

Summary of Suggestions & Comments from 2021 Gardener Survey

- The EVCG Board encourages gardeners to provide feedback and ask questions during the Orientation, clean-up days at the beginning and ending of gardening season, at educational programs and other Garden events, by email to evcg@evcg.org, and on the whiteboard or bulletin board at the Garden shed. This annual survey is an opportunity to comment at the end of each gardening season, anonymously unless the respondent opts to include contact information.
 - The 2021 survey was conducted online using Google Forms, opened for responses on November 2, 2021. All gardeners received an email with a link to the survey. Twenty-two responses were received, dated November 2-6, 2021.
 - **Thank you to the responding gardeners for taking time to complete the survey.**
 - Below are the survey questions, with gardener replies and EVCG Board responses.
1. What worked well for you in your garden? List specific crops/varieties, approaches or techniques, if applicable. 19 responses
 2. What did not work well for you in your garden? List specific crops/varieties, approaches or techniques, if applicable. 20 responses
 3. List your crops that were NOT damaged by rodents, if any: 20 responses
 4. List your crops that WERE damaged or destroyed by rodents, if any: 17 responses
 5. Did you have any insect problems this season? List the crop(s) damaged, if any, and name/type of insect if known: 17 responses

Questions 1 – 5: EVCG Board response - Please see the table at the end of this report for crop lists with notes. Specific comments about critter control and insects:

- Take the ground squirrels head on. What worked for us was broken and scattered eggshells, red pepper and garlic [“tea” made from these ingredients] around edge of plot – no problems.
- We had a raised plot [tall] so had no critter problems. [2 responses]
- Early and consistent rodent control is essential. Without control of the rodents, it is not worth trying to grow anything.
- Everything was damaged and pretty much wiped out initially by rodents. This was in spite of covering all my crops with covers and using the sonic vibrating pest repellents. Once there was better control of the rodents, my garden was able to rebound.
- While the sunflowers are beautiful, I am very concerned that they are attracting mice and rats hence the reason why I never put out bird seed at my home. I also do not want to attract bears.
- Obviously the rodents are a big pain.
- I had a slow start due to the critters...
- Almost nothing worked well due to the rodent issues.

- Most things leafy got destroyed by rodents early and couldn't make a comeback.
- Rodents destroyed young plants... it was frustrating and disappointing.
- Planted green beans twice and both times eaten down to the stems.
- Small aphid problem.
- Some type of small white bug/fly infested my Romaine lettuce.
- Green beans eaten by insects.
- No insect issues.

EVCG Board Response: For the 2022 season the EVCG Board has a high priority on planning critter management strategies and will involve gardeners in seeking and implementing effective and acceptable control measures.

6. What suggestions do you have for educational program topics? 11 responses

- Informal Q&A sessions at the Garden during early season **[This is being planned.]**
- Sharing with others what is working prior to planting season** **[See note at end of this report.]**
- Gardening 101 at high elevation **[Free Zoom is scheduled for 4/26/22 at 1 pm, presented by CSU Extension. Zoom link will be sent to all gardeners.]**
- Starting plants from seed indoors – when and how **[See evcg.org/Resources, click on "Seed Starting"]**
- What brand of seeds worked well for gardeners.
- Dealing with critters **[See EVCG Board Response above, after items 1-5]**
- Insect prevention/control.
- Watering – how much and when.

7. For educational programs held indoors at the Community Center, I prefer 19 responses - could select multiple choices

- Daytime 6; Evening 4; Weekday 3; Saturday 1
- I prefer Zoom events (at this time), 10
- No preference/flexible – 3

8. For outdoor events at the Garden, (Potluck, Clean-Up Days, social gatherings) I prefer: 18 responses - could select multiple choices

- Daytime 13; Evening 3; Weekday 5; Saturday 6
- Other 1 (usually doesn't matter; this year I was out of town...)

9. What suggestions, if any, do you have for improving your experience as a gardener? 13 responses [See Comments/Suggestions, below]

10. Any other comments you wish to make: 12 responses [See Comments/Suggestions, below]

Comments/Suggestions:

- The new watering system worked well.
- Watering. How much additional water is needed on the plots. I often need to water every day that the drip doesn't run. Not sure if it a drip system issue with my garden or climate problem.
- I also planted a few blocks of spinach and leaf lettuce in late March/early April and covered it with a thin row cover cloth. It survived despite hard freezes and several snowfalls. Germination and growth were slow until the weather warmed up, but I was harvesting a couple weeks earlier than when I had planted in late April/early May in previous years.
- The soil was slow in warming up.
- In spite of the slow start, it turned out better than it seemed going in.
- Effectively manage the rodent problem as it has become worse every year.
- It seems some gardeners do not understand how to garden. I would be happy to help them select things that will grow and how to care for them.
- To improve my gardening experience, I need to:
 - Start seeds, add a barrier for rodents, visit garden more often.
 - Plant more closely.
 - Get hail cloth and close off my plot to keep the critters out.
- Squash, tomatoes and other spreading or vine-type plants should be towards the center of the plot, not at the edges where they creep into neighboring plot and pathways.
- Thank you for all your assistance! I do appreciate the wind screen on the west side of the garden. It makes a big difference in preventing wind damage and dehydration of my crops.
- It is wonderful to have a place to garden. Everything is so well managed to make each year a special adventure as to what will grow the best.
- Disappointing season, but will try again next year.
- Love the garden, observing other gardens and all the hard work everyone does.
- I love every aspect of how the garden is ran! It is wonderful and we enjoy it so much. Sad to see so many gardeners not harvest their crops and let them go to waste.

11. If you want a response to any of your comments or suggestions, please provide your name and email. If you do not want a response, please leave this blank. 2 responses; **Board has responded.**

2021 Gardener Survey - Crops with both successful and unsuccessful reports – See the table on page 4, below.

| 2021 Gardener Survey - Crops with both successful and unsuccessful reports** | |
|---|--|
| Successful Crops Listed by Gardeners | Unsuccessful Crops Listed by Gardeners |
| | Basil - |
| Beans – not eaten by critters | Beans, green – destroyed by critters, some insect problems, late to germinate so never caught up |
| Beets – Detroit Red | Beets – eaten by critters |
| Carrots | Carrots – eaten by critters |
| Chard | Chard – eaten by critters |
| Herbs: parsley, lavender, basil, dill, borage, mint [PLEASE NOTE: MINT IS INVASIVE – plant in a container and be prepared to pull out runners ruthlessly!] | Herbs: Basil, red mustard (bolted) |
| Lettuce – many leaf types | Lettuce – eaten by critters during summer |
| Onions – sweet – not eaten by critters | Onions – soft; was that too much water? |
| Peas – Sugar snap; some reports of no critter damage | Peas - Snow, snap, podding – low production; some seeds eaten by critters |
| Radishes | Radishes |
| Squash – yellow, zucchini | Squash - zucchini |
| Strawberries – not eaten by critters | Strawberries – eaten by critters |
| Tomatoes – not eaten by critters in tall plot; cherry tomatoes did well | Tomatoes – eaten by critters in low plot |
| Crops with only successful reports | Crops with only problem reports |
| Arugula | Broccoli – eaten by critters |
| | Cucumber – Burpee Picklebush not disease-resistant as advertised; also bitter |
| Garlic – not eaten by critters | |
| Potatoes | Kale – eaten by critters |
| Sorrel | Peppers – better than last year but did not thrive due to cool weather |
| Tomatillo | Spinach – eaten by critters |
| Flowers – Dahlia, zinnia, bachelor button, calendula, snap dragon | Tomatoes – started late |

**See evcg.org/Resources under Specific Crops for “Plants That Can Be Grown in Estes Park”, and under Weeds, Diseases & Pests for info about common ones in the Community Garden.