

We Go Gardening

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club



February 26 Meeting

St. Andrew Lutheran Church

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

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Pruning: Don't be Scared

Ruth Kyme

Our February speaker, Amy Powers, is a Garden Coach based near Chicago with a lifelong passion for gardening and nature.



With a background in chemistry, IT consulting, and competitive sports, she combines science and coaching to help clients create thriving, sustainable gardens through in-person and virtual sessions. Amy is on a mission to teach everyone to get in touch with nature and learn how to manage their own landscape, from vegetables and herbs to trees and perennials.

Pruning can feel intimidating and downright scary. When should I prune? How much should I prune? What if I make a mistake? But Amy's presentation, 'Pruning: Don't be Scared,' breaks it down into clear, confidence-building guidance. Amy explains when, why, and how to prune trees, shrubs, and perennials to promote plant health, structure, and flowering.



We are still looking for volunteers to Setup/Clean up for our meetings and to bring treats and host the refreshment table. We need a Sweet treat and a host for this month's meeting. [Click Here to sign up using Sign Up Genius](#)

Just a friendly reminder to pay your 2026 membership dues

Pamela Darrah

Thank you to the club members who have already paid their 2026 Membership Dues.

If you haven't renewed, a [Membership Application](#) can be found on our website. Please bring the form and your renewal to the February meeting or mail it to the PO Box shown on the form.

We can also accept credit cards using our online "store" where you can pay your dues. If you choose this option please write a note that this is a renewal in the spot for a comment. We would also appreciate you filling out a [Membership Application](#) so we are certain we have your current information.

The online store is at : <https://west-chicago-garden-club.square.site/>



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We have the right plant for the right place!
We enjoy sharing our love of plants and
knowledge with our customers year
round. Stop in and browse.

For the Love of Gardening...

About our Club

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.

Meetings & Dues

We meet on the 4th Thursday from January to October, the 3rd Thursday of November and do not meet in December.

Most meetings are at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in West Chicago (155 N Prince Crossing Rd) at 7:00pm. Occasional meetings may be held elsewhere and that information can be found in our newsletter or website.

The Board meets on the 2nd Thursday at St. Andrew Lutheran Church at 7:00pm.

Dues for 2026: Individual \$20
Family \$30

Contact Us

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Board Members

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Treasurer: Karen Sherman
Publicity Director: Ruth Gauss
Program Director: Ruth Kyme
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Pamela Darrah
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Lisa Marie Vogt
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Mary Schramer & Dan Beebe
Kruse Garden Chair: Open

Getting To Know You - we'd love to!

Pamela Darrah

Our newsletter usually has a monthly feature called "Getting to Know" which features a little bit of information about one of our members. This is put together each month by our Vice President, Janet Frogner.

Sadly, she could not find a volunteer this month to be featured in this article. To be our featured member only requires you to answer some simple questions - I'm sure you have seen them in past issues - and to

provide a photo of yourself. If you would like to also include a few photos of your garden, we all would enjoy seeing them.

If you would be willing to be featured in a Getting to Know You article this year, please reach out to us. Either email us at WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com or talk to Janet or another board member at the February meeting.

Out and About

Kerry Perry

College of DuPage hosted an event to thank those who plant the seeds of opportunity in students' lives. The tour and presentation was held in one of the Horticultural Department's greenhouses.

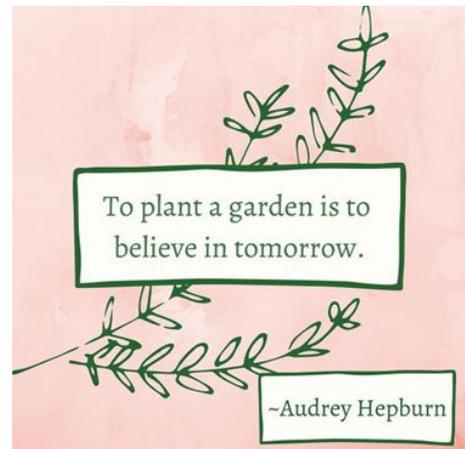
Speakers included Anne Farnum, Coordinator of Scholarships and Lead Gifts and Brian Clement, Asst.

Professor of Horticulture. Members from nine local garden clubs attended; WCGC was represented by Karen Sherman and Kerry Perry.

In 2025 WCGC donated \$3,000 in scholarships to eligible students in the COD Horticultural Department programs. Our club continues its commitment to support education.



Kerry, Karen, Anne and Brian



Plant Sale News

Mary Schramer

Blooming Fest is May 16th this year!

The Blooming Fest Plant Sale is our only fundraiser and provides the resources to carry out our club's mission.



To prepare for the sale, we typically hold 4 Perennial Potting Parties where members donate plants from their gardens and we pot them up. We also hold 3 or 4 plug potting parties beginning in March and ending the last week of April or first of May, depending on donations we get from a local nursery. We usually schedule these at the last minute for a Saturday or Sunday afternoon as soon as we find out plants are available. For this reason, I tend to call them Pop Up Potting Parties.

Garden club volunteers also help water and care for the plants until the sale, label and price the plants, etc. It takes a lot of work to get things ready for the sale and we need the help of as many members as possible. To help you plan so you can be involved here are some dates to get on your calendar:

Perennial Potting Parties

April 4 (Saturday) from 9:30 AM to 12:30 PM

April 12 (Sunday) from 1 PM to 4 PM

April 18 (Saturday) from 1PM to 4PM

April 26 (Sunday) from 1PM to 4PM

Other Important Dates

Label Plants for Plant Sale: May 9, 9 AM to 12 PM

Members Only Plant Sale: May 14

Set up Plant Sale and move plants to tent: May 15

Blooming Fest Plant Sale: May 16

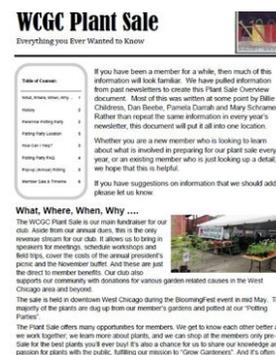
Pop up potting parties for annuals will begin in March. Typically, we pot these plugs on a Saturday or

Sunday afternoon and there are usually 4 or 5 times when we get plants between March 1 and the end of April. If you want to be involved in this process, please visit the garden club Sign Up Genius page and add your name to the list to be notified ([Annual Potting Volunteers](#)).

We are also looking for people who are willing to help with small, one time only, jobs related to managing the plug donations. Add your name to that list if you think you may be available and you will receive an email when we have an opportunity. Both opportunities are available on the same Sign Up Genius page.

There is also a sign up for **odd jobs** associated with managing the plant sale preparations and the day of the plant sale. These odd jobs may take a few hours or may be more involved. Some can be done from home and some cannot. If you would like to be on a list to receive an email or call when these jobs pop-up, [sign-up for Plant Sale Odd Jobs notification](#).

Are you a more recent member and would like to know more about the Plant 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](#).



There are several articles in this document that have been pulled from past newsletters or written for this informational document. We've tried to organize it so it is easy to find any information you may be looking for. If you still have questions, please send an email to WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com and we'll be happy to help.

News from Kruse

Christina Covarrubias

A February garden in West Chicago should be difficult to discuss. However when you find a weekend with 50-60 degree temperatures it's easy to survey the garden and take time to admire the winter landscape. Sadly, no early spring bulbs or ephemerals were popping up despite the unseasonable weather.

The Kruse garden, at 527 Main Street, belongs to the original house built in 1917 and presumably the garden dates back closely to that time. Past Kruse garden volunteers describe uncovering stone paths buried in layers of soil, digging a hole to find the hole belonging to the goldfish pond (though we don't keep goldfish) and explained the north hillside was originally a rock garden. This long established garden offers visual interest in hardscaping, mature trees and perennials left standing from the past season.

As always you are welcome to walk around the garden any day of the week; parking behind the garage. You are also welcome help garden with our wonderful Kruse crew starting in April on Wednesdays from 9-11:30am or the Second Saturday of every month from 9-11:30am. Commitment to come every time is NOT required to join the fun.



Nature Notes: Oak

Kerry Perry

The Bebb Oak is a naturally occurring hybrid oak with White and Bur as parents. Generally, it can be identified by having characteristics (leaves, buds, bark, and/or fruit) of both parents on the same tree. Because it is a hybrid many trees will grow faster than either parent will. It is less likely to suffer from chlorosis (yellow leaves) than the White Oak.

Yikes! This 400-year-old oak was down the road from my former home in Northbrook. While driving

through the old neighborhood yesterday, I was thrilled that this magnificent giant is still standing.

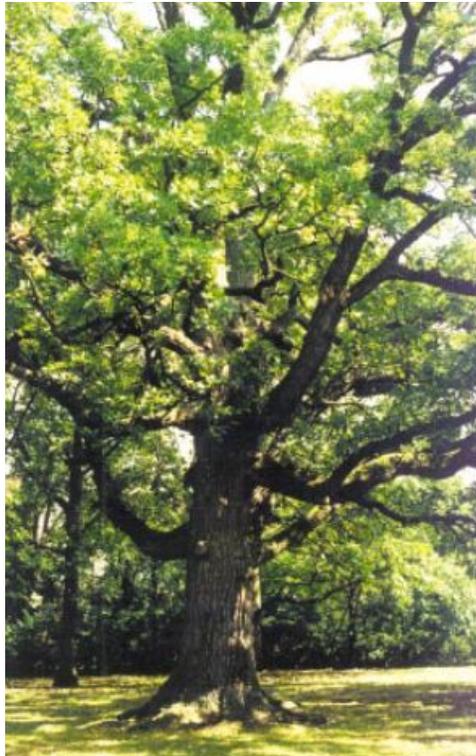
“Great oaks from little acorns grow” is an Old English proverb.

Plant an acorn today!!

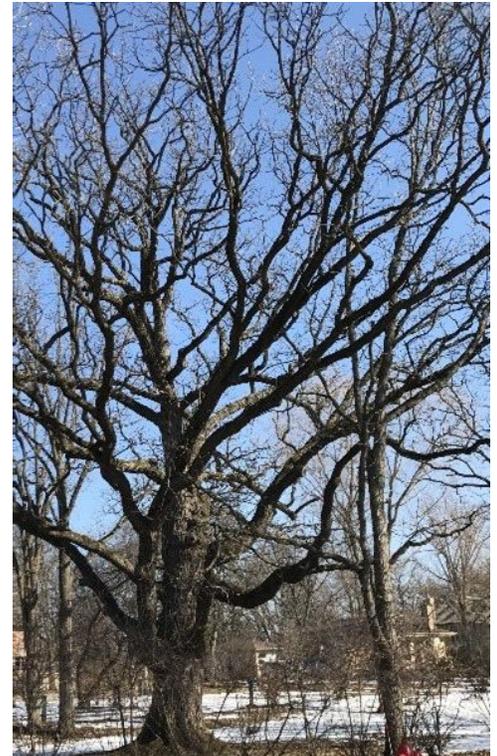


Bebb Oak
Quercus x bebbiana

Form: Round Height: 60-80'
Spread: 60-100'



August 2001



February 2026

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Growing Native—Born to be Wild(flowers)

Ruth Gauss

Hi, gardening friends! I thought it would be fun to cover the native plants that are listed as the “[birth month flowers](#)” for this month since there aren’t any actual truly native plants in bloom at this point in our area in February and there’s quite a bit of room for interpretation with the two species that are listed: Violet and Iris.

I understand that a lot of people don’t believe that we need to plant or encourage violets. They tend to just show up and spread like wildfire, but I’m betting that you are a fan of butterflies, so I’m sure it’s no surprise that I am going to share a couple of the insects that rely on violets for larval food so we might show a little more tenderness towards the enthusiastic violets!

The [Aphrodite fritillary](#) (which is state threatened) and the [Meadow fritillary](#) are two small butterflies that we can support in our area through letting a patch of violets grow in our native plant areas (or lawn areas that are untreated with fertilizer and pesticides and not mown very low). As I shared in my [September 2025 article](#) we need to keep in mind that our plants will have leaves that have holes and maybe that’s one of the advantages of plants like violets—we won’t feel disappointed when we see that! We are intentionally



Aphrodite Fritillary Photo © Mary Kay Rubey



Meadow fritillary (photo from IDNR)

growing that plant to provide food for these small flying jewels and will be excited to know that we can offer them as food to support the ecosystem.

[Common Blue Violet](#) (*Viola sororia sororia*) can grow almost anywhere, spread readily, and bloom from April to August. They are small plants with blue or white flowers and the plants tolerate clay, deer, and black walnut, which we all know can be problematic for some plants.

Onto the other birth month flower, iris. Our native Iris is [Blue Flag Iris](#) (*Iris virginica shrevei*), which is a wetland plant, making it perfect for a rain-garden or next to a pond or other water

source. Blue Flag Iris is June blooming on 1-1/2–2’ tall plants. The flowers are showy, fragrant, and make a great cut flower—but you might want to leave them in your garden for the bees and butterflies to enjoy the nectar and pollen. This plant does best in a sunny, moist spot and might not flower or thrive outside of those conditions. Blue Flag Iris is somewhat toxic to deer, so they tend to leave it alone.



Image from [IllinoisWildflowers.info](#)

I hope this was helpful in bringing a little color into February and giving some food for thought about what to plant where in our gardens in the coming growing season! Happy (native) gardening and anticipation of Spring!

Local Events for gardeners

Patti Pirrie

Wednesday Feb 26. The Buzz in Your Garden. 7-8:30pm. Free Online/Virtual Seminar. Wild Ones Natural Landscapers Greater DuPage
https://dupage.wildones.org/events/?wo_event_id=11569

The Buzz in Your Garden is an introduction to the many pollinating bees making essential contributions to the health and productivity of gardens and ecosystems. You'll gain a new appreciation for how people and bees are helping each other while peacefully working and living side by side.



Thursday March 5 & Saturday March 7. Introduction to Pruning (online and in person). The Morton Arboretum (Lisle, IL). Cost: \$49. Member cost: \$42.
<https://mortonarb.org/explore/activities/adult-programs/introduction-to-pruning/>

Practice correct pruning techniques and learn which plants to prune now and, more importantly, which to prune later. Learn which trees and shrubs to prune at different times of the year and the best practices in pruning different species of trees and shrubs. In this interactive class, you will complete a 60-minute online component on your own before attending an in-person session. Spend the in-person session outdoors with an expert who will demonstrate what to prune and how to do it. Then put on your gloves, grab some pruners, and try it yourself.



Saturday, March 7. Designing a Pollinator Garden Seminar. 11am-12pm The Growing Place. Aurora, IL. Free. No registration

required.
<https://www.thegrowingplace.com/event/saturday-seminars-designing-a-pollinator-garden/>

Learn how to plan a butterfly and pollinator garden with practical guidance for new or existing garden spaces. Join Kyle Lambert, Manager of Perennials & Roses at The Growing Place, as he shares tips to plan your layout, choose plant varieties that provide pollen and nectar, and use color and plant groupings to attract and support a wide range of pollinators.



Thursday, March 12. Doors open at 6:30 pm. Tickets \$20 in advance. \$25 at the door. 33rd Annual Floral Symphony at Glenbard South High School (Glen Ellyn, IL)
<https://www.gsboosters.org/floralsymphony24/p/tix>

Floral Symphony is an annual flower and music show that benefits the Glenbard South music programs. Watch amazing floral arrangements made right before your eyes, as well as music played by our talented local students. On stage, Master Florists will create lavish arrangements while our Master of Ceremonies educates us on the latest in floral design. Each floral arrangement will be awarded as a Door Prize (your entrance ticket serves as your Door Prize entry and you must be present to win!).



Saturday, March 14 at 10:30am. Seminar: Beyond the Best Sellers: Underused Plants. Woldhuis Farms Sunrise Greenhouse (Grant Park,



Continued on Page 9

Local Events for gardeners (Continued)

Patti Pirrie

IL). No registration required.

<https://woldhuisfarms.com/Spring-Fever-Events>

This in-person seminar shines a light on 12 underutilized perennials and shrubs that bring depth, resilience, and quiet beauty to Midwest landscapes, yet are often overlooked in favor of familiar standbys. You'll learn why these overlooked plants succeed, where they fit best in real garden situations, and how to confidently incorporate them into existing landscapes.

Saturdays, March 14, 21 & 28 at 8:30am & 12:30pm.
Greenhouse Tour.

Woldhuis Farms Sunrise Greenhouse (Grant Park, IL). No registration required.

<https://woldhuisfarms.com/Spring-Fever-Events>



On our behind-the-scenes tours we will highlight the technology

used for heating, cooling, seeding, watering, fertilizing, planting, and much more! Each tour is approximately one hour long and covers a half mile. Wear comfortable shoes!

Now through March 22. Valentine's Day Flower Show. Free admission.

Wilder Park Conservatory (Elmhurst, IL). Open Monday–Sunday. 8 am–2:30 pm

<https://www.epd.org/facilities/wilder-park-conservatory>



Wilder Park Conservatory hosts three seasonal flower shows, showcasing the vibrant colors and beauty of various flowering plants. The conservatory is free and open to the public year-round, offering a serene escape with lush flora and seasonal blooms.

Twilight Tuesdays

Ruth Kyme



A few years ago, we began a new WCGC event called Twilight Tuesdays. Twilight Tuesdays are intended to be casual, laid-back events on Tuesday evenings at a member's garden. Members are welcome to visit the designated garden after 6:30pm and spend as much or as little time as they like viewing the garden, socializing with other members and discussing the garden with the host(s). This is not a "Garden Walk" and there is no pressure on our hosts to have their garden "perfect" for the event. It is a chance to see other members' gardens in a relaxed setting.

If you have never hosted a Twilight Tuesday. You can [sign up on Signup Genius now \(click here\)](#). There are nine Tuesdays available May- August. Don't be shy! We would love to see your garden.

If we don't get enough new volunteers, we will later open the signup to anyone who would like to host whether they have done it before or not. If it fills up fast, we could add a couple other Tuesdays to the schedule.

Each week, a day or two before the event, an email will be sent to members with the details about that week's garden. This will include a little bit about the garden, the location and perhaps a couple of photographs to peak your interest.

Upcoming Programs & Events for 2026

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.

[Click Here](#) to download a poster with our 2026 Schedule.

Date	Speaker	Topic	Treat Volunteers
January 22	Mel Zalousek	Identifying Trees in Wintertime	Patricia P, Janette G, Roxanne W, Dotty F
February 26	Amy Powers	Pruning: Don't Be Scared	Janette G, Patricia P, Claudia F, Keith L
March 26	Dolly Foster	Plant Propagation From Stem Cuttings, Layering, and Divisions	Jean M, Margie V
April 23	Nina Koziol	To be announced	Shirley S, Judy K
May 16		PLANT SALE	
May 28	Ann Baker	The Blended Family: Integrating Natives into Traditional Gardens	Marion M, Mary S
June 25	Diane Smith	How to Breathe Life into Your Landscaping	Lisa H
July 23		President's Picnic	
August 27	Nicole Jagielski	Grow Your Vegetable Garden Year Round- Even in Chicago	
September 24	DuPage County Forest Preserve	Civic Outreach: The Urban Coyote	
October 22		Bulb Bingo	Barb B
November 19		Member Appreciation Dinner	

Garden Bucks

West Chicago Garden Club distributes Garden Bucks (real fake money) to our members. You earn Garden Bucks by participating in club activities, volunteering at events, and donating items!

We have a Tally Sheet that you can use to help you keep track of your own Garden Bucks. We work on an honor system and you need to add up your total before the November meeting.

There will be copies available at our meetings or you can download by [Clicking Here](#).

At the November meeting you will be able to use your

Bucks to enter raffles for donated items and gift cards.

Come out and volunteer. Your participation keeps our club going strong.