



WE GO GARDENING

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

www.westchicagogardenclub.org

Volume 18 Issue 8 August 2014

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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.

August 28th Meeting: Shade Gardening Beyond the Hosta with Lou Horton

An overview of the palette of plants, shrubs, and ornamental trees which can add color and interest to the shady garden. Lou is a thirteen year veteran



Master Gardener (DuPage unit) who has evolved into a shade gardening and hosta specialist largely due to the nature of his property in West Chicago which is dominated by a grove of mature Oaks. Aside from hostas, his gardens include collections of ornamental trees and shrubs as well as shade companion plants. Lou is past president of the Northern Illinois Hosta Society and Midwest Regional Hosta Society and has managed a regional conference on hostas which features speakers from all over the country and takes place in Lisle in late January. He also runs a small retail hosta specialty business from his home.

Next Meeting: Thursday, September 25

“Bulb Bingo!” with June and Pauline



Upcoming events (outside the club)

Cantigny: Bird Walk. Sept. 13, 7:30am. Garden Photo Tips. Sept. 21, 2:00pm. Call 630-260-8162 for more information.

Growing Place: Fall Fest. Sept 20-21. Aurora Location—all day. Hayrides, children’s crafts, games, fall harvest festival!

Chicago Botanic Garden: Central States Dahlia Society Show. Sept. 27, noon—4:30pm and Sept. 28, 10am—4:30pm. Hundreds of Dahlia blooms on display. More information: (847) 835-5440.

Heinz Brothers: Fall Container Planting, More than just Mums! Sept 6 & 13, 10am-11am and Sept 6 & 7, 1pm-2 pm. \$15 program fee plus plant material fees. Call (630) 377-6288 for more information.

NEW! West Chicago Farmers Market: Thursdays, 7am—1pm, until October 30th. Mosaic Crossing Shopping Center (64/59 near Hobby Lobby and McDonalds).

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



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Club information

www.westchicagogardenclub.org

West Chicago Garden Club
P. O. Box 313, West Chicago, IL 60186
westchicagogardenclub@gmail.com

Membership information

Dues for 2014: 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

2014 WCGC BOARD:

President:

Keith Letsche, 630-293-0192, keithletsche@aol.com

Vice President:

Dick Darrah, 630-584-1900, info@bwdarrah.com

Treasurer:

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Planned WCGC Events - 2014

Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event	Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event
28 Aug	Lou Horton	Beyond the Hosta	23 Oct	Jo Ann Loebel	Pressing Flowers
25 Sep	June & Pauline	Bulb Bingo!	20 Nov	All members	Dinner & Garden Dollar Auction

Mark your Calendars—another event to show off the lovely Kruse Garden!

**West Chicago Historical Society
Ice Cream Social/Silent Auction
September 6, 2014
12:00 PM—3:00 PM**



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News from Kruse

by Billie, Angie, Kerry and Tom

Mush Mummies: During the last part of July and most of August, picking mush mummies is a common garden task. "What's that?" you say? Well, some of the 'Krusies' hadn't heard this term before either, so as all good reporters strive to do, we will share this nugget of horticultural knowledge. The past blooms of Hemerocallis (Greek term meaning beautiful for a day), commonly known as daylilies, are called mush mummies. A reference describes them as "wet globs of tissue paper, slimy creatures" and recommends daily dead-heading. It was noted that "they are especially troublesome when the flowers are purple and leave grape juice stains on your hands." We aren't as diligent as recommended, in the Kruse garden, but we did pick a few mush mummies and Tom kept asking "what are these called again?" And now I'll leave this fascinating subject with a tongue twister: Mummies munch much mush.

Bushel Baskets: Hurray!!! We now have 3 new wooden bushel baskets for collecting our weeds and deadheads! **June Luther** donated two and **Barbara Carlisle** donated one.

Thank you very much! No more excuses for strewing. Just go get a basket!

Ice Cream Social: The Historical Society will hold its annual fund raiser Sat. September 6th. The home baked cakes and pies along with the ice cream are an exquisite treat and the silent auction offers a host of desirable items. It's also another chance to see the garden. We're making an extra push for it to look nice. That's a challenge at this time of year but we're up for it! See you there!

Angie: We have been without our leader for a time due to Angie's illness. It doesn't always go so well when the boss is gone, but we limped along. By the time you read this we trust she will be well on the road to recovery. Good thing. We can't do it without you, Angie!

Perennial Ageratum: We finally have some of this plant established in the garden and are looking forward to its cheerful August and September blooms. Marion, thanks for yet another wonderful donation! Eupatorium coelestinum, also known as Mistflower, looks like the annual argeratum, grows 2 feet tall, likes sun but tolerates shade. It needs virtually no care. It comes up late in the Spring, which is why you don't see it at our Plant Sale. The only complaint I've heard of, is that for some, the seedlings are a problem. I've had the plant in my garden over 5 years and have nothing but praise for it. It combines well with Rudbeckia 'Goldsturm' or 'Viette's Little Suzy' or better yet, with pink Japanese Anemone. It's an old standard for gardens since its introduction in 1850



Well, that's about it for all the news that isn't. Enjoy the last days of summer. See you at our monthly meeting.

-Billie, Angie, Tom, and Kerry



Shining a Spotlight on Perennial Ornamental Grasses

by The Growing Place

Ornamental grasses are as versatile and beautiful as they are diverse. The diversity of size, form and habit make them suitable for a great variety of ornamental uses, both in landscapes and containers. Perennial grasses also provide a wide range of colors and textures and create interest in all seasons. “Now is the perfect time to plant perennial ornamental grasses in the landscape so that they can become established before the winter,” says Joannie Rocchi, Retail Perennial Manager at the Growing Place-Aurora, and 24-year staff member of the garden center. Grasses are easy care plants that tolerate a wide range of light and soil conditions. They respond and grow in response to temperature. There are two basic types of grasses: cool season and warm season.

Cool Season Grasses

Cool season grasses begin growing in early spring and hit their prime in early summer. Their plumes, officially called inflorescence, are produced in the cooler months. Joannie notes that one of the most popular cool season grasses is *Calamagrostis* ‘Karl Foerster’, also known as Feather Reed Grass because of its upright clumping habit and wheat-like plumes. It’s a great plant for screening eyesores like electrical boxes. *Calamagrostis* ‘Overdam’ is another cool season Feather Reed Grass which features variegated foliage, rosy purple seed heads borne in mid-summer, and an upright habit that makes it perfect for a landscape screen.

Warm Season Grasses

These grasses begin to grow when the temperatures rise in the spring. By mid-May the new leaves emerge and begin growing very quickly and by mid-summer plants begin to mature. They set seed in the summer and fall, then go dormant for the winter. There are a wide variety of available warm season grasses. In the American native genus *Panicum*, more commonly known as Switch Grass, ‘Cheyenne Sky’ is currently displaying its blue-green foliage. ‘Cheyenne Sky’ forms a tight, vase-shaped mound only three feet tall. The bluish-green foliage turns wine red in early summer. It is topped with purple, airy panicles in the fall. “I just love *Pennisetum* ‘Red Head’,” say Joannie, “It’s burgundy bottlebrush plumes at the beginning of September are striking above graceful, arching rich green foliage.”

...continued on next page!



(Continued from page 5) Another favorite, *Miscanthus* 'Strictus', or Porcupine Grass, features creamy yellow bands horizontally across the green leaves of this upright grass. Copper colored plumes emerge in fall, turn to tan and then change to white and last through the winter. *Sporobolus*, also called Prairie Dropseed is another American prairie native that's at home in the commercial or residential landscape. The variety 'Tara' is a more compact and upright than the species and is favored for the smaller garden or edge of the border

and as a bonus their flowers smell like buttered popcorn. It's important to note that both the *Miscanthus* and the *Pennisetum* family of grasses should be planted in the ground by mid-September. This will give them ample time to get established for the winter.

Grasses for Shade

Most grasses can tolerate partial shade but they grow more densely and vigorously in full sun—that is, six or more hours of direct sunlight. However, there are grass and grass textured plants that thrive in partially shaded areas, they include the varieties of the genera *Acorus* and *Carex* (These are actually sedges, not a grasses), many of which are North American Natives. *Acorus* 'Ogon', also known as Japanese Sweet Flag is notable for its green and yellow striped leaves and graceful iris-like fans. Another native grass that thrives in full sun to full shade is *Chasmanthium*, also called Northern Sea Oats, with its flattened seeds that look like dangling fish scales.

Planting and Maintaining Perennial Ornamental Grasses

Grasses are tolerant of average soils, but adding organic soil amendments such as compost or leaf mold will help get your grasses off to a good start. According to Joannie, grasses really benefit from being well watered when planting them. She suggests filling the hole with water, placing the plant in the hole and watering thoroughly as you replace the backfill. Water frequently the first season so plants develop good root systems. Once established, grasses will only need water during periods of drought.

Grasses do not need to be cut down before winter. In fact, they add interest to the winter landscape when left standing and the foliage helps to insulate the crown of the plant. In early spring before growth resumes, cut back the foliage to about 4-6 inches. Consider using your cut grasses as straw mulch around other plants.



Fall Fest: 9/20 & 21, Aurora
Hayrides - Pumpkins - Mums - Games & Crafts

Fall Planting Celebration Weekend:
9/27 & 28, Both locations
Silent Auction - Classes - Demos

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