

# HISTORY

## High Plains Arboretum

Authorized by Congress and the Secretary of Agriculture in March 1928, the Great Plains Field Station was established with the intent of creating a designated area to study fruits, vegetables, windbreaks, and ornamental plants. Cheyenne, Wyoming, has some of the toughest environmental conditions for plants to survive, including high elevation (6,200 feet), cold temperatures, drought, wind, hail, and short growing seasons, making this an ideal location for a horticultural experimental station.

Over the years the Field Station has conducted a wide range of research. It began with horticulture and shelterbelt research and later focused on rangeland management, mined land reclamation, water conservation, and soil conservation. Along with the changes in research, there were also changes in the oversight of the Field Station. Many influential superintendents guided the Field Station throughout the years. Most notable was A.C. Hildreth, for whom the main road you drove in on was named. In the early 1970s as horticulture research ended, less care and maintenance was devoted to the trees and shrubs. As a result, many perished. In 2000, a group of concerned citizens called the Friends of the High Plains Arboretum began to advocate for this portion of the Field Station and eventually was successful in transferring 62 acres to the City of Cheyenne. This 62 acres was named the High Plains Arboretum.

*Early days of development at the Field Station met with harsh weather.*



*After some time the Field Station is no longer barren, plants are living up the landscape.*

### The Legacy of the Cheyenne Field Station research includes:

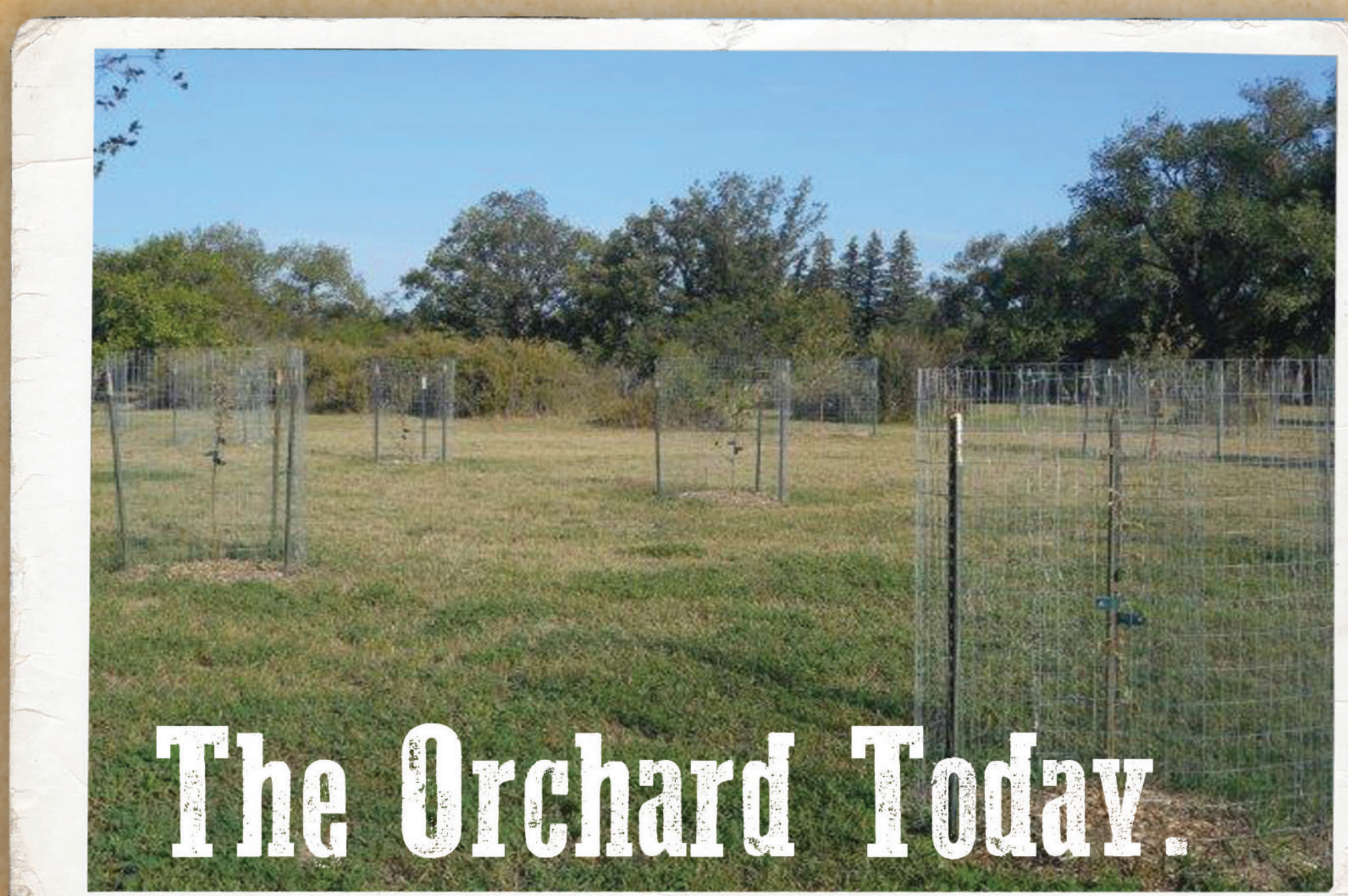
- 2,000+ fruit varieties tested
- 1,300 varieties of woody ornamental plants tested
- 200 species of trees and shrubs tested for windbreaks
- 8,000 vegetable varieties tested
- 45 hardy chrysanthemums developed
- Hardy currants, gooseberries, sour cherries, and domestic plums developed

# TODAY

## “Making a connection from the past to the future”

Today, the City of Cheyenne Parks and Recreation Department maintains the arboretum. The focus has been on preserving existing plants, replacing original plants that have been lost, and adding new unique plants to the arboretum. Maintenance activities include watering, spreading mulch around trees and shrubs, mowing periodically, spraying herbicide to kill unwanted grass and weeds, and pruning the trees and shrubs.

*Photo of fruit orchard that once thrived at the Field Station.*



**The Orchard Today.**

The Urban Forestry Division is attempting to re-establish an apple orchard at the arboretum. In the past, the Field Station maintained a large apple orchard and allowed the public to pick apples. Trials are underway to grow many of the same apple species that grew back then. Eventually, as the apple orchard matures the public will be invited to enjoy Cheyenne grown apples once again.

