

We Go Gardening

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

Volume 28—Issue 2—February 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: February 22

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**

Backyard Birds and Bird Feeding

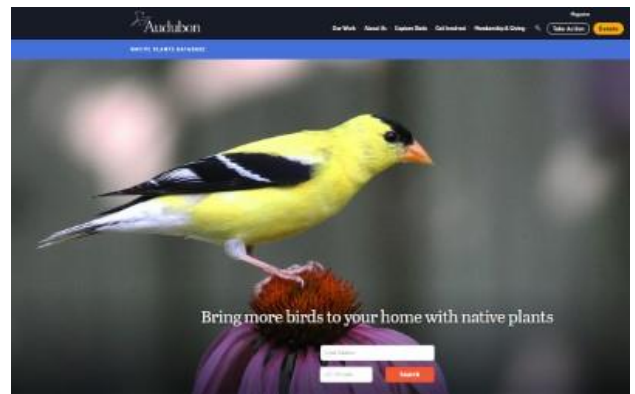
Ruth Kyme



Our February speaker is David Brooks, a professional naturalist with the Spring Valley Nature Center in Schaumburg. In his program, Backyard Birds and Bird Feeding, we will learn the “how to” of attracting a variety of birds to our property through properly maintained feeding stations and plantings that offer both food and shelter. The program will also include a who’s-who of common local birds and some of the migrating birds to be observed in the spring and fall.

Member Billie Childress suggested this Audubon Society link. You can type in your zip code and it will list a variety of plants for your area and the birds they may attract. It pairs well with this month’s speaker.

<https://www.audubon.org/native-plants>



Where to find us online

Website: www.westchicagogardenclub.org



Facebook:

facebook.com/westchicagogardenclub



Instagram:

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

MARCH 28TH MEETING

**“Best new Plants for 2024”
by Kim Hartman**

Notes from the President

Dan Beebe

Looks like we are going to continue to have a mild end to Winter (fingers crossed). Hopefully, that translates to a mild Spring and excellent weather for our annual Plant Sale and all of the events leading up to the sale. Preparations for the sale are well underway; there has been a meeting with the City to discuss plans, the tent contract has been signed, vegetable seeds have been ordered, the first of several greenhouses has been set up, the Park District's participation has been confirmed, Mary & Billie are making plans for getting annual plant plugs and dates for the much-loved Potting Parties have been set (See page [9](#)).

There is still a lot to be done between now and May 18th, but I am confident that all of you are ready to pitch in and help get things done. The potting parties are a great chance for members to socialize and meet other members of the club, so mark your calendars and start thinking about plants that you might be able to donate to the sale. 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](#). Additional details will be coming over the next couple of months.

I would also like to thank Julie Blazak, and Mary Smedegaard for volunteering to help our Program Director, Ruth Kyme, with planning this year's Twilight Tuesdays and local field trips. In addition, I want to thank Amanda Skinner for stepping up to help feed the Kruse House Garden cats. Your help with these small jobs and the hours put in by all of our volunteers are the fuel that keeps the club moving forward.

We are currently looking for additional people to help plan and coordinate events in the Kruse House Garden. The club can fully sponsor these events or co-sponsor them with other local organizations. If you are good at event planning or just like to help run events, this is the perfect opportunity for you. See Christina's article in this newsletter for more details.

And finally, please join me in welcoming all of our new members. When you see a face at a meeting that you don't recognize, take a minute to introduce yourself and share your love of gardening with our new members and guests.

Looking forward to a busy 2024!

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



MIKE & LINDA SABO

Resident of: West Chicago Since 2017

WCGC Member since: 2023

How did you become a member: Linda was invited to join at the Blooming Fest. Mike helped at the Kruse garden to spread mulch and signed up for 2024.

What is your current profession: Mike is a retired carpenter. Linda is a Senior Registered Financial Associate for a securities brokerage firm

What are you most proud of in your garden: We are kind of new at this so we don't have anything really different from most gardeners, but I guess Linda would say the limelight hydrangeas are a favorite. The blossoms are huge and so far they are doing great. Mike is more on the lawn care and loves a freshly mowed lawn.

A garden mistake you made: Planting too close together. Linda always feels like she is moving things around.

What do you love most about gardening: We love the results, to look out in the backyard and see the wonderful display of color.

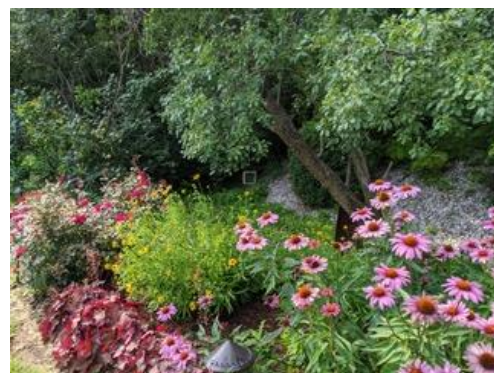
What tip, trick, or words of wisdom can you share: Listen to people who know things about plants. Linda doesn't know a lot, so she's a bit like a sponge when it comes to listening to others. Mike is more on the lawn maintenance end of the operation. I have a commitment on Thursdays so rarely will I be able to join the meetings of the garden club. They hope to go to some of the garden walks this year.

Favorite place to purchase seeds and plants: Loved Proseks! Also the Growing Place and Home Depot.

Favorite spot in your garden: Linda was given a Serviceberry tree to memorialize her dad when he passed away. That's kind of special.

What plant can't you wait to see this season emerge from your garden: Linda loves when the lilacs are in bloom. She also loves her coneflowers, but also needs more spring flowers.

What are you looking forward to this season: Linda planted a few new plants last fall at the end of the season so it will be nice to see how it turns out. She also removed a lot of rudbeckia hirta to make some space.



Kruse Garden Events Volunteers

Volunteers would require very limited physical demands and helping does not necessarily involve any hands-on gardening.

We need members to assist in planning work days in the garden, act as a liaison to the West Chicago Historical Society who owns the property, work with the Historical Society on developing new, innovative ways to showcase all the work that has been and continues to be put into the garden and most importantly share the garden with the community.

Interested? Email westchicagogardenclub@gmail.com or speak to Christina Covarrubias

Christina Covarrubias



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For the Love of Gardening...

Just a friendly reminder to pay your 2024 membership dues.



Don't miss out on benefits such as receiving monthly newsletters, meeting notifications and more.

Dues are:

\$20 – Individual and \$30 – Family.

Download the [Membership Application](#) from our website.

At the Feb 22nd meeting pay by cash, credit card or check.

You may also mail payment to the PO Box on the form, or pay by credit card online at <https://west-chicago-garden-club.square.site/>.

Seed Order Sharing Meetup

Christina Covarrubias

If you were inspired to start seeds after last month's meeting this is for you.

Thursday, February 22 at 5:30PM in our club meeting location at St Andrews Lutheran Church. (Before our monthly meeting at 7:00pm)

Feel free to come browse some seed catalogs, talk seeds with fellow members, order seeds, and consider splitting a seed packet order (e.g. most of us don't have room for 20 pumpkin seedlings right?).

We are also in need of additional catalogs if you have any we can borrow please contact Christina at cmcgal.220@gmail.com and she will arrange pick ahead of that date.

Members will pay for their seed order and share the shipping cost.



Care to Share?

Janet Frogner

This is a new segment in our monthly newsletter featuring any items that YOU, members, would like to share with other members.

This month includes an article from Barb Bizzarri about her Amaryllis. We are looking for anything that our members would like to share, such as tips & tricks, a good gardening book, a nursery or website you particular like, and so on.

To participate just email your item(s) along with your name and contact information (if you need to be contacted) to westchicagogardenclub@gmail.com

Do you enjoy writing about Gardening?

Pamela Darrah

We could still use another writer or two for writing a monthly article for the West Chicago Voice. We sent in an [article](#) about the club in late January and will be submitting a version of the "Winter Sowing" article from this newsletter soon.

If you are interested, you might want to take a look at the [West Chicago Voice website](#) to get an idea of how this publication looks. If you decide you would like to help with writing an article or two, please contact us at westchicagogardenclub@gmail.com. We need a minimum or 4-6 volunteers to make this work.



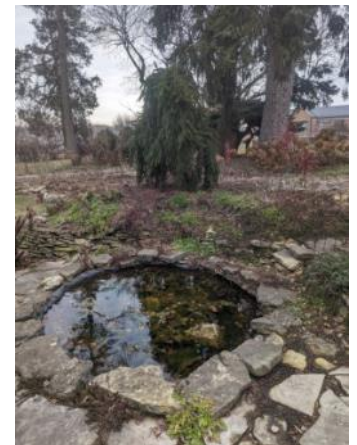


January was a long dark month this year. There wasn't even enough sunlight to cause the snow to glisten. For the first time, our solar panels generated no electricity, and the extended sub-zero temperatures knocked out the heat in our greenhouse. So, it was with excitement and delight one early February morning that I discovered the dancing yellow petals of the winter aconites in our front yard. Nothing beats these early reminders of spring as winter slowly begins to fade away.

Thus it was that I decided to make a journey to the Kruse garden to see the place where I first encountered these gentle reminders of spring's renewal. Much to my disappointment, I couldn't find any sign of them there. Don't get me wrong; the garden still had the quiet beauty of winter's simplicity. The unique shapes of the trees and the bushes stood out and the little frog prince by the pond gazed longingly for just a murmur of green.



At this time of year, we can feel winter's dull and gray grasp beginning to weaken. There is a bit more sun, a few hints of green and the hidden secrets of new life shyly begin to appear. The lethargy that comes from winter's darkness starts to lessen and new projects come to mind. I expect that the aconites will come back at Kruse, perhaps even a snowdrop or two, and in my mind the garden will begin to grow again.



We Go Gardening

Board Position: Vice President

Approximately two years ago Barb Bizzarri asked me if I'd be interested in taking over her position as the vice president. I wasn't quite sure what was involved or what I might be getting myself into, but I'm glad I accepted. I've had the opportunity to meet and work alongside wonderful people and become a more active participant.

Vice President responsibilities include:

- Perform the duties of the President and Secretary in their absence
- Write the "Getting To Know You" article in our monthly newsletter
- Have the opportunity to help out with other club activities such as the potluck meeting
- Possibly takeover the President's position when he/she steps down
- Attend monthly board meetings

If you think you might be interested in learning more about this board position, please see me at the monthly meetings.

Janet Frogner



Suggestions ~

You will now have the opportunity to share your suggestions with the garden club board members.

Suggestion forms and drop-off location will now be available at the registration table during our monthly meetings.

Janet Frogner



A Growing Legacy

A lot has changed over the years but our commitment to our customers and to our community has not. Our goal remains providing high-quality, locally-grown plant and landscape material, expert advice and professional installation and design services.



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Amaryllis

Barbara Bizzarri

Every Christmas I purchase several amaryllis bulbs that I start in mid October and the flowers bloom at Christmas. This Christmas season I took advantage of Pauline's offer to purchase bulbs along with her Bulb Bingo order. As soon as I received my 3 amaryllis bulbs, I planted them and waited and waited and waited and not even a peep of green showed!

I called Pauline and she found that the bulbs this year were Holland Amaryllis, and these bulbs take 12 weeks to bloom unlike 'regular' amaryllis aka 'Christmas Amaryllis'.

My research showed that there is a difference from one amaryllis bulb to another and the variables of origin, variety and bulb size all factor into price and performance, Most amaryllis bulbs are produced in Holland, Brazil, Peru, South Africa, and Israel. Dutch Amarilis, are grown in temperature-controlled greenhouses to ensure quality.

Amaryllis bulbs typically take 5 to 7 weeks to bloom whereas the Dutch amaryllis bulb takes 12 weeks. If you combine these natural bloom time variations with a staggered planting schedule, you can have Amarilis in flower from December through early March.

My Holland Amaryllis bulbs each produced three stems with four flowers opening on each stem. It was a spectacular display and long lasting.

Here's a quick tip, when I plant amaryllis bulbs, I plant them with a 1" base of glass marbles, then good quality dirt up to the middle of the bulb. I use tall glass vases there by eliminating the need for staking the plants or plants falling over. As you can see from the photos, the wait was so well worth it!

Thanks, Pauline. I really appreciate your hard work each year with Bulb Bingo and ordering bulbs for members.



I waited

And waited

And it was worth the wait!



Nature Notes – Get Ready!

Kerry Perry

After 17 years underground, cicadas are expected to emerge in huge numbers. In the Chicago area the cicadas will be seen in late May and active through late June.

Cicadas are insects in the same order as stink bugs and aphids. Cicadas aren't harmful to people or pets; they do not sting or bite and pesticides do not kill them.

The immature cicada (nymph) claws its way out of the ground. Its pale body emerges from the old shell (exoskeleton) to climb into trees and join the "synchronized mating frenzy". Only the male cicadas sing. After reproduction and laying eggs, cicadas start dying and dropping from the trees. Their dead bodies pile up and could become rather stinky.

You may want to keep your snow shovel handy to clear the sidewalks. Add the debris to your compost pile. The noise of the insects can be disruptive, but only lasts six weeks. Male cicadas can reach decibels similar to a lawn mower. Eggs on twigs and shoots of newly planted trees could cause damage, so you might wrap new branches with cheese cloth.

Benefits of these insects:

- Valuable food source for birds and other predators
- Aerate lawns
- Add nutrients to the soil as they decompose

Enjoy nature.



SAVE THESE DATES

Pop up potting parties: Saturday or Sundays in March to be determined

Perennial Potting Parties:

- Sunday, April 14, 1-4 PM
- 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)



Winter Sowing

Christina Covarrubias

If you wanted detailed instructions on starting seeds outside after last month's meeting read on!

- 1) Use translucent or clear 1 gallon containers (e.g. water or milk gallons, not solid white ones).
- 2) Cut the container nearly in half starting where the base of the handle meets the side. Cut around the circumference stopping just before the handle on the other side. This will basically leave a hinge which will be useful in a couple steps.
- 3) Poke drainage holes in the bottom of each container. You can use a hammer and a long nail, a cordless drill or carefully with a sharp knife to accomplish this. 5 holes are adequate.
- 4) Fill each container with potting soil. This will be about 4 inches deep based on where you cut the container in half. Water the soil until it is all thoroughly moistened; equivalent to a well dampened but not dripping sponge.
- 5) Plant seeds according to the seed packet instructions. For vining plants sow a max of 2-3 seeds per container. For things like Alyssum or herbs a generous sprinkle will allow you to divide the plants in clumps suitable for planting in the ground later.
- 6) Tape the lid back on to the base. Painter's tape works well, but electric, duct or masking tape will also do. Clear packing tape is not recommended as it quickly becomes brittle and loses its adhesiveness.
- 7) Label on the outside of the containers with a plant marker or wax pencil so the sun does not erase the plant's id. Sharpie will fade and a popsicle stick inside is unreadable without opening the container and losing the greenhouse effect of the setup.
- 8) Set the containers OUTSIDE in a protected place that will prevent them from blowing away. Make sure they will receive plenty of full sun. Do NOT put the caps back on.
- 9) 2-7 days before planting these seedlings in the ground untape and prop open the top half. Be careful the top doesn't become a guillotine- it may be necessary to cut the top off completely in some cases to save the plants. This time of propping open the containers is usually around the same time other annuals or tender perennials would be planted-on or after May 20th.



Other tips from personal experience: This method is supposed to produce stronger/hardier plants because they have already acclimated to the weather from their beginning. It will definitely take longer for the seeds to germinate. Compared to their indoor sown counterparts the plants catch up quickly and perform fairly equally. They do not need to be watered after the initial watering. They will get watered with rain/snow depending on the weather. This is why you don't put the caps back on them. I NEVER water these containers. I did cover them with a sheet if it snowed AFTER the plants germinated but never for frosts.

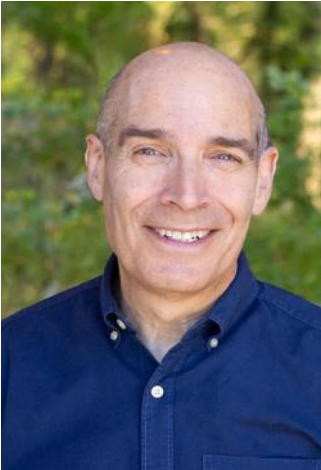
Although it is called winter sowing, I have set out my containers anywhere between March 15th and April 15th in order to avoid too many snowstorms after sprouting. You definitely can start earlier than me.

Other helpful resources: [GardenAnswer YouTube titled "Winter Sowing"](#) and the [Facebook group Winter Sowing with Sheryl Mann](#)

Happy gardening!!

Local Events

An Evening With Geoffrey Baer” - Thursday, April 4 from 6 – 8:30 p.m



The Friends of the Forest Preserve District of DuPage County is delighted to host “An Evening With Geoffrey Baer” on Thursday, April 4 from 6 – 8:30 p.m. at Mayslake Peabody Estate in Oak Brook. Popular WTTW host, producer, and writer Geoffrey Baer to explore the DuPage forest preserves. From historic architecture, namesake families, and other local characters, discover fascinating stories about the preserves. This program is available to individuals ages 18 and up. \$150 per premium seat; \$75 general seat. For more information or to purchase tickets, call 630-871-6400. Or visit <https://dupageforest.kindful.com/e/evening-with-baer>.

We would like to extend this invitation to your club members who may be interested in this program.

Thank you for your support in our community! We are grateful for your club’s donation, which helped the Forest Preserve District to restore habitat, preserve native plants and animals, and sustain our landscapes and natural functions in the DuPage forest preserves.

U of I Extension: Where will you Garden? Growing Great Vegetables

February 27, 2024 — 6:00 PM - 7:00 PM

Online Program — Event Fee: \$10.00

Growing a vegetable garden is hard work, but sometimes, the hardest part is knowing where to start.

Dig in with confidence this spring, with the Growing Great Vegetables five-week webinar series that explores how to grow a vegetable garden from seed to harvest. Log on for a weekly online workshop covering a new topic, engage with Illinois Extension horticulture experts, and receive emails with even more research-based tips and factsheets.



Build a garden using whatever space you have. Learn about traditional garden plots, raised beds, salad tables, container gardening, growing vertically, and more.

Sessions are recorded and made available to registered participants if you are unable to attend live.

For details and registration, visit <https://extension.illinois.edu/events/2024-02-27-where-will-you-garden>.

There is also information on four other additional series sessions in March. Each class covers a different topic. Registered participants can attend all five sessions and a bonus Q&A session on April 23. Topics include: Seed and Plant Choices, Soils and Fertilizers, Warm-season Vegetables, Cool-season Vegetables, and Insects & Diseases.

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.

Feb 22	David Brooks	Backyard Birds and Bird Feeding	Carol G., Keith L., Barbara D.
Mar 28	Kim Hartman	Best new Plants for 2024	
Apr 25	Nina Koziel	The Elegant Edible Garden	
May 18		PLANT SALE	
May 23	Marcy Lautanen-Raleigh	Herbs	
June 27	Thom Skibble	Permaculture	
July 25	President's Picnic		
Aug 22	Cindy Crosby	Dragonflies and Damselflies	
Sept 26	Dianne Blazek	Plant Breeding	
Oct 24		Bulb Bingo	
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>