

we locate ours in areas where cats can't easily hide. We still lose some birds to wandering cats, but at least the birds have some chance of escaping the cats.

Water is as important as food for birds, but a note of caution: Water should not be allowed to stagnate, because birds (and people) are susceptible to the West Nile virus spread by mosquitoes that breed in standing water.

Landscaping

As you might imagine, feeding and watering is maintenance intense. A more sustainable method is to landscape with trees, shrubs, and flowers to naturally attract birds and butterflies. It's more sustainable because the birds won't leave when you're on vacation.

Trees

For most songbirds, the rigors of survival take place under cover, so providing cover increases the possibility of them nesting in your yard. First, consider where you live and what types of plants are already in your area and established in your yard. Micro-climates, sun angle, and soil and moisture conditions vary considerably between Gleneagle and Palmer Lake.

On the Divide, coniferous trees that tend to be must

successful are the ponderosa pine, Colorado spruce, and cedar. All provide good cover and a source of food for birds. Deciduous trees that attract birds include scrub oak, mountain ash, hawthorn, serviceberry, American plum, and crabapple, most of which will require supplemental watering. Due to fire danger here, it is recommended that trees be planted at least 30 feet away from a structure.

Shrubs

Many songbirds nest at the edge of a forest in shrubs that grow between open meadows and tall trees. They provide cover for nesting birds to hide from predators. My favorite ornamental shrubs is the old-style French lilac, which is not on any bird lists but I'm amazed at the diversity of birds and butterflies that are attracted to it in summer and winter. This variety grows tall and can be shaped into a small tree.

Other shrubs for consideration include junipers, gamble oak, sumac, chokecherry, Korean lilac, honeysuckle, viburnum, dogwood, and spirea. All shrubs attract birds, so plant the ones that will survive in your yard.

Flowers

Our variety of native wildflowers is one reason birds fly to the Palmer Divide. Flowers provide nectar and attract insects: both are necessary for nesting songbirds. We use a wildflower mix formulated for our area. Some flowers must be reseeded annually while others, like blue flax, reappear each spring.

Over the years, we have planted many perennials and continue to try new ones. Some of my favorites include daylily, coneflower, aster, Russian sage, delphinium, yarrow, salvia, iceplant, soapwort, and the list goes on. We have found that the hummer's favorite flower is monarda, often called bee balm.

We are always looking for new ways to attract birds, but sometimes a bird will just show up for no apparent reason. Why the great horned owl came to John's yard or the pileated woodpecker stopped in our yard is anyone's guess!

Elizabeth Hacker is a writer and artist. E-mail her at elizabethhacker@ocn.me to share bird pictures and stories.

High Altitude Nature and Gardens (HANG)

Protect soil for best results

By Janet Sellers

Garden friends: fungi, forests and sunflowers

Warm days are here, so we can finally put in our spring and early summer plants snow-free! Many sow seeds or plants for summer now. Do protect the soil fungi for success. Soil is a living material that has minerals and organisms with gases and water in between. My favorite helper is aged live compost.

Ja Schindler, researcher at Fungi for the People, says, "Many factors determine the balance of organisms, and the fate of the soil itself. In Nature, the water content, temperature, and pH control the direction of ongoing activities. Anthropocentrically speaking, human activity and interest often affect the fate, as we have invested interests in soil and its health."

The health of the soil begets the richest support for our gardens and proven results. Plants and fungi have evolved over millions of years together to create their relationship of plant and microbe diversity. Our forests and wild places are intact ecosystems that are home to

the greatest gene pool for this; most are yet to be studied because our understanding of fungi has been based on cultivated mushrooms.

Did you know plants can help heal the soil? Sunflowers at the Fukushima nuclear accident site and rafts of sunflowers floating in the pond at the Chernobyl nuclear accident site decontaminate the areas of cesium, and will be disposed of safely. The search is on for bioremediation for glyphosate contamination from herbicides such as Roundup.

Dr. Stephanie Seneff, senior research scientist at MIT, in recent years has coauthored a number of papers exploring links between glyphosate and human health problems. The glyphosate goes through the plant, to the roots and into the soil, effectively killing the plant but also the vital microorganisms in the soils, and available evidence shows the harm going to the human gut biome as well. Penn State University has made studies on successful organic herbicides that are safe around kids and pets that use a compound of vinegar and clove oil (cin-

namon oil also works).

The safest removal for garden weeds is to hand pick them or mow to 4-6 inches before they flower. As a green mulch, this length of grass or weeds protects soil from wind and water, is good between raised beds, and will slow weed propagation.

Pretty but deadly plants in our local hiking areas: death camas, western water hemlock, larkspur, locoweed, lupine, poison oak, poison ivy, sumac, and myrtle spurge in Woodmoor roadsides. Wearing protective clothing, remove by hand weeding.

Also, the Palmer Lake noxious weed group meets at 9 a.m. on the second and fourth Saturdays at the Town Hall.

Janet Sellers is an avid nature and garden enthusiast. For local high-altitude nature and garden information collected just for you, visit [facebook.com/Monument-CommunityGarden](https://www.facebook.com/Monument-CommunityGarden). Janet can be reached at JanetSellers@ocn.me.

Art Matters

Outdoor art and nature



By Janet Sellers

This time of year, we can go outdoors on most days—or the sunny parts of them—and hike, paint, or photograph to our heart's content. I take mental pictures as I walk, and in my paintings I can edit things into and out of the art.

The amazing part is that in painting out of doors, plein air, the art is vastly different than when done from a photo or indoors in the studio. There are urgency and vibrancy to the art, not to mention the fact that the sunshine offers true colors to the viewer, and for the artist that means better use of light and color. And an overcast day is also a good day to paint or photograph art or people, as the colors are true and the shadows are becoming to the subject.

I've been working on a series of forest paintings, very big ones and very small ones, and researching forest habitat and health as I do it. I've always found that creativity in art and creativity in life are closely related. Both require adaptation, resilience, imagination, and support to thrive. The forest has shown me the same motivations, in great harmony and constant activity. Our forests support our wildlife and offer us recreation and peace, all the while with a mysterious beauty to consider.

Our May 18 Art Hop was snowed out by a foot of snow, so four local arts venues created an art evening the following Thursday and there were a surprising number of attendees. I dropped by Bella Art and Frame to visit with photographer Kim McFadden-Effinger. We chatted about her recent travels to Honduras on behalf of a water project. Fluent in Spanish, she had been a Peace Corps volunteer in El Salvador and had worked in Mexico City. Her current exhibit displays aspects of her travels and her keen eye for the intimacies of daily life in the places she's visited.

Art events

Art Hop is a monthly art event on the third Thursday of each summery month in Historic Monument, like a pop-up art fair. We'll showcase these and local arts venues.

Art Hop: Act 2 DIY from thrift shop finds. 245 N. Jefferson St.

Bella Art and Frame Gallery, June 1-26, Douglas Mann art exhibit. 183 Washington St.

Santa Fe Trail Jewelry, June 15, Local Artists Pop Up shop; Janet Sellers demonstrates plein air watercolors in the courtyard. 106 Second St.

Janet Sellers is a Colorado artist, writer, and teacher. Her artworks are exhibited in Colorado cities and galleries; she teaches art locally. JanetSellers@ocn.me



Above: From left, Steve Castle, Donna Merrifield, Kim McFadden-Effinger, and Maggie Williamson talk about McFadden-Effinger's travels and her photography show at Bella Art and Frame. *Photo by Janet Sellers*

Snapshots of Our Community

Pine Forest Show gets better with age

By Harriet Halbig

The 41st annual Pine Forest Show and Sale, sponsored by the Tri-Lakes Women's Club, was held on May 6 and 7 at Lewis-Palmer High School.

The show has grown and evolved through the years from a handmade craft show and an antiques show to its newest iteration, which includes antiques, plants for the garden, home décor, artwork, bird feeders, glass repair, and food trucks. The ever-popular bake shop featured a variety of items prepared by club members.

The club supports the activities of local schools and organizations through a grant program funded by this show and other events. This year's show featured 85 vendors and earned about \$20,000. Attendance was estimated at 736. The show was co-chaired by Andrea Keough and Cindi Monahan. ■



Above: Second Vice President of Special Events Andrea Keough, left, and Bakery Chair Becky Hassler pose in the bake shop during the show. *Photo by Harriet Halbig.*