

Gary and Cindy Mass
1118 Merriman Place

Welcome to our home! We have had a garden for 47 years. Between 1967-1969, I was a young, naïve Peace Corps volunteer in Nepal, on the border with India, in a tropical environment. I worked as an agriculture extension agent to help increase production of rice, wheat and corn for food security. Ever since then, I have been interested in organic food production and more natural yard care.

We moved to Longmont in 2016, after living in Kansas City for 40 years. The climate in Longmont demands a different form of cultivation, living in a high desert with a two-month shorter growing season.

The front and west side of the house had the drainage toward our window wells. I quickly decided to change the slope and content of the yards. I hired a Skidster and removed 8 dump truck loads of roots and stumps, then placed 30 cubic yards of topsoil. The front was then graded smoothly from the home to the street. This gave us an opportunity to start fresh with plants that thrived in this environment.

When you start at the curb, looking at our home, you will notice the shade from the morning sun comes up half of the front yard. By early afternoon, the shade from the western sun gradually covers the front yard. The area near the street is the hottest. Water-wise plants were planed next to the driveway and the areas closest to the sidewalks. I tried to plant many plants from the list that Plant Select Colorado has researched. This is a wonderful effort shared with the Denver Botanical Gardens, CSU agriculture extension, many local growers, and cooperating horticulturalists from many nations.

Plant Select Statement: “Every Plant Select plant endures a rigorous eight-point selection process: to thrive in a broad range of conditions; to flourish with less water; to be tough and resilient in challenging climates; to be one of a kind/unique; to be disease/insect resistant; to be habitat friendly; to have long-lasting beauty; to be non-invasive.”

The center of the yard has a grass called, “Dog Tuff” grass that is only mowed at the beginning of May to remove the prior season’s summer thatch. The grass is sterile, so its thatch can easily be used as a mulch under strawberries.

Some of the plants have a culinary use or medicinal application, such as lavender, varieties of sage, Artemisia, hyssops, and mint. Swiss chard, kale, collard greens and broccoli are easily planted within the front yard.

From the mailbox along the driveway area, the plants were chosen to give a soft feeling to the landscape.

As you enter the backyard, you will see a peach tree surrounded by culinary herbs that can be dried or used fresh.

The greenhouse is a 26 feet diameter, 12 feet tall geodesic dome from Growing Spaces Company. This greenhouse is supported by a ground to air heat transfer system that helps to heat it in the winter and cool it in the summer. This provides for a semitropical climate in the dome, to grow banana, papaya, citrus fruit, Moringa, vegetables and herbs. The 1200 gallon fish tank is kept at 70 degrees minimum year round.

Next, you will see another patch of no mow "Dog Tuff" grass. There are a total of 6 rows of vegetables, plus 2 rows of raspberries. There are grapes on the back fence. Terraces are filled with blackberries, strawberries, bush cherries and fruit trees. As you exit the back yard, you will go past Jujube trees (Chinese red date). The fruit has many health benefits.

Thank you for visiting our gardens and supporting the Longmont Symphony.