

The Dirt

WINTER 2025



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MONTROSE BOTANICAL SOCIETY



Pumpkin and Edelweiss, a team of Gypsy horses owned by Syneva and Sid Blatchford, await their next wagonful of eager event attendees.

Garden of Lights a Glowing Success

The Montrose Botanic Gardens were decked out for the holidays, welcoming the community to the **Garden of Lights** on the nights of December 14-15, 21-22 and 26. The five-night event drew over 5,000 people into the Gardens – equivalent to 24% of the population of the City of Montrose!

In addition to hundreds of strings of lights along garden paths and displays, other highlights of the event included horse-drawn wagon rides, a close-up photo opportunity at the new horse barn, Santa in his 18-foot tipi and free hot cocoa.

“It was rather surreal, especially in the fog on the last night, to see people wandering slowly and taking in the moments,”

noted the event team’s leader, Sara Ungrodt. “But, how fortunate to be able to provide this space where people wanted to experience what our volunteers put together. And how blessed we were with such warm weather and a full moon!”

Volunteers cheerfully began putting hundreds of hours into decorating the Gardens at the end of October, with finishing touches applied just days before the gates opened.

Returning after a two-year break, this year’s event marked the seventh Garden of Lights. First hosted by MBS in 2014, the event was originally created as a way to increase community awareness of the Botanic Gardens.

MBS BOARD

President

Liz Mauch

Vice President

(open position)

Treasurer

Peggy Justis

Secretary

Brenda Bafus-Williams

At Large

Linda Bentley

Anne Britton

Tracy Harrison

Anne Schuttig

Board meetings on the third Wed. of each month unless otherwise posted.

4:00pm - 6:00pm at:
1st Presbyterian Church
1840 E Niagara Rd
Montrose, CO

Horticulture

Sara Ungrodt

Operations & Maintenance

Rob Clapper

Membership

Debby Ingram

Website & Newsletter

Brenda Bafus-Williams

Laura Perfors

Montrose Botanical Society

P.O. Box 323
Montrose, CO 81402

Visit the Gardens at

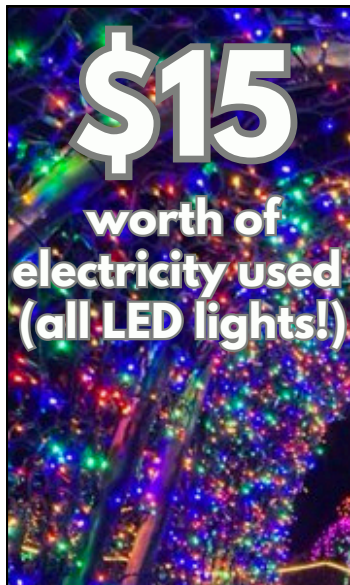
1800 Pavilion Dr
Montrose, CO 81401

www.montrosegardens.org

[facebook.com/
montrosegardens](https://facebook.com/montrosegardens)

info@montrosegardens.org

Garden of Lights by the Numbers





Clockwise from top left:

- The Tunnel of Lights and Santa's tipi in the quiet of dusk.
- Santa (Rich Plankis) gets an unexpected kiss!
- Count and Commander, Percherons owned by Matt & Marci Miles, meet their fans.

- "Deer Creek" along the Promenade is a delightful first display for visitors.
- Volunteers take a wagon ride at the end of the night.
- Captain and Cotton, two more Percherons driven by Matt Miles, bring their wagon around the track.

Montrose Botanic Gardens

wants to thank all the donors and volunteers who made the 2024 Garden of Lights the most successful ever!

HORSE TEAMS

Matt & Marci Miles and their Percherons
 Syneva & Sid Blatchford of Edoras Stables Gypsy Horses

Jim Rock

SANTA

Rich Plankis

OTHER SUPPORTERS

City of Montrose
 Montrose Daily Press
 Friends of Ukraine
 Timebank of the Rockies
 Linda Cagnetti
 Chelsea Nursery
 Mary Crist
 Peggy & Glen Justis
 Sally McClintock
 Carol & Tim Stevens
 Julee Wolverton

ORGANIZING TEAM

Sara Ungrodt, Team leader
 Bryan Cashion
 Anne Britton
 Pat and Bob Brown
 Tim Garvey
 Peggy Justis
 Liane Muller
 Alicia Tuck
 Anne Wilburn
 Brenda Bafus-Williams

Photo by J.P. Cencer

PATRONS



Hairlines and Nail Designs

Montrose Forest Products



IN-KIND DONORS

DMEA ELEVATE



Michiko Hitchcox
 Mike & Suzi King
 Bob & Pat Brown



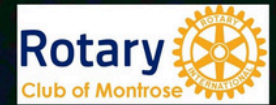
CIMARRON CREEK



Sani-Serv



Alpine Bank



Mary Coluccy
 England Fence
 Jon & Beth Gordon



OTHER VOLUNTEERS

| | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Bruce Ackerman | Kevin Dawson | Charlie Leaver | Lynn & George Pulford |
| Taylor Anthony | Leslie Dubois | Susan Leeming | Carol & Jerry Pyle |
| Marny Apel | Denise Farley | Lynn Lewis | Arlene Richter |
| Linda Bentley | Betty Hall | Malcolm MacDougall | Anne Schuttig |
| Sandy Beranich | Tracy Harrison | Steve Manis | Kathy See |
| Vince Beresford | Carol Howe | Doug & Bryn Marah | Terri & Ed Simon |
| Lisa Boyko | Debby Ingram | Dawn Marah | Sheri Smyth |
| John Britton | Eileen Izzo | Lorrie Martin | Ruth Spradling |
| Jolene Buntin | Gayle Johnson | Laulli Martin Neff | Kathy Svenson |
| Bob & Karen Burk | Heather Johnston | Liz Mauch | Cathy Trujillo |
| Dick & Judy Bushmiaer | Abel & Alexis (Scouts) | Riley McNeil | Al Tuck |
| Jim Cencer | Glen Justis | Mary & Lee Nelson | Linda Walline |
| Susan Chandler Reed | Connie Kolker | Nancy Odle | Susan Werner |
| Rob Clapper | Cindy Larson | Maggie Ogilvie | Greg Wilburn |
| Brenda Coda | | Connie Pittenger | Kevin Williams |
| | | Mark Prezbindowski | |

