

We Go Gardening

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

Volume 28—Issue 4—April 2024



The purpose of the West Chicago Garden Club shall be to increase interest in gardening through sharing our ideas and knowledge, promoting and participating in community beautification, and protecting and promoting a clean, sustainable environment in which to live.

Meeting Date: April 25

Meeting Time:

Meeting Location:

**St Andrew Lutheran Church NE
Corner of Prince Crossing &
Geneva Road.**

**6:45PM Arrive & Mingle
7:00PM Business Meeting
7:15PM Program**

The Elegant Edible Garden

Ruth Kyme



Our April speaker will be horticulturalist and garden writer, Nina Koziol. In her presentation, The Elegant Edible Garden, Nina will introduce us to the portager (pow tuh jay.). The potager is an elegant, productive kitchen garden—large or small—that provides seasonal vegetables, berries, and cutting flowers. Discover the elements that make attractive, functional layouts for your home, provide a wonderful harvest, and attract pollinators.

We received a few photos of flowers from last year's Bulb Bingo. These are from Marylin & Ruth G.



Where to find us online

Website: www.westchicagogardenclub.org



Facebook:

facebook.com/westchicagogardenclub



Instagram:

[westchicagogardenclub](https://www.instagram.com/westchicagogardenclub)

MAY 23RD MEETING

**“Herbs” by Marcy
Lautanen-Raleigh**

Notes from the President

Dan Beebe

I continue to be amazed at how many of our members actively participate in club events. While everyone can't make every event (and I really, honestly don't expect you to) we always have a great turnout of active, friendly, and hard-working members. The first Adopt A Highway cleanup and first Perennial Potting Party were so well attended that we managed to get all of the work done fairly quickly. The Annual Pop-Up Potting Parties have also been well attended, making light work for all. As always, it was great to be out there seeing and talking to many of you at these events. All of your smiling faces are a real treat!

Aside from the other Plant Sale related events, our Program Chair, Ruth Kyme, has been working with her team of volunteers to plan a record-breaking number of monthly programs, Twilight Tuesdays, workshops, and local field trips. In addition, Marilyn Santos-McNabb is working on the final details of our first bus-based field trip of the year to the Chicago Botanic Gardens and is planning to have another trip in the late Summer or Early Fall. I hope that all of you will find many of our planned events of interest. If you think of any activities that you would like the club to consider planning in the future, the Board is always looking for new ideas. Please let any board member know if you have a great idea for a club event or activity.

On a related note, I am still looking for other groups in the community with missions similar to our own that we can partner with. If you are a member of a local group that might be interested in co-sponsoring an event with the club, just let me know. In the meantime, enjoy the mild weather and be sure to spend plenty of time outside – I know I will.

Dan



Club Information

Website: www.westchicagogardenclub.org
P. O. Box 313, West Chicago, IL 60186
E-mail: westchicagogardenclub@gmail.com

Membership Information

Dues for 2024: Individual: \$20 Family: \$30 (2 people)

Board Meetings

2nd Thursday most months at 7 p.m.

Regular Meeting Location

St Andrew Lutheran Church—155 N Prince Crossing Rd

2024 WCGC Board & Committees:

President:	Dan Beebe
Vice President:	Janet Frogner
Treasurer:	Kerry Perry
Secretary:	Christina Covarrubias
Publicity Director:	Ruth Gauss
Information Director:	Pamela Darrah
Program Director:	Ruth Kyme
Member Services Director:	Lisa Marie Vogt
Director at Large:	Marilyn McNabb
Plant Sale Chair:	Mary Schramer & Dan Beebe
Kruse Garden Chair:	Open

To Contact any Board Member, please send email to WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com



It is time to begin thinking about donations from our member gardens and potting parties to get those plants ready for our sale. I have set up signup lists using SignUp Genius again this year. SignUp Genius will remind you by email what you have signed up for a day or so before the event.

If you have any questions about the sale or the events leading up to it, our Plant Sale team put together a document to help introduce you to the ins and outs of the sale. This document can be found here: [WCGC Plant Sale: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know](#).

Here are links to the Potting Party signups:

- **Donate Plants from your Garden:** <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A8AE29A75-48482904-donate>
- **Potting Party #2:** (April 20) <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A8AE29A75-48482665-perennials>
- **Potting Party #3** (April 28): <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A8AE29A75-48482681-perennials>
- **Potting Party #4** (May 4): <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A8AE29A75-48482681-perennials>

Links to new signups:

Donate Flats/boxes: Sturdy boxes with low sides or box tops from paper boxes make good plant holders for our customers. If you visit Aldi, they have some excellent boxes. Bring them to the plant sale setup on Friday, May 17th between 5 and 7 PM or plant sale on Saturday, May 18 between 7:30 AM and 9. [https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A8AE29A75-49126833-donate#/#/](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A8AE29A75-49126833-donate#/)

Place Yard Signs: If you live in a well traveled location, would you be willing to put up a sign in the parkway? Or at your local business? Or help place signs at key places throughout the city? Signs go up the Sunday before the sale and need to be taken down Saturday after the sale. If you have a sign in your garage from a previous year please note it in the comments. [https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A8AE29A75-49126855-place#/#/](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A8AE29A75-49126855-place#/)

Price Plants: Saturday May 11 from 2:00-4:00p. [https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A8AE29A75-49127792-price#/#/](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A8AE29A75-49127792-price#/)

Assist with Member Only Sale: Thursday, May 16 from 5:00-9:00 [https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A8AE29A75-49126857-member#/#/](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A8AE29A75-49126857-member#/)

Set up for Plant Sale at Blooming Fest: Setup tables & load the plants into the tent on Friday evening before the sale May 17. [https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A8AE29A75-49126876-setupfor#/#/](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A8AE29A75-49126876-setupfor#/)

Plant Sale: Volunteer for a morning or afternoon shift (or both!) We need a lot of help for a successful sale on May 18th. [https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A8AE29A75-49126832-blooming#/#/](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A8AE29A75-49126832-blooming#/)

Clean up Park District Site and return items to the Barn: Once the sale is over, there is still a little clean up needed. This will be Sunday May 19th from 1:00-2:30pm [https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A8AE29A75-49127956-clean#/#/](https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0444A8AE29A75-49127956-clean#/)



Tom Morrow

Resident of: West Chicago since 2000

WCGC Member since: January 2024

How did you become a member: Just heard

What is your current profession: Professional window washer

What are you most proud of in your garden: My dahlias and my spring ephemerals

A garden mistake you made: Planting dead nettle in my front garden. UGGH! Still trying to eradicate it for several years now.

What do you love most about gardening: Just getting my hands in the soil. Planting things and just watching stuff come up that you planned and planted in past years.

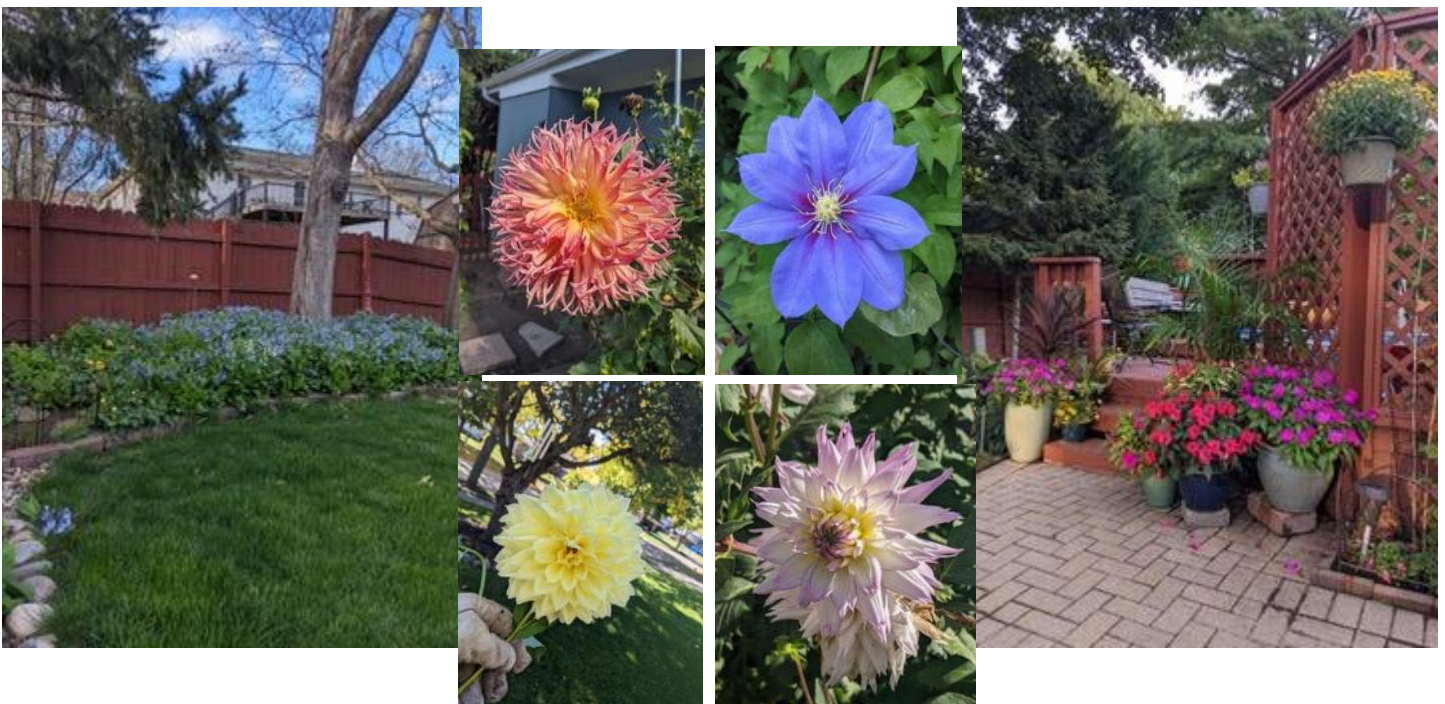
Words of wisdom: Go out daily and just look around. Take a stroll through your yard/garden to see what's looking good, or not doing well and needs your attention. Be observant of weeds when they start to pop up...get them early before they take over.

Favorite place to purchase seeds/plants: I LOVED Planters Palette and, of course, Proseks. It's very unfortunate they are both closed now.

Favorite spot in your garden: My backyard...it's my little oasis.

What plant can't you wait to see this season emerge from your garden: Virginia Bluebells, Dutchman's Breeches and Wild Geraniums

What are you looking forward to this season: My vegetable garden. I love fresh tomatoes and fresh herbs like basil and rosemary.



Kruse Garden Spring Clean Up

Christina Covarrubias

Sunday, April 21st from 1:00 to 3:00pm



Do you get excited when you see your perennials sprouting in the spring? Can you identify plant starts versus weeds sprouting? If so, The Kruse House garden is looking for you and other experienced gardeners to help with our Spring cleanup. Please come help cut back last year's perennials, pick up sticks and perhaps stake a couple plants. It is also your chance to admire the beautiful spring flowers currently showing off in the garden! One day only- Sunday, April 21st, 1-3PM

College of DuPage Scholarship Recipient

Kerry Perry

The College of DuPage presented the West Chicago Garden Club's spring 2024 \$1,000 scholarship to Francisco Garcia. Francisco finished his Horticulture AAS degree work and earned his Permaculture Design Certificate. He is currently pursuing a Horticulture Business Mgmt. degree. In the future he plans to teach as an adjunct instructor in COD's horticulture program.

We wish Francisco continued success in his endeavors.



Scan to learn more:




PH: 630.668.0316
www.BarnOwlGardenCenter.com

You're invited to come explore, get inspired, learn and add some beauty to your garden at



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For the Love of Gardening...

News from Kruse

Christina Covarrubias

West Chicago Garden Club gardeners returned to the garden at the Kruse House museum property just last week and will meet every Wednesday from 9-11am weather permitting.

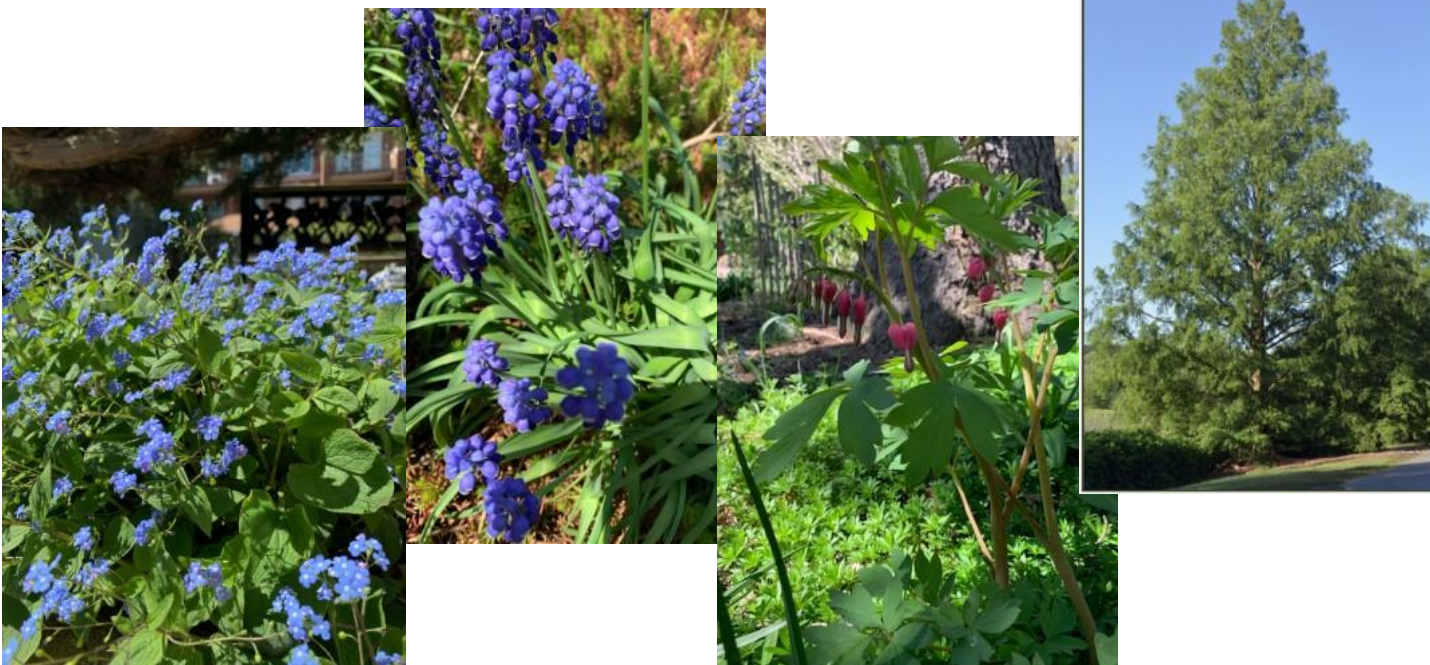
Gardening began just in time to inhale all the beauty of spring. Literally, at every turn in the garden there is a bright spot of color from the flowering barrenwort along the sidewalk, tulips dotting the landscape, Virginia bluebells, pink and purple lungwort, hot pink pigsqueak, a showstopper of a magnolia tree to blankets of violet-hued grape hyacinths that are children, grandchildren and great grandchild (probably) of the original ones planted by the Kruse family. A picture will not do it justice to represent how lovely the garden is in spring.



Ephemeral bulbs are not the only thing of interest in the garden. There are several unique species of trees including ginkgo, dogwood, London planetree, an original pear tree, and even a once-thought-extinct Dawn Redwood.

Just a note, from the Metasequoia genus native to China, a forester rediscovered Dawn Redwoods in one single Chinese region during the 1940's. This led to seed collection and distribution around the world. The deciduous Dawn Redwood species sets itself apart from the other two redwoods species (Great Sequoia and Coast Redwood) by changing color to a rusty orange in the fall and then dropping its leaves. Such a treasure to have in this garden!

If you find yourself driving down Main Street at any time you should pull in the driveway and take a short (or long!) stroll around the garden.



We Go Gardening

Thank You to our Volunteers!

Last weekend was the start of our very busy Spring season. It was wonderful to see so many members come out to volunteer. The weather was fantastic and we had a good crew for all three events. The Adopt-a-Highway crew raced through the cleanup in just a little over an hour. The Pop-up Potting Party on Saturday potted up a wide assortment of annuals and the Perennial Potting Party on Sunday potted up nearly 600 plants!



Inspired to GROW

Open April 1 - December 23
10am-5pm, 7 days a week

Naperville | 630.355.4000 | 25w471 Plank Rd
1 block south of Ogden Ave/Rte 34
& 2 blocks west of Naper Blvd

Aurora | 630.820.8088 | 2000 Montgomery Rd
2 blocks north of Ogden Ave/Rte 34
& Rush-Copley Medical Center

thegrowingplace.com | 

The Growing Place
Garden Center | Gift Shop | Gardens

Join us for our Spring Opening March 25 & 26!
Free Seminars * Artisan Market * Terrarium Workshop
Visit Countrysideflowershop.com for details.
Call 815-459-8130 and register today!


42W075 Route 38, Elburn, IL 60119

Snail Seed Rolls

Marilyn McNabb

...Another method to germinate seeds

Constantly searching for a simple method without the elaborate set up? I found this Seed Snail Method on Instagram by @faridasober. She uses what is called sill gasket foam or packing foam sheets to roll compost into a snail! You can use different width foam depending on your seed needs, anywhere from 4" to 6" or wider, lay out your material, add about 1/2 inch soil-less potting mix, then roll like jelly roll! Tape down the seam so it does not unroll! Some people also like to put this coil in a cup or plastic bag, or something to keep its shape! Now, you can sprinkle your seeds on top of the coil or gently insert a seed an inch or so apart into the coils, then water from the top til your seeds germinate! You should also cover the top with something like a shower cap until the seeds germinate. Ideally, it is best to water from the bottom if your snails are sitting on a tray! I have also seen people use their small germinated seedlings in snail rolls to get bigger before transplanting to the ground! Also, when your plants are getting too big but not big enough to transplant outside or you are not ready to plant because of the weather, you can add a little more potting mix by unrolling your snail, add more potting mix to compensate for the growing roots, then roll them back up! You can also add a weak liquid fertilizer solution to the bottom of your pan when you have your second set of true leaves.

This snail seed method is great for limited space on a window or under a lamp, also on a small heat mat! Seems uncomplicated! This method is great because your seed roots are not all tangled up, the seedlings are easy to separate when potting up! You can harden off your seedlings the same way as if they are in pots before planting them in ground.

Note: the aim is also to recycle/reuse whatever material you already have, so, any used plastic sheets you can cut up or packing foam would be ideal!

Happy Gardening!



Board Position: Treasurer

Kerry Perry



In 2018 I gladly accepted the role of Treasurer. I love detail and organization and I have an extensive accounting background. It's a great job and fun too!

The treasurer's responsibilities include:

- Maintain records of the club's spending and earnings
- Prepare a proposed budget for each fiscal year
- Distribute funds approved by the board
- Responsible for safe keeping of funds and securities
- Keep detailed reports of membership information and dues
- Present financial reports at the board meetings and the annual member meetings.

What is a Keystone Plant?

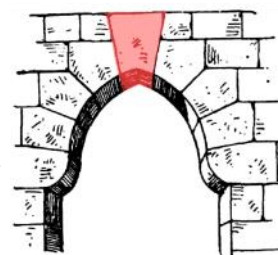
Lisa Marie Vogt

I recently attended a webinar where the host referred to specialist/keystone plants. I was intrigued to learn more. Information obtained from: <https://www.nwf.org/Garden-for-Wildlife/About/Native-Plants/keystone-plants-by-ecoregion>



Native plants are core to the wildlife garden. Intentional use of native plants, which have formed symbiotic relationships with native wildlife over millions of years, creates the most productive and sustainable wildlife habitat. While some plants play a singular role for one or limited types of wildlife, others are essential to the life cycle of many species. The local species of these plants vary by ecoregion, that is, areas where ecosystems (and the type, quality, and quantity of environmental resources) are generally similar. Keystone plant genera are unique to

local food webs within ecoregions. Remove keystone plants and the diversity and abundance of many essential insect species, which 96% of terrestrial birds rely on for food sources, will be diminished. The ecosystem collapses in a similar way that the removal of the "key" stone in an ancient Roman arch will trigger its demise.



The research of entomologist, Dr. Doug Tallamy, and his team at the University of Delaware have identified 14% of native plants (the keystones) support 90% of butterfly and moth lepidoptera species. The research of horticulturist Jarrod Fowler has shown that 15% to 60% of North American native bee species are pollen specialists who only eat pollen from 40% of native plants.

This data has been summarized by Level I Ecoregions along with top plants used by pollen specialist bees [Click here for the Eastern Temperate Forest—Ecoregion 8](#). In addition, approximately 4,000 genera of native plants that support over 11,000 lepidoptera can be sorted by zip code in National Wildlife Federation's Native Plant Finder: <https://nativeplantfinder.nwf.org/Plants>

For purposes of these lists, we have included critical plant genera and local species that host significant numbers of butterflies, moths, and pollen specialist bees. Without these "key" plants, the ecosystem and the wildlife would suffer.

Nature Notes – Take two aspirin?

Kerry Perry

Looking out my kitchen window this morning I noticed a large hole in the side of the old weeping willow tree. Yep, a red bellied woodpecker nest.

The male was pecking, actually hammering away and making quite a racket. I wondered, do woodpeckers get headaches? Hmm. According to scientists at ASU, woodpeckers' skulls are more flexible. They have a special bone that acts like a seat-belt for its skull. Even the structure of its beak helps to absorb impact while pecking.

A woodpecker's skull is like an internal bike helmet to keep its brain from getting hurt. Scientists think some of the things they learned about woodpeckers can be used to make better helmets for humans.

What we learn from nature is pretty cool.



SAVE THESE DATES

Pop up potting parties: Saturday or Sundays to be determined

Perennial Potting Parties:

Saturday, April 20, 9am to 12 PM
Sunday, April 28, 1 to 4 PM
Saturday, May 4, 9am to 12 PM

Plant Sitters needed from April 14th through May 16th

Plant Labeling and Pricing: Saturday May 11, time to be determined

Put out yard signs: Sunday May 12th

Member Only Plant Sale: Thursday, May 16th 5:30 to 8:30???

Plant Sale Set Up: Friday, May 17th, time to be determined

Plant Sale: Saturday, May 18th, 7 AM to 3 PM
(Sale open from 9AM-2PM)



Midwest Daffodil Society Show

Chicago Botanic Garden

Saturday & Sunday
April 27: noon – 4:30 p.m.
April 28: 10 – 4:30 p.m.

See a floral design show and displays featuring daffodils (as blooms permit). Learn about the 13 divisions of daffodils, many of which are featured in Garden display beds.



Cocktails and Conservation: Plant your Own Container Garden

The Preserve at Oak Meadows (DuPage County Forest Preserve District)

THURSDAY, MAY 2, 2024, 6:30 – 8:30PM

Container gardening with native plants is much easier to put together than a full sized garden. Learn about native wildflowers, how to identify them, and how to easily grow them at home in a container garden. Sip a signature cocktail made with native plant ingredients as you pot up your own container of native flowers, grasses, and sedges for home. Ages 21 and up. \$40 per person. Online registration: [click here](#) To register by phone instead, call 630-933-7248.



The Morton Arboretum Photographic Society Exhibit

Opening Reception:

Friday, May 10, 5:00 to 8:00 pm

Exhibit

Saturday, May 11, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Sunday, May 12, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm

Over 125 beautiful framed photographs showcase nature's bounty. They include images captured at the Arboretum as well as at local, national, and international locations. All showcase the wonder of trees, plants, animals, rocks, skies, and more. Cards, coasters, books, and matted prints are available, and most of the artwork can be purchased from the artist following the exhibit.



The exhibit is free with admission to the Arboretum. <https://mortonarb.org/explore/activities/adult-programs/morton-arboretum-photographic-society-exhibit/>

Garden Bucks

West Chicago Garden Club distributes Garden Bucks (real fake money) to members who participate in club activities. At the November 2024 meeting you will be able to use your Bucks to bid on donated items at the Silent Auction.

The chart below shows how to earn your Garden Bucks. Keep track of your dollars earned. Either pick up your earnings at each meeting or collect them before the auction. Come out and volunteer. Your participation keeps our club going strong.

Volunteer for Workdays at Kruse, Plant Sale or other events		Donate plants for Plant Sale	
1 to 4 hours	\$ 75	Less than 50	\$ 75
More than 4 hours	\$ 150	50 - 149	\$ 200
Donate pots for plant sale	\$ 50	More than 150	\$ 300
Donate snacks for meeting	\$ 75	Write newsletter article	\$ 100
Set up or clean up at meeting	\$ 25	Bring a guest to a meeting	\$ 50
Attend Field Trip	\$ 25	Attend Meeting	\$ 25
Donate plants to Kruse Garden	\$ 50	Pay 2024 Dues by Feb 24th	\$ 50
		Pay 2025 Dues by Nov 17th	\$ 75

Refer a new member and participate in a raffle for a gift card at the Nov 2024 meeting.

Upcoming Programs & Events for 2024

These are the currently scheduled programs. If there are any changes we will update this in future newsletters. The last column will show who has signed up to bring treats.

Apr 25	Nina Koziel	The Elegant Edible Garden	Margie V, Carol G, Karen K
May 18		PLANT SALE	
May 23	Marcy Lautanen-Raleigh	Herbs	Amanda S, Carol G, Julie B
June 27	Thom Skibble	Permaculture	Lisa H, Christina C, Carol G
July 25		President's Picnic	
Aug 22	Cindy Crosby	Dragonflies and Damselflies	Cindy T, June L, Jen K
Sept 26	Dianne Blazek	Plant Breeding	Marion M, Mary S, Cindy B
Oct 24		Bulb Bingo	Barb M, Barb B, Mary A, Tom F
Nov 16	Silent Auction	Pot Luck Dinner	

A poster of our 2024 schedule can be downloaded at <https://westchicagogardenclub.org/wp-content/files/2024PosterWithSchedule.pdf>