garden Grow?

## The Summer of 2025



by Lisa Singer

My property was full of surprises as usual. Overall, I was shocked because plants just didn't come up for soooo long, if at all. Most everything I did was direct seed into the ground. I attribute it to much more shade on my property due to tree growth. I also see that the rodents moved sunflower seeds from where I had planted them to unlikely places like the middle of the gravel driveway. But in general, growth was delayed, like poppies and hollyhocks coming up in August.



I think the only actual plants I planted were bee balm. They got rooted in, and I have high hopes for their beautiful flowers next year! The big winners of the year were the bush type marigolds. They were spectacular with their deep green foliage and two shades of rusty orange blooms. They were VERY satisfying and really held the gardens together.

I did manage to get my fruit out of the trees before the bears did. I call that a win! And no more broken branches!! I also planted potatoes in the ground for the first time.

That was pretty fun to dig them up and consume. But there seems to be some easier ways to grow potatoes, like in straw, which I might try out next year to make the endeavor less labor intensive.

All-in-all a decent growing season!

## Favorite Flowers

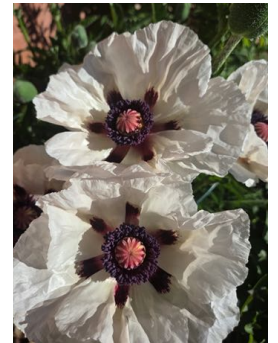
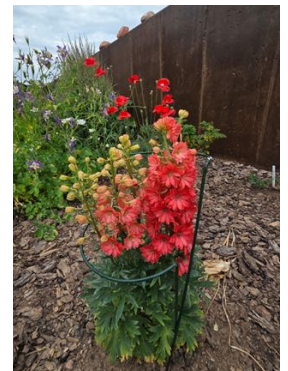


by Tora Routhier

Here are photos of my favorite flowers this summer. The garden is finally put to bed. There are always weeds to keep me on my knees and happy. The bee balm fed the hummingbirds first, then lots of bees, and finally little birds who would sit on the stalk and eat the seeds in the pods. That orange delphinium was pretty spectacular. One of my favorite plants is larkspur, and I was happy to see it pop up in two other places. The roses bloom all summer so that is great.

I battled aphids all summer. Because of all the nesting robins in our rafters, I could only use castile soap which I mixed with olive oil to get it to linger on the leaves. I spent way too many hours spraying rose leaves, columbine and lupine this season. I definitely knocked the majority out, so fingers crossed next summer won't be so bad.

Clockwise from top left: rose, orange delphinium, poppy, bee balm.  
Photos by Tara Routhier.



## Coming up

January 2026  
No Meeting

February 19, 2026 tentatively  
Annual Meeting  
Community Room  
Basalt Library



Garlic bulb painting by Lisa Singer.



## Executive Committee

President: Annie Runyan Worley  
Vice President: Lisa Singer  
Treasurer: Nancy Bobrow  
Secretary: Lynne Uhl

Communications Chair: Deborah McCanne

Membership Chair: Joyce Woltman

Program Co-chairs: Linda Hollomon, Susan Arenella

Hospitality Co-chairs: Jackie Doig, Debbie Hanson

The Valley Gardeners Newsletter is published six times a year  
January, March, May, July, September, and November.