

Featured landowner

Artist finds a new canvas in the Powell landscape

When the Roses built an adobe home on their 18-acre property near Powell, construction left the ground surrounding the house a blank canvas. This offered artist Stephanie Rose an opportunity to create in 3D what she often does on linen canvas or paper.

Many artists are captivated by gardens—the endless supply of natural beauty provides a subject for their work and gardening itself often becomes a creative outlet as well.

However, the dry, sandy soil on the Roses' land posed an obstacle to traditional gardening. Additionally, Stephanie had never taken on such a large gardening project.

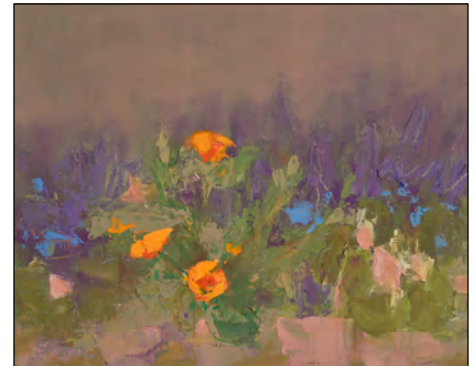
From the beginning, she knew she didn't want a turf lawn and wouldn't use a traditional irrigation system, so she needed to find alternatives.

As she researched non-traditional options, Stephanie became interested in xeriscaping techniques and water-wise plants. In the early 2000s, such approaches were not widely used, but Stephanie was intrigued. She found inspiration in publications authored by gardeners like Lauren

Springer Ogden and Susan Tweit, who championed water-wise, site-specific plants for gardens in challenging climates.

High-country gardening

The lack of widespread literature on high-country gardening techniques was not the only challenge Stephanie encountered. The garden was a major time



Springtime Rhapsody II, oil on linen, 8" x 10." Stephanie Rose



From back to front, (A) sagebrush (native to site), (B) tall blue rabbitbrush, (C) blue oat grass, (D) Pawnee Buttes sandcherry, (E) Walker's Low catmint, (F) pineleaf penstemon.

Stephanie Rose

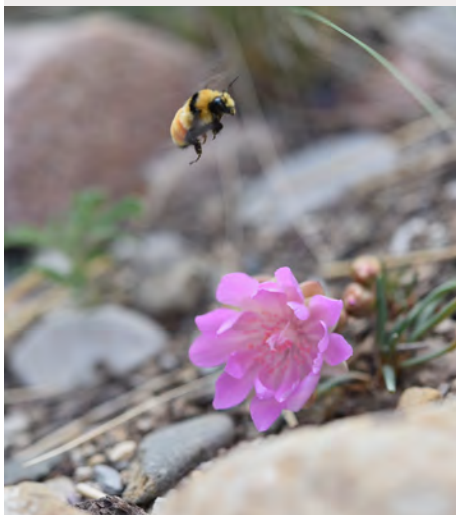
You can be a hero, too

Habitat Hero gardens...

- Include a diversity of native plants
- Provide seeds, insects, shelter, and nesting sites for birds
- Provide nectar, pollen, and host plants for pollinators
- Conserve water
- Do not spread invasive species of plants

Anyone can become a Habitat Hero, regardless of their gardening experience. Even people without access to land can create container gardens. To learn more, visit <https://rockies.audubon.org/habitat-hero>.

If you already have a garden, a good way to get started is incorporating plants that attract local birds. A recommended list for your area can be found at <https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>.



Stephanie Rose

commitment at first. Initially, planting, weeding, watering, and designing took up to 20 hours a week.

Now, she spends five hours or less each week on maintenance in the summer—a result of her trial-and-error efforts to determine which plants thrive on her property with the least amount of time and upkeep.

Finding xeric and native plants for plant hardiness zone 4 (plants that can withstand winters with -20 temperatures) in local nurseries proved difficult at first, but over time Stephanie found sources in Wyoming and other high-altitude states.

Stephanie's favorite plants are native grasses, specifically little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) for its fall colors, and Indian ricegrass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*), for its texture in the spring. Her favorite perennials are licorice mint hyssop (*Agastache rupestris*), Rocky Mountain penstemon (*Penstemon strictus*), butterflyweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), and dotted gayfeather (*Liatris punctata*).

Stephanie's favorite shrubs include New Mexico privet (*Forestiera neomexicana*), littleleaf mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus intricatus*), rabbitbrush (*Ericameria* spp), and Pawnee Buttes sandcherry (*Prunus besseyi*).

As she observed the plants over the years, Stephanie developed an awareness of the garden as an ecosystem. She became fascinated by the pollinators and birds that visited her garden. Over time, she started to notice which plants were more attractive to pollinators and was inspired to learn more.

Becoming a Habitat Hero

In 2016, Stephanie attended a Habitat Hero Workshop in Cody. Through this program, led by Audubon Rockies, she and other volunteers help weave together a network of habitat patches for birds, pollinators, and other wildlife. Stephanie is now a certified gardener in the program.

At that first workshop and through her own firsthand experience, she learned that by planting bird-friendly plants, gardeners can provide birds and other pollinators with food, shelter, and a place to breed.

The garden has evolved as Stephanie has determined what works (and what doesn't). She has learned that it's important to be flexible, to watch how plants behave in the landscape in relation to the weather—and of course, to find ways to evade nibbling creatures. Ultimately, she favors plants that self-seed and are drought tolerant.

Perhaps most importantly, Stephanie has learned that it is important to let go of expectations.

Over the years, she has gained an appreciation for how much garden design can be enhanced by structure and color. She aims to stagger blooming plants throughout the year and incorporates everything from native grasses to shrubs of varying heights and textures for added artistic flair.

What started as a blank canvas has evolved to reflect the artist's vision. Through time, effort, knowledge-building, and sheer instinct, Stephanie has created a beautiful and unique garden

filled with plants that suit her landscape. At the same time, she has created a haven for birds and pollinators.

To learn more about the Habitat Hero Program visit <https://rockies.audubon.org/habitat-hero>. To view Stephanie's artwork, check out <https://stephanieroseartist.com>.

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Additional resources for Wyoming gardeners

Native plants:

<https://bit.ly/BBNativePlants>

Water-wise landscaping:

<https://bit.ly/bb-water-wise>

Soils:

<https://bit.ly/bb-soil>

Supporting backyard birds:

<https://bit.ly/bb-birds>

Attracting birds:

<https://bit.ly/bb-attracting-birds>



Stephanie Rose

Important plants in this photo are (A) Apache plume, (B) Colorado 4 o'clock, (C) butterflyweed, and (D) Rocky Mountain juniper.