

I don't know how it happened, but here we are and spring of 2012 is around the corner. It's time to plan this year's garden and none too early to start seeds indoors. This is the best time to reflect on what worked last season, and of course what didn't, in guiding your gardening thumb.

This season I am going to try something different and focus on planting heirloom seeds. Heirloom seeds were developed through open pollination and date back to 1950 or earlier; some have existed since ancient times.

Heirloom vegetables may not look as pretty as the produce we find in the grocery store, but the flavor is said to surpass anything found there. Heirloom vegetables will bruise easier and can't be stored fresh for long periods of time, but I still want to give them a try. Without getting into the politics of seeds, heirlooms are the best way to preserve the biodiversity of plants. A little known fact about heirlooms is that they require less water than hybrid varieties. Under-watered hybrids will shrivel and die, where heirlooms will produce a smaller yield rather than die off when water is in short supply.

Heirlooms go hand in hand with seed saving and seed exchanges. Last year with the help of one of our master gardeners, Sally Berriman, the Arvada Gardeners held their first ever seed exchange. We started small but I envision this growing (pun intended) in the future. Thank you Sally.

The Arvada Gardeners and the Arvada Community Garden, with the help from grants from the Colorado Garden and Home Show, have improved access to the garden over the last two years. Eight raised garden beds were installed as were handrails to make accessing the garden easier for everybody. We will continue to improve the garden which will contribute to a better gardening experience by allowing more folks to participate.

I look forward to seeing old friends and making new ones.

Keith Sorci