



Mesa Conservation District Partners with the Mesa County Library's Discovery Garden Project.

THE GARDEN BLOSSOMS IN TWO SHORT YEARS



In 2018, the Mesa County Central Library in Grand Junction, Colorado established the Discovery Garden. From its inception, Mesa Conservation District has been an integral partner in the project.

The Discovery Garden is a project that aims to address fundamental conservation issues within a high desert environment. The importance of this project lies within its capabilities of reaching a wide variety of audiences and imparting tangible concepts about how to save money, create a beautiful productive landscape, and establish conservation practices at home. The mission is to bring these concepts to the patrons of the Mesa County Library District and will be a living classroom providing educational programs, cooperative projects, and experiential learning for a variety of audiences.

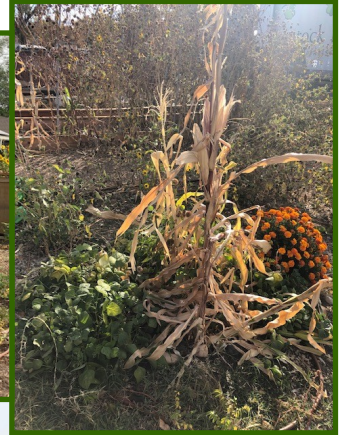


2020 brought great progress to the Discovery Garden even with COVID-19 effecting our ability to recruit volunteers during much of the spring and summer.

Above: Discovery Garden prospered during the summer, 2020.

Right: Garden location in 2017.

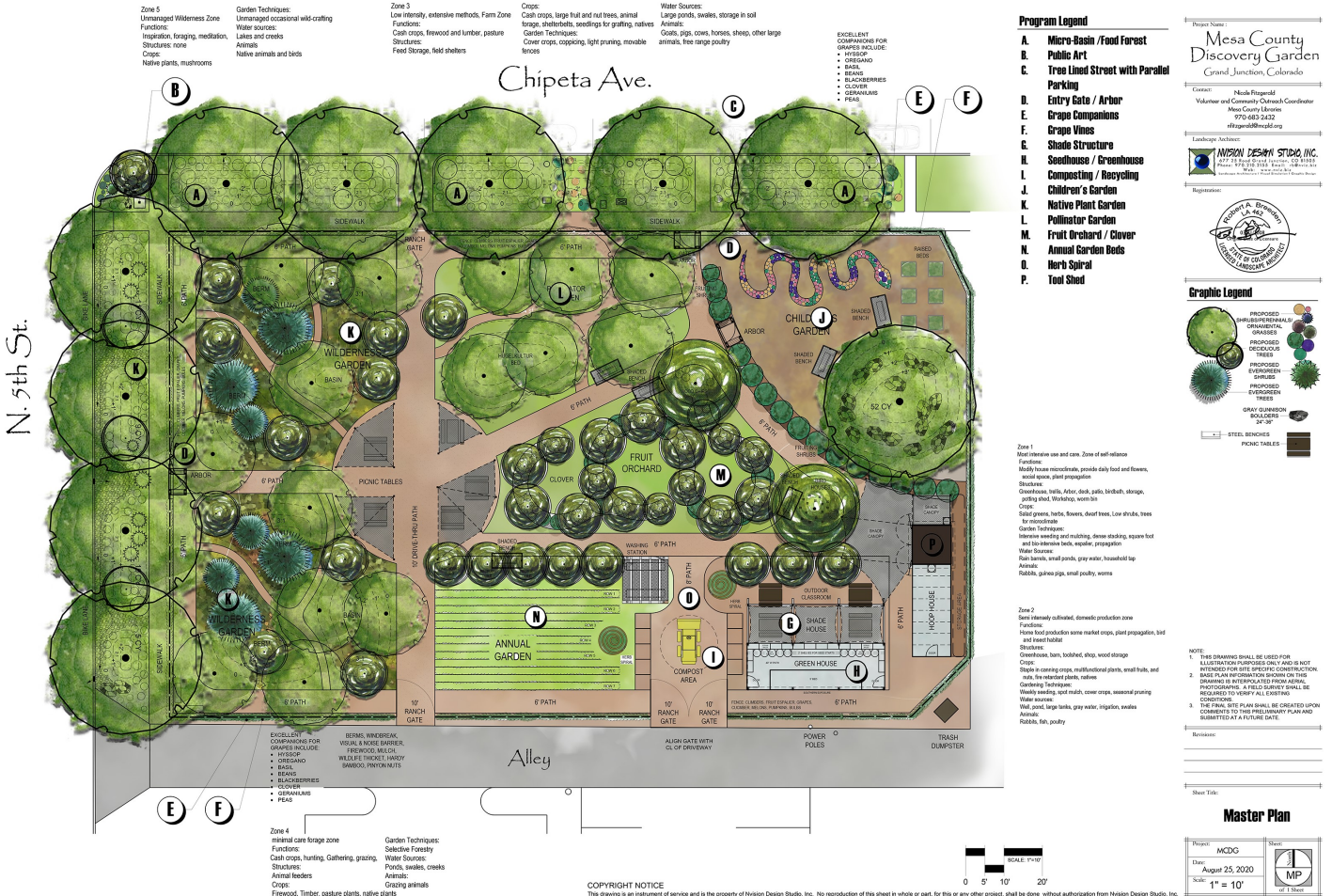






EXTENDING OUR EDUCATIONAL REACH

DISCOVERY GARDEN MASTER PLAN



The Discovery Garden is developing toward a mature garden. In the 3/4 acre space there are several different demonstration gardens including a Children's garden which contains a sensory garden and raised bed gardening, a pollinator garden which demonstrates how to attract pollinating birds and insects to a hügelkultur, xeric landscape, native plants, and local DIY store plantings, an uncommon fruit orchard, a vegetable garden including 3 Sisters Beds, a compost area, and a hoop house to allow growing earlier and later in the seasons.

Written explanations of each area of the garden including plant identification, plus information on how a person might integrate the specific style or method into their own home space is included, plus pertinent website, video, and library resource suggestions are included where appropriate in our Virtual Garden Tour. Available at MesaCD.com, a visitor may access these educational snippets while in the garden or at home.

Virtual Tours topics cover Children's Garden, Raised Bed Gardening, Sensory Gardens, Pollinator Garden, Xeriscape, Hügelkultur, Composting, Compost Tea, Vermiculture, Bioswales (Micro-basins), Three Sisters Beds, Soil Health, Cover Crop, Irrigation, the Hoop House, Solar Energy, Art in the Garden, and the Mesa Conservation District. Because of the interactive nature of the Discovery Garden, we can add and adapt the information in these tours to grow with the garden.



FIRST MICRO-BASIN (BIOSWALE) INSTALLED IN 2020



It Works! March 2020, rain runoff flows into freshly dug bioswale on Chipeta Avenue.



Above: Drains, gravel, soil, mulch, and irrigation lines are installed. Left & Below: Spring of 2020 the City of GJ planted two trees in bioswale, by summer all was thriving.



Left: Illustration of cross-cut bioswale construction.



MAKING PUBLIC SPACE PRODUCTIVE!

The 15 feet between the back of curbing and sidewalks, referred to as “City Right-of-Way”, along 5th Street and Chipeta Avenue, will be reconstructed as shallow basins where new curb cuts will allow storm water to flow into landscaped areas.

BENEFITS OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE

- Urban runoff typically sent into a drain pipe and delivered elsewhere will now be utilized as irrigation water to support plant life.
- Restores a critical component of the rain cycle and hydrology in the urban setting.
- Storing water in the soil creates a long-term storage bank of water for food-producing plants to utilize during seasonal periods of drought.
- Create complex plant diversity:
 - ≈ Install shade trees to reduce the urban heat island effect, reduce soil moisture evaporation, and provide bird habitat.
 - ≈ Fruiting trees & shrubs for food.
 - ≈ Perennial plants (cover crops) as companions for fertility and to attract pollinators.
- Install wood mulch as a winter blanket of warmth, a summer barrier from sun and wind, and as a source of food for microbes.
- Smart irrigation:
 - ≈ soil moisture sensor to determine exactly when water is needed.
 - ≈ Eliminate guesswork.
 - ≈ Automated irrigation controller and valves.