



We Go Gardening

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

www.westchicagogardenclub.org

Volume 20 Issue 2 February 2016

FEBRUARY IS "Guess How Many Butterflies" MONTH! (Butterflies? See page 4!)

Meeting Date: February 25, 2016

Program Topic: The People and Nature Perspective

Presenter: Peggy Doty, U of I Extension Educator, Boone/DeKalb/Ogle Unit. Peggy is an expert in environmental education, composting, river ecology, recycling and solid waste, and wildlife management. Peggy specializes in Outdoor Teacher Education, Curriculum, and Instruction and has served as a Natural Resources Educator for 12 years in DeKalb County.

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, March 31st:

"Organic Vegetable Gardening" with Ed Max

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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 630-231-1791 the Wednesday before the meeting.

DATE CHANGE FOR MARCH MEETING!

Our regular meeting in March will be held
on the 5th Thursday, **March 31, 2016**
at Faith Community Church, 910 Main Street in West Chicago



**Help us prep for the 2016 Plant Sale:
Potting Parties on
April 3, 9, 16, and 24**

Sign-up sheets will be available
at the February and March meetings!

Save the Date: FIELD TRIP!

**Saturday, September 10, 2016
Chicago Botanic Garden**

Club Information

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

Membership Information

Dues for 2016: 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

2016 WCGC BOARD:

President:

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

Vice President:

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

Treasurer:

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

Secretary:

Annette Wulfe, 630-462-0208, annetwulfe@yahoo.com

Program Director:

Billie Childress, 630-231-1791, billiedc@sbcglobal.net

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WCGC 2016 Calendar

Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event	Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event
28 Jan	Richard Hentschel	Trees	23 Jun	TBA	AT Kruse Garden
25 Feb	Peggy Doty	People and Nature	28 Jul	TBA	President's Picnic
31	Ed Max	Edible Gardens	25 Aug	TBA	Butterflies
28 Apr	TBA	What's New for 2016	22 Sep	TBA	Birds
21 May	ALL MEMBERS!	PLANT SALE!	27 Oct	TBA	TBA
26 May	TBA	AT Cantigny	17 Nov	All members	Dinner & Garden Dollar Auction

Anemone 'Honorine Jobert' is 2016 Perennial Plant of the Year

Each year the Perennial Plant Association chooses a tried-and-true plant to recommend to home gardeners. The 2016 selection, Japanese anemone, 'Honorine Jobert' (*Anemone xhybrida*), is a three- to four-foot-tall, deer-resistant perennial that blooms in late summer or early fall and attracts pollinators. Grow in part shade in USDA Hardiness Zones 4-8, AHS Heat Zones 8-5.

Photo courtesy of PPA.



Did You Know?

Member Angie Sadauskas very successfully grows this plant.

It's one of her favorites and she has shared some for the plant sale in the past!



From the Program Coordinator's Desk, February 2016

January Recap: the first GC educational program in January, by R Hentschel, on trees, reminded us how to plant a tree (useful information for April 29, Arbor Day, when I hope you all plant a tree) and information on invasive trees like barberry, burning bush, and Bradford Pears. The audience raised good questions, offering an opportunity for members to learn from each other as well as our speaker. I received 25 (37 attendees) evaluation forms back. 19 were marked "very satisfied" and many very helpful comments were included.

February Program: 'The People and Nature Perspective' by Peggy Doty

U of I Extension Educator, Boone/DeKalb/Ogle Unit

Expert in: environmental education, composting and vermicomposting, river ecology, recycling and solid waste, and wildlife management

Bachelor of Science in zoology with a specialization in wildlife management from Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. Master's in education from Northern Illinois University. Specializing in Outdoor Teacher Education, Curriculum, and Instruction.

Natural Resources Educator for DeKalb County for 12 years.

Peggy's talk about people and nature was reviewed in a "Wild Ones" newsletter as follows:

"Her presentation was most enjoyable not only because of its content but also because of her humorous delivery. The title of her presentation was "The People and Nature Perspective." One of her main points was about food chain restoration. She talked about the need to supply our native pollinators the native food they evolved with if we want to sustain our own food supply. She urged us to plant for more than just ourselves, i.e. plant native plants that support our native pollinators that in turn support the food chain. We are building a food chain. She says, if you plant natives, they will come, and then others will come. This was an inspiring message."

Humorous, educational, inspiring, what more could you ask for in a talk?! Please come, I know you will enjoy it.

Added incentive: Peggy released a number of adult Monarch butterflies last year. If you come closest to identifying the correct number you will win a prize.

The plan: our GC schedule allows for 9 educational programs per year (2 meetings are social ...president's picnic in July and potluck/ auction in November). I gathered information on desired topics for programs from the 33 member surveys completed last fall. I'm focusing on providing programs that match your interests. However, there are so many aspects to each subject that we could have a whole series just to cover one topic. For example; the topic "perennials" could be presented as a program about the most resilient, or a speaker might structure the talk on best color combinations or how to make a Perennial border. Another might focus on sun/shade perennials. The possibilities are numerous! The trick is to find the best match for our club considering what speakers/topics are available, what haven't we covered in past years, and what is realistic in terms of cost. I will do my level best to find great programs. Help me by giving me feedback following each presentation. The comments will be very helpful.

Program coordinator, Billie Childress, billiedc@sbcglobal.net, cell 630-862-1213 or text.

Questions? Concerns? See me! -Billie



News from Kruse

Since our Kruse garden is covered by snow and at rest till spring, I will give you my thoughts for my own garden in the coming year.

Many of us during these months are looking at garden catalogues and ordering plants for that wonderful garden we imagine will be ours in the coming summer. But think. Why aren't garden catalogues sent out in the early fall when we would have more time to order, maybe place an order for gardening friends for Christmas? It's because in the winter we're rested from yard work, we are anxious for a flower. We don't remember the unpruned shrubs, the straggly plants, the failed annuals. We don't remember that we were too disinterested, tired, busy last August to water or weed. In winter we are at our weakest and the beautiful pictures in the catalogues and the plants soon to appear at the garden centers are luring us.

It's time to get a grip. Remember last year, the plants we ordered from the catalogues? In spring they seemed to arrive too early, almost all at once, packaged well in tiny containers, very delicate looking, and usually half the size we expected. I planted mine here and there just to get them in the ground before they totally wilted away, having long forgotten where they were to go in that garden of mine.

So now I've put away the garden catalogues. I pulled out some great garden books and magazines. My favorite garden magazine is the "English Garden". It has beautiful pictures of many perennial garden borders that are very doable. To me "a picture is worth a thousand words." This magazine is one of six garden magazine subscriptions that our garden club buys for our library. Many of the plants featured are very familiar to us. The gardens are planted in a way that I try to emulate, though not often with success. So this year I am not ordering plants now. Instead I have a list of five things that I will do that I know will make gardening less labor intensive for me and give me a fairly presentable garden. These are also the five points that make the gardens in the magazine so lovely.

No. 1 Remove All Debris

All debris should be removed as early as possible in the spring, hopefully in early April before the weeds sprout aggressively. All branches, old flower stalks, etc. should be cut down and raked up.

No. 2 Prune, Tidy, Mulch

Now is the time to look with a critical eye at my garden and be very brutal. I will prune those lopsided bushes, prune low-hanging tree branches that hit me in the head as I walk by. I will dig out those plants that never looked good—that straggly rose, the over-grown perennials, plants that looked messy, collapsed, those that need to be babied (who has the time,) plants that I hoped might recover and miraculously perform? Hope does not spring eternal in the NEAT garden. I will then mulch as much as possible. This part of the early work is the hardest, but done well, brings in later months the most satisfaction—a good appearance, healthy plants, and less weeds.

No. 3 Edge the Beds

I will use a shovel to dig out a shallow ditch between the border and the lawn. This will give a very finished appearance. After this chore I will have time for a bit of relaxation because if I do nothing else the garden will already look very fine. It will be neat and tidy.

No. 4 Repetition of Perennials and Shrubs

A great garden will always have a repetition of plants. Look at the beautiful gardens and notice. I like perennials tightly planted so there is little room for weeds. Our gardens are usually not large enough to have too many varieties of plants. A few varieties in groups of three or more, repeated throughout the border work well. Too many varieties end up looking like a miss-mash with no cohesion or a place for the eye to rest. The garden has to flow. The same is true for the shrubs in a border.

No. 5 Buy Plants for the Location

A plant for sun needs sun. A dry location is not swampy after a rain. I probably do not need many new plants if I divide what I have and reposition others into a better location. To get the tightly planted look I will seed annuals directly into the open spaces. I like the annuals weaving in between perennials, providing summer color. Some annuals that do well seeded directly in the soil are zinnia, marigold, larkspur, California poppy, to name a few. I like cosmos between tall grasses.

These five points are my thoughts and plan that I will try to follow in 2016 to make my garden more care-free and looking put-together. My aim is to start early and be done by Memorial Day. I remember my mother on many a Memorial Day looking at the plants that I hadn't as yet planted, so satisfied that her zinnias and old-fashion petunias were seeded weeks before. She would give me her best gardening advice: "Green is a color" and especially, "LESS IS MORE."

-Angie



Planning for Next Winter's Garden

by The Growing Place

We promise we're not jumping ahead to next winter. However, now is the time to really take a look at your garden and see what you can add to brighten up your space even in the dead of winter. Although flowers are few and far between, you can add interest in the winter with the textures of branches, a framework of trees, varying shades of evergreen and even windswept grasses.

Color – Enliven your view and delight your eye by adding a splash of color.

Greens - Evergreens come in many sizes and shapes but also colors. The crisp blue of juniper or spruce lends distance to your view. The bright gold of false cypress can cheer up a part shade corner. Some types of arborvitae shrubs turn rich orange for added drama. Groundcovers may be evergreen, too. Pachysandra's glossy dark foliage stands out in winter. Ajuga's dark burgundy leaves add interesting accents at the front of the border.

Reds and yellows - Many shrubs such as yellow twig or red twig dogwood have beautiful winter bark that is especially showy in front of mature pines or spruces.

Late winter flowers - Watch for early blossoms! Some hardy plants and bulbs bloom as soon as the temperatures rise regularly above freezing. It's great fun to find the first flower of the year. Adding snowdrops, winter aconite, snow crocus, hellebores, witch hazels or Cornelian cherry dogwoods for a early bloom.



Texture – Add interest to your view by combining different textures.

Deciduous Trees - Their branches are bare but there are some trees with beautifully textured bark that can be a focal point. Add a Paperbark Maple (*Acer griseum*) with its wonderful peeling bark or a Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) with its knobby, gnarled bark (pictured at left) or even a Seven Son Flower (*Heptacodium miconioides*) with its shaggy red bark.

Grasses - Some of our favorites include Little Bluestem 'Blue Heaven' and Panicum 'Northwind' *Calamagrostis* 'Karl Foerster' is another fairly common grass but it stands up well in the winter and because it is a cool season grass you will start to see new growth in late March. Mix several different grasses in the same bed for even more textural interest.

Views – Take a moment to pay attention to your views indoors and out.

What are some of your favorite views from inside? Are there picture windows that could use a focal point? A home office that needs inspiration? Kitchen windows that look out to an empty deck? Think about what sorts of colors and textures might enliven your view to the outdoors.


Are there views that you do not enjoy? Winter can be a good time to notice areas where you may want some screening. Plants can soften unsightly views and disguise troublesome areas.

Birds – Our feathered friends are attracted to different plants each season. In winter try to provide food and shelter.

Birds are hungry in winter. Consider planting plants that produce berries and seeds such as crabapple, viburnum, chokecherry, ornamental grasses and junipers.

It's cold out there! Birds will frequently roost together in dense evergreen trees and shrubs such as yews, spruces and junipers. They also prefer dense shrubs as cover from hungry predators.



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West Chicago Garden Club Membership Application - 2016

Our meetings in 2016 will be held on the 4th Thursday evening of each month from January through October and the 3rd Thursday of November (no meeting in December).

With your paid membership you receive a copy of our monthly newsletter and membership in the Garden Club of Illinois, which includes the quarterly publication *Garden Glories*.

Individual Membership:

\$15 per year

Family Membership:

\$25 per year

(For multiple members at the same address)

Our club year runs from January 1st through December 31st. 2016 Membership dues should be paid by February 25th, our February meeting.

Please make your check payable to:

West Chicago Garden Club

Please bring this form and your check to a club meeting or mail both to:

West Chicago Garden Club
P.O. Box 313
West Chicago, IL 60186

Application

Type: New or Renewal

Class: Individual or Family

Name(s): _____
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Please Note: A membership list with your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address, will be distributed to Club members, unless you check below the information you do not wish to appear:

In the circulated membership list, do not include my: ___ name; ___ address; ___ telephone number; ___ e-mail address