



# YAMPA RIVER BOTANIC PARK

## About the Park

Mission: "A place of serenity celebrating the trees, shrubs, plants and birds of the Yampa Valley."

Gardening at 6,800 ft (2,000 m) in the mountains is a challenge. Winter snowfall averages 180 inches (15 ft/4.6 m) and blankets the ground from November to April. Annual precipitation of 24 inches (2 ft/70 cm) comes mostly as snow, with little summer rain. Winter temperatures get down to minus 30°F (minus 35°C) and summers may have only two months without a killing frost. The Park is in USDA Hardiness Zone 4. Native plants thrive here as do high altitude and high latitude plants from other parts of the world. The Park has 500 trees and 60 gardens, many sponsored by individuals and organizations.

The Yampa River, for which the Park is named, runs from the Flattop Mountains at 12,000 ft (3,700 m) to its confluence with the Green River at 5,100 ft (1,600 m) in Dinosaur National Monument.

The Park charges no entrance fee because its operations are entirely funded by the voluntary contributions of its members,

garden sponsors and donors. It is a City park but there is no direct City funding. However, the City provides banking, office and vehicle maintenance work, creating a remarkable private/public partnership for the Park.

A parcel of flat land was donated to the City in 1992 by a local couple who constructed the Park with their own funds in 1995-97. It was opened to the public in 1997 and since the year 2000 has been managed by the Yampa River Botanic Park Association. This is a group of dedicated local citizens who work many volunteer hours in the gardens and help solicit funds to employ our outstanding and dedicated staff.

### Serenity and Design Vision

An urban oasis, free from traffic, commercials and the engineered society. The Park's design avoids straight lines, the paths twist and turn, the gardens are three-dimensional, the ponds are free-form and clusters of trees filter out the sounds of traffic.

## Membership

Become a member online at [yvcf.org/park](http://yvcf.org/park)

Memberships and gifts are tax-deductible. You can have the satisfaction of knowing you have taken action to sustain the Park if you become a member at one of these levels:

- ☐ Glacier Lily .....\$30 - \$99
- ☐ Columbine.....\$100 - \$499
- ☐ Trillium.....\$500 - \$999
- ☐ Sunflower.....\$1,000 - \$4,999
- ☐ Shooting Star .....\$5,000 - \$9,999
- ☐ Sego Lily .....\$10,000 - \$19,999
- ☐ Forget-Me-Not .....\$20,000+
- ☐ Business Supporter .....\$100+
- ☐ Garden Sponsor .....\$900+

Or, mail your donation.

Make checks payable to "Yampa River Botanic Park"

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Billing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Amount enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Yampa River Botanic Park  
PO Box 776269, Steamboat Springs, CO 80477

*Thank you. Your donation helps keep the Park free for all.*

### Contact Us

Phone: 970.846.5172

Email: [Info@yrbp.org](mailto:Info@yrbp.org)

Visit our Website: [yampariverbotanicpark.org](http://yampariverbotanicpark.org)

Join us for "Social Gardening" every Wednesday 9 – noon.

## Self-Guided Garden Tour

The neighborhoods below are color-coded to the map (over). The Tour starts from the Main Entrance, goes south and clockwise round the Park then to the center. Throughout the gardens are native pine trees, spruces, firs, junipers, cottonwoods, aspens and non-native fruit trees. Most of the plants here are perennials. Most plants are labelled.

### Hummingbird Neighborhood

The **Butterfly Garden** features plants on which butterflies feed or lay their eggs.

The **Hummingbird Garden** has flowers that attract these tiny birds, mostly

broad-tailed. They arrive in the summer to breed and in August they migrate 1,000 miles to return to the mountains of Mexico. The **Crevice Garden** displays plants growing between vertical rock faces as they do naturally in the nearby mountains.

### Rainbow Neighborhood

Each of the **Color Gardens** has flowers of a different color. Some annuals are used to maintain color throughout the season. The west-facing **Tranquility**

**Garden** has two benches with views of Emerald Mountain and the Yampa Valley.

### Wind Neighborhood

Continue south to the **Medicinal Herbs, Culinary Herbs** and **Sensory Gardens**. Beyond is **Windigo Garden** and the Wind Sculpture, which has

turned continuously since 1998. The **Waterwise Garden** features dryland plants of the intermountain west. Enjoy **September Charm**, the grove of aspen trees and the **Garden for All Seasons** with its sandstone blocks from the mountains near Rocky Mountain National Park. Follow Loop Walk to see the **Pioneer Garden**, featuring plants that the early settlers brought across the prairies.

### Reflecting Neighborhood

Wander left to see the **Hidden Garden**, shaded by tall native cottonwood trees that were here before the Park.

Above it are the gardens around the Reflecting Pond: the **Reflecting Garden**, the **Grove Garden** and the **Penstemon Garden**. The ponds' source of water is Fish Creek, a half-mile away and the water travels in a ditch through other properties, a right protected by Colorado water law.

### Natives Neighborhood

The adjacent **Painter's Garden** features plants that grow in the niches between large rocks on this cool north-facing slope, but the Secret Trail is only

for the agile. Next is the **High Country Natives Garden** which has thickets of native shrubs and plants from the surrounding mountains and is left to grow fairly wild. At the end of this garden, backtrack to Jeff's Walk.

### Trillium Neighborhood

The high wooden fence provides privacy for the Park's neighbors. **Jeff's Garden** climbs the south-facing bank and has volcanic rocks from the flanks of the Flat

Top Mountains, a crevice area, troughs and tufa rock. Beyond the stands of evergreens is **Trillium House**, the Park's headquarters, named for the three-petalled flowers that push up through the snow in nearby mountains in spring. Here are restrooms, the Park Office and Resource Center. The Emerald Room and the patio are used for small functions, and may be rented. **Carol's Garden** sits in the rocks on the west side of the building facing the Yampa River. From the Patio, walk up to enjoy the Eagle Garden.

### Foliage Neighborhood

Follow the South Ridge Trail to Loop Walk and turn left to **Lynne's Garden**, where the Wolf is resting among columbine flowers and aspen trees.

Around the corner the **Foliage Garden** was planted to provide a mosaic of textures. To the left of the gate is the **Spring Bulbs Garden**, a riot of color in May and June.

### Kiosk Neighborhood

To the right of the gate is a ridge and **Sascha's Rock Garden** with a profusion of rocks and rock plants from around the world. Sit on the bench above to enjoy

the Yampa River flowing by. Beside the kiosk is the **Rose Garden** with the few shrub roses that can survive in this climate. Cross the bridge and turn right to see the potentillas beside the creek and take a look at the **Cactus Garden** opposite. As you walk towards the shed, do not miss the **Fairy Garden** and all of its treasures.

### Members Neighborhood

Beyond the shed, on the left is **Dorothy's Garden** filled with native species. Above sits a bench with a ramada overlooking Emerald Mountain. On the right is the

**Members Rock Garden**, the largest garden in the Park. It gets full sun, but large rocks and gravel trap moisture to permit many interesting rock plants to grow.

### North Neighborhood

North of the Members Garden, between the arches, is the **Childrens Garden**. It contains a covered amphitheater, a constructive play table called

**Stumpyland**, a play house and a teepee covered in hops. Beyond are vegetable gardens for the staff and **Junior Master Gardeners** and raised beds which are planted by members of **Community Cultivation**, a local non-profit. The north-facing slope to your right has a stand of sub-alpine and Douglas fir trees.

### Sundial Neighborhood

Returning to the Main Entrance turn right to the flat gardens beyond the Y. The first garden you will see is the colorful **Corner Garden** and beyond it

the **Lily Garden** with a mixture of tall Colorado native lilies and showy oriental lilies. Beside the sundial, the **Yin Yang Garden** showcases unusual shrubs and grasses. The **Sundial Garden** is a miniature alpine landscape using tufa rock and the **Subalpine Garden** showcases dwarf shrubs. The **Shrub Garden** provides shade for the unusual fall crocus that leaf out in spring but display their bright pink blossoms leafless in September. Next, **Doris' Arbor Garden** features a variety of plants providing blooms most of the year and an arbor decorated with roses and clematis.

### Green Neighborhood

Think of **The Green** as a theater. The pines, spruces and firs are the walls, the grass is the seating. Peter's Pond and surrounding trees and benches are the

scenery. The stage is ready! The Green is the venue for Music-on-the-Green (in season Thursdays at 12:15 pm) as well as yoga classes, theater and opera. It is available for beautiful weddings and other events each summer.

### Pond Neighborhood

**Peter's Pond** is shaded by native narrowleaf cottonwood trees. To avoid a killing frost, the **Annuals Garden** is not planted until June, which is when

the water lilies begin to flourish in the warmer water. The water from Fish Creek has now travelled through three ponds and from here it will travel under the Loop Walk, under the bridge, through a wetland into the Yampa River, then the Green and the great Colorado River. It will be tap water for Phoenix, irrigate vegetables in California and a trickle may enter Mexico's Gulf of California.

**Park Memberships:** North America Rock Garden Society; American Public Gardens Association. The Park has a "Plant Select" demonstration garden and gets valuable support from the Denver Botanic Gardens.



## MAP

& Self-Guided Tour  
**FREE ADMISSION**  
Steamboat Springs, Colorado



**Park Hours:**  
Dawn to Dusk, May 1 - October 31  
yampariverbotanicpark.org



**Self-Guided Garden Tour**  
Neighborhoods are groups of gardens, each with its own story (over).

**Plant label key**  
Common Name  
Genus & Species  
Family  
N  
'N' = Native to Northwest Colorado

**Label colors**  
Black/White - Perennials  
Rose - Annuals  
Blue - Shrubs  
Green - Trees

**Legend**  
= Bench  
= Footpath  
= Steps  
= Sculpture  
= Osprey Viewing  
Scale: 20' 15' 10' 5' 0' 20'