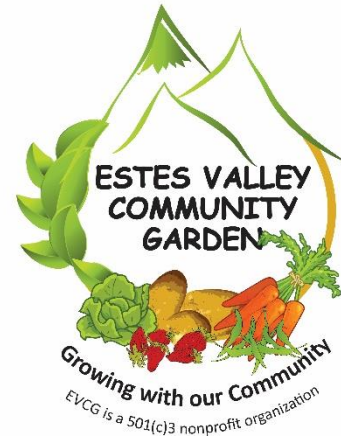


Estes Valley Community Garden - 2023 Annual Report

It was a good but challenging year in the Garden. Spring weather did not cooperate. March and April saw snow and late-May and early-June (prime seeding season) saw unpredicted rain. The weather delayed our Spring startup efforts. And it impacted the number of volunteers and volunteer training that usually occurs for water monitoring, pest control, and garden appearance initiatives.



But despite these difficulties, largely due to the herculean efforts of a few highly dedicated volunteers, Wyoming Ground Squirrels were largely kept in check (having caught and removed far fewer in 2023 than 2022). Pollinator beds were well maintained. The garden was continuously mowed and maintained. Garden plots were kept well irrigated.

An upcoming challenge for the 2024 growing season will be to find and implement better controls for pocket gophers and voles who love fresh veggies. September and October saw an “explosion” of voles in the garden. Voles are particularly difficult to remove since (unlike Wyoming ground squirrels) collapsing vole tunnels usually only serve to move the voles to the next garden plot. We continue to search for and use more effective means of dealing with this situation.

We welcomed new gardeners for 20 of the 91 plots. There were 17 sponsored plots: 12 individual plots for low-income gardeners, 3 for Crossroads, 2 for the Elementary School Garden Club.

In 2023 we started collaborating with Estes Park Garden Club, sharing invitations to each group’s programs and events. We continued the Garden’s annual donations of produce to Crossroads Ministry’s Food Pantry. We held a wonderful potluck and bar-b-que in August which was described as the best attended ever. We conducted an open house in September. We’ve started a “seed sharing initiative” with the Estes Valley Library that will go into full swing for the 2024 growing season. We’re hopeful of hosting more in-person programs and events in 2024.

The year 2023 will go down as one of the most eventful ever for the EVCG Board of Directors. During the past year, four board members (three of whom were office holders) resigned. This has resulted in a board that for the first time does not have a sitting founding member. Although the loss of years of service and history will no doubt be felt, the situation has also created an unprecedented opportunity for the new board. If you are interested in becoming a new board member and would like to shape the future of the EVCG, we’d love to hear from you.

Perhaps the most exciting thing that occurred to the EVCG this year was the winning of a \$7,636 grant from the Village Thrift Store (VTS). The grant is being used to build twenty raised beds to assist senior gardeners. These beds will allow seniors to garden without bending over to reach the ground. The raised garden beds employ a new and innovative design that features a concrete block foundation filled with gravel to deter ground squirrels, voles, and other burrowing rodents.



Figure 1 Volunteers Working on a beautiful fall day.

The project is approximately 80% complete and will be finalized in the Spring before the start of the 2024 growing season. The final steps will be to add a final mixed layer of soil, mulch, and compost to each bed, as well as to connect the beds to the garden irrigation system. To date, over 500 volunteer hours have been spent on the project.

The EVCG Board of Directors would like to thank the following, who have made this project possible: The 28 garden members who contributed

personal tools and labor to the work effort; The YMCA Elevate Gap Program and Eagle Rock School students who unselfishly contributed their valuable time and labor to the project; The Estes Valley Recreation and Parks District (EVRPD) for providing the gas generator that was needed for construction; and Ms. Erinn Wharton's Middle School horticulture class for their interest in our project and desire to learn more about gardening.

The EVCG Board once again thanks the generous donors, plot sponsors, volunteers, and of course our wonderful gardeners, for making the Garden a success in this eighth year of operation.

You can contact us at evcg@evcg.org, or learn more about the Garden at evcg.org.



Figure 2 YMCA Elevate Gap Program

2023 Statement of Activities				
		Planned	Actual	Variance
Unrestricted Revenue and Expenses				
Revenue				
	Plot rental fees	4,400.00	4,500.00	100.00
	Sponsorships	1,020.00	880.00	(140.00)
	Other Donations	40.00	40.00	0.00
	Grants (Unrestricted)		249.31	249.31
			0.00	0.00
Total Unrestricted Revenue		5,460.00	5,669.31	209.31
Expenses				
General & Administrative	State registration	20.00	20.00	0.00
	Insurance	1,300.00	1,273.00	27.00
	PO box rental	175.00	188.00	(13.00)
	Website & email fees	275.00	168.00	107.00
	Zoom account	200.00	172.71	27.29
	EVRPD rent	1.00	4.00	(3.00)
	Banking expense	105.33	109.45	(4.12)
	Misc		0.00	0.00
Total Gen & Admin		2,076.33	1,935.16	141.17
Garden Operations	Water	1,400.00	1,184.39	215.61
	Mowing & trimming	100.00	100.46	(0.46)
	Pest control	635.00	166.54	468.46
	Green waste service	100.00	337.56	(237.56)
	Plot preparation	1,200.00	46.00	1,154.00
	Low plot replacement (5)	550.00	851.97	(301.97)
	Drip System	50.00	0.00	
	Misc	300.00	245.08	54.92
Total Garden Operations		4,335.00	2,932.00	1,403.00
Events & Publicity	Publicity	50.00	0.00	50.00
	Treats for Opening & Closing	50.00	0.00	50.00
	Food & Drink for potluck	100.00	81.74	18.26
	Misc		0.00	0.00
	Total Events & Publicity		200.00	81.74
Total Unrestricted Expenses		6,611.33	4,948.90	1,662.43
Total Unrestricted Variances		(1,151.33)	720.41	1,871.74