



# WE GO GARDENING

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

[www.westchicagogardenclub.org](http://www.westchicagogardenclub.org)

Volume 19 Issue 4 April 2015

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**Babysitting**—The Club provides babysitting during its regular monthly meetings when held at Faith Community Church. There is no fee to you for the service and no reservations are necessary.

**Rides**— Need a ride to the meeting? Call Billie Childress at 231-1791 the Wednesday before the meeting.

Have you signed up to volunteer for the Plant Sale yet?  
See Page 5!

## **April 23rd Meeting: "Kruse House History" with WCGC Member Billie Childress**

**Join us for a lovely evening focusing on a West Chicago icon: The Kruse House!**

**Member Billie Childress will talk about the people who built the house and garden at 527 Main Street, the Historical Society who Celia Kruse willed the property to, and the Garden Club's role in making and maintaining the gardens. Special feature: a slide show of images from the garden!**

**Faith Community Church at 910 Main Street in West Chicago**

**6:45 - refreshments and gathering**

**7:00 - brief business meeting**

**7:15 - speaker**

**Next Meeting: Thursday, May 28th:**

**FIELD TRIP to Blumen Gardens!**

Please make note of the date change for the President's Picnic to:

**JULY 30, 2015**



## Upcoming events (outside the club)

**Cantigny:** National Public Gardens Day. May 8, 10AM-3PM. Free entry coupon available online at [Nationalpublicgardensday.org](http://Nationalpublicgardensday.org)

**Growing Place:** Edible Gardening: Tomatoes. May 2, 10AM—11AM at Aurora Location. Landscaping 101: Creating a Butterfly Garden. May 23, 10AM-11AM at Aurora Location. Call (630) 820-8088 for more information.

**Heinz Brothers:** Summer Container Planting Demonstration. May 12, 6-6:30PM. Free, but RSVP requested. Call (630)377-6288.

**City of West Chicago:** Blooming Fest is May 16th!

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### Club information

[www.westchicagogardenclub.org](http://www.westchicagogardenclub.org)

West Chicago Garden Club  
P. O. Box 313, West Chicago, IL 60186  
[westchicagogardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:westchicagogardenclub@gmail.com)

### Membership information

Dues for 2015: Individual: \$15 Family: \$25

### Board Meetings

2nd Thursday each month at 7 p.m.

### Regular meeting location

Faith Community Church  
910 Main Street, West Chicago

### 2015 WCGC BOARD:

**President:**

Dick Darrah, 630-584-1900, [info@bwdarrah.com](mailto:info@bwdarrah.com)

**Vice President:**

Keith Letsche, 630-293-0192, [keithletsche@aol.com](mailto:keithletsche@aol.com)

**Treasurer:**

Barb Darrah, 630-584-1900, [info@bwdarrah.com](mailto:info@bwdarrah.com)

**Secretary:**

Annette Wulffe, 630-462-0208, [annetewulffe@yahoo.com](mailto:annetewulffe@yahoo.com)

**Program Co-Chairs:**

Pauline Briggs, 630-254-2969, [briggspm@gmail.com](mailto:briggspm@gmail.com)

Marcy Kozlowski, 630-846-3466

[marcellakozlowski@yahoo.com](mailto:marcellakozlowski@yahoo.com)

**Information Director & Publicity:**

Melissa Birch, 630-621-0128, [melissabirch@gmail.com](mailto:melissabirch@gmail.com)



## Planned WCGC Events - 2015

Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event	Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event
22 Jan	Cindy Tyley	Tips for Lazy Gardener	25 Jun	TBA	At Kruse Garden
26 Feb	Don Guzan	Basics of Pruning	30 Jul	All members	President's Picnic
26 Mar	Shawn M. Odneal	Vertical Gardening	27 Aug	TBA	TBA
23 Apr	Billie Childress	Kruse House History	24 Sep	Bulb Bingo	Pauline
16 May	ALL MEMBERS!	PLANT SALE!	22 Oct	TBA	TBA
28 May	Blumen Gardens	FIELD TRIP!	19 Nov	All members	Dinner & Garden Dollar Auction



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**News from Kruse**

*by Billie, Angie, Kerry and Tom*

Garden Word of the Month: What's that fragrance rising from a garden after a rain? It is petrichor; the earthy aroma is partly from soil bacteria called actinomycetes. *From AHS March E-BULLETIN*

Kramer comes to call at the Kruse house (Kramer, as in, 'Kramer Tree Specialists').



Trees, like all plants in the garden, need care. And, who better to do it, than the tree experts, Kramer Tree Specialists! There are three huge maples in the front yard of the Kruse Garden that had numerous dead and low hanging limbs which desperately needed attention. So this was the year to invest in taking care of the trees. This particular job is called 'pruning & crown raising' in the trade. We spent a chilly afternoon in the Kruse Garden watching the tree trimming and the results are truly rewarding. The trees said 'thank you' from the bottom of their hearts..... plants are sentient you know?!

The particular species of maple at the Kruse house is Norway maple, *Acer plantanoides*. This tree is native to eastern and Central Europe and south-west Asia. It was introduced into this country as early as the



18th century and became a popular replacement for diseased and dying Elm trees during the 1930s and 40s. Chosen for rapid growth and dense shade, Norway maples flooded the market. There are, however, drawbacks to this tree. The heavy seed crop and high germination rates lead to invasive tendencies and in many areas of the U.S. it is banned for sale. It is also prone to frequent wind damage, a constant problem for home owners and municipalities. Since the trees are so large they often cause significant damage to adjacent structures as the limbs break in storms and because of their shallow root system, it isn't uncommon for the whole tree to blow over. The maple tree in the center of the Kruse garden is a perfect example of past storm damage. It has had lots of limbs cracked off in wind storms and consequently has an ungainly shape. Another of the maple trees in the yard appears to have been struck by lightning in the past (not uncommon given the height of these trees). You can see the streak down the trunk and the tree has large fungus growing in the crook of the tree.

Given the opportunity to contemplate the condition of these trees carefully we were reminded that gardens never stay the same. Not a problem....real gardeners step up and deal with it! Looking forward to sharing lots of information about the Kruse Garden at the April Garden Club meeting.

-Gardening with Spring in our step. Billie, Angie, Tom & Kerry





## Plant Sale 2015

April is our last club meeting before our annual fund raiser, **THE PLANT SALE!** The club needs all members to pitch in and help again this year. It's actually fun to work side-by-side with fellow club members and the following will give you an idea of some of the items that need staffing:

Of course there are the potting parties. As of this moment we have already had one very successful potting party and there are several more to come. If you haven't signed up to help please contact either Pauline ([briggspm@gmail.com](mailto:briggspm@gmail.com)) or Billie ([billiedc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:billiedc@sbcglobal.net)) to see at which party you can help. Plant Sale Day is **May 16<sup>th</sup>**. **The day of the sale we will need cashiers, sales persons, plant holding area watchers, tally sheet people, and a clean-up crew.** There is a job for everyone and we need everyone to take on one of the jobs.

On Friday evening, **May 15<sup>th</sup>**, we will be moving the plants to the tent downtown West Chicago. **We need loaders, drivers, un-loaders and members to move plants around the tent.**

On Thursday evening, **May 14<sup>th</sup>**, we have our members pre-sale. At this time most of the plants will be at either the barn or Marcy's. This is the opportunity for members to get their pick of the plants as we prefer members work the day of the plant sale, not shop. **We will need a few members to collect money from member-customers that evening.**

The club also needs **three volunteers** to help put up the road side signs during the week of **May 11<sup>th</sup>**. Anyone able to help Keith, please call him at (630) 293-0192, or e-mail him at [keithletsche@aol.com](mailto:keithletsche@aol.com). Please feel free to contact any of your club board members for more information or to volunteer for the job(s) you want.



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**Spring Ephemerals: Our Native Wildflowers**

**by The Growing Place**

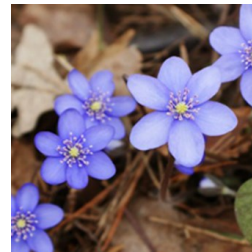
Nothing seems to say “springtime is truly here” as the sight of our native woodland wildflowers in full bloom. With a few exceptions, most of these elusive spring beauties are tied into the seasonal rhythms of their shady woodland homes. Early spring provides a short window when these alluring plants can be enjoyed, even if it is for what seems to be a brief minute. When the warmer temperatures arrive, most species will go dormant for the season. They bloom for just a few weeks, and then their leaves turn yellow and the plants disappear. These plants are called spring ephemerals.



Bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*)



Virginia Bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*)



Liverwort (*Hepatica*)

A particularly lovely plant that can be spotted in our gardens soon is bloodroot, *Sanguinaria canadensis*. It is named for the reddish-orange latex found within the leaves and roots. The pure white, star-shaped flowers open early and are then followed by large, waterlily-like leaves that unfurl as the weather warms up. The leaves will stay around as long as the soil remains cool and moist. It is beautiful interplanted with other spring ephemerals such as Virginia bluebells (*Mertensia virginica*). Virginia bluebells have spectacular pink buds that open to blue dangling bells which attract hummingbirds and the early bumblebees. They can spread into a spectacular large mass. Plant it with ferns that will cover up the yellowing foliage.

Also blooming now in the moist woods of early spring is *Hepatica*, better known as liverwort. Named for its attractive lobed and speckled leaves that are similar to the shape of the human liver, this plant is a welcome sight in very early spring for its cheerful flowers that bloom blue, violet, white or pink. They often will bloom into May and they do not go dormant. Pretty soon the shooting stars (*Dodecatheon media*) will be poking their heads up in our Learning Gardens. White or pink nodding, star-shaped flowers will soon appear on stiff, upright stems of these unique plants. They look especially attractive when combined with the broad heart-shaped leaves of the native woodland ginger (*Asarum canadense*).

We have these beauties for sale right now. We will be adding jack-in-the-pulpit, trilliums, spring beauty, mayapple, trout lily and others as they become available.

If you are not lucky enough to have the garden conditions that these plants require, please take a trip to your local forest preserve, the Morton Arboretum, or Chicago Botanic Garden over the next few weeks to discover and enjoy these enchanting and elusive spring ephemerals before they disappear for another year.

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