

# We Go Gardening

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

Volume 24 Issue 7 July 2020



*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 environment in which we live.*

**Meeting Date: July 23**

**Meeting Time: 6:00 to 8:00 pm**

**Meeting Location: Kruse Garden  
527 Main St**

## A Visit to the Kruse Garden

Many thanks to everyone who took our survey. Based on the results, over half of our members are comfortable with meeting at the Kruse Garden this month.

This is going to be a very casual “meeting” where any members who are comfortable can come to the garden (wearing facemasks!) and enjoy the beautiful space that has been created and maintained by our volunteers. Some of those volunteers will be there to answer any questions you may have.

There will not be a program, but it will be a chance for the club to get together and socialize (at a safe distance).

There is parking available at City Hall (475 Main St). There are a few spaces in

the Kruse driveway—please reserve these for members who cannot walk the short distance from City Hall to the garden.

For more information about the garden,. [See page 5](#) for Billie’s article about the history of our club’s work there or [page 4](#) for this month’s News from Kruse.



AUGUST 27TH MEETING

**Native Plants?**

## Notes from the President

Dan Beebe

Well, as you know by now, the State moved to Stage 4 of its reopening plan, however, many meeting spaces that would be suitable for our club are being very cautious and have not reopened their doors. As such, at a special board meeting in June, the board sent out an online survey to all members to get some feedback on how comfortable members were with attending meetings, informal outdoor gatherings and/or online (Zoom) meetings. 50 responses were received. 35 were OK with informal outdoor gatherings and 34 expressed some level of interest in online meetings. As a result, we will be meeting informally in the Kruse House garden in July and will investigate the possibility of a speaker to present to us online at some point in the future.

Also, at the board meeting the board agreed that, because we have been unable to meet as a group for the past few months and club activities will remain on hold for the foreseeable future, all 2020 Memberships will automatically be extended through the end of 2021.

Keep an eye on our website and our Facebook page for updates as we continue to navigate forward through our ever changing situation. As always, stay safe and hope to see you soon. -Dan

## Garden Notes

Barb Melville

This was a fabulous year for my daylilies! Each plant seemed to have doubled in size and was tall, vibrant and had a wonderful scent that I had not noticed before. I am planning on dividing these gorgeous plants and wanted to find the best way to do this. I found this article below and hopefully it's helpful to others who also are not sure of the best way to make the most of their daylilies.



When is the best time to separate and transplant daylilies?

From P. Allen Smith Gardeners, the best value in plants is generally determined by three factors. I want them to be low maintenance, I'd like for them to bloom for a long period of time and I'd like for them to come back year after year. Well I know this may sound like a tall order, but there are actually a lot of plants out there that will fill this criteria.

One of the best examples is the daylily. In fact, they have another attribute as well, they can be very vigorous growers, often doubling in number from year to year to the point that they really should be divided every three to five years to continue good blooming.

I've found that the late summer is an excellent time of the year to separate and transplant clumps of daylilies. By doing it at this time, it gives them an opportunity to settle in before shorter days and colder temperatures set in. Also by moving them in late summer as opposed to the spring, it's been my experience that they actually seem to bloom better.

There's really nothing to dividing daylilies. Just carefully lift the clumps with a sharp shovel and gently remove the soil from the roots so you can begin to see the individual plants. Then with a knife separate each plant and remove any foliage that appears dead or diseased.

Now just cut off the foliage at about half and they're ready for transplanting back into the garden. Space them about ten to twelve inches apart, put them in full sun and keep them well watered until they're rooted in.

**While their flowers are lovely to see and smell, lilies pose a significant safety threat for your cat.** Lilies in the "true lily" and "daylily" families are very dangerous for cats. The entire lily plant is toxic: the stem, leaves, flowers, pollen, and even the water in a vase.

## Getting to Know ...

**Barb Bizzarri**

### **Melisa Ferguson**



**Resident of West Chicago:** I'm a life long resident

**West Chicago Garden Club Member:** Since 2011

**Hobbies:** Reading, bowling, spending time with my dog...a beagle

**Favorite Flower:** Ivy Geraniums; The variegated purple/white ones.

**Biggest Gardening Mistake:** Not Weeding...."the weeds won"

**Career:** West Chicago Alderman and Medical Supply Sales (we've been super busy this year! )

**What gardening chore do you hate:** Mulching

**If you could have only one flower in your garden, what would it be?** Shasta Daisy

**What is your least favorite flowers:** Cosmos and Cleomes. I think it's because in high school I worked at We Grow (original name of the garden center until it became We Grow Dreams). It wasn't fun always moving around those tall cosmos and cleomes.

**What do you look forward to in your Fall garden?** Mums, in all different colors

**Favorite restaurant:** Hawthorn's

**If you could travel now, where would you go?** Pennsylvania to visit family and I would also take the time to visit Long Wood Gardens, a beautiful garden in Chester County, PA

**Anyone need a Red Point Maple??** I bought a tree from the Arbor Day foundation this year. It came with 2 free trees. I only have room for one of the extra trees and was wondering if ANYONE in the garden club would like a small sapling Red Point Maple tree. It came in a quart size pot to give you an idea of how small, small really is! Plant itself is about 2ish feet tall. Free to a good home . . . garden!— Christina Covarrubias

## Garden Notes

**Barb Bizzarri**

It's never too early to think about fall planting. So here are some tasks to complete when you have the time.

Clean up any debris. Clear out any weeds and faded blooms (that is, deadhead spent flowers), and divide any plants that have overgrown.

Refresh the soil. Plants consume much of the soil's nutrients as they grow and bloom during spring and summer, so wherever you plan on planting new Spring plants/bulbs, mix compost or fertilizer into the soil.

Keep an eye out for pests and diseases. Remove any diseased plants (DO NOT compost them, where the pest or disease could survive). Treat any serious pest problems in the soil or on your current plants to keep them from spreading to new growth.

Identify plants that you want to dig up and donate to our Bloomingfest plant sale!!!





Dark purple day lilies in front yard bed

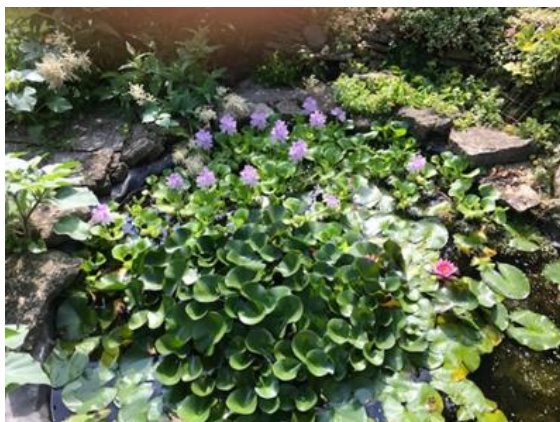
The long, hot summer is here, with more 90-plus degree days already than the whole of last year. The sultry weather, however, has not deterred the dedicated Kruse House crew from gathering each Wednesday morning to work in the garden. With the copious rains in May and June and now the warmth and meticulous tending by the crew, the garden is beautifully arrayed with all kinds of mid-summer blooms.

Early July, of course, is lily time, and lush banks of Mary Todds, Stella d'Oro, and other varieties of day lilies are everywhere. Most sensational are a dark purple variety planted in the new front yard bed on the east side of the house that are blooming for the first time. There are also spectacular thickets of crimson beebalm and feathery purple larkspur. Virtually all of the yuccas this year are

topped with tall thick stalks of creamy white bell-shaped flowers, thanks probably also to our hot days. Perhaps the loveliest site is the pond, which is abloom with lavender water hyacinths and pink water lilies.



Beebalm



Water hyacinths and water lilies

One of the projects this year was the enlargement of the new front yard bed mentioned earlier to include a small tree.

A hornbeam was selected and delivered and planted in mid-June, and then almost lost to the excessive heat at the end of that month. However, the tree seems to have recovered and is doing well

Now is the time to come and see the Kruse House garden. If you wait until August, the show will be over.

**Come view the garden with other members on July 23rd from 6-8pm. See page 1 for details.**



New hornbeam tree

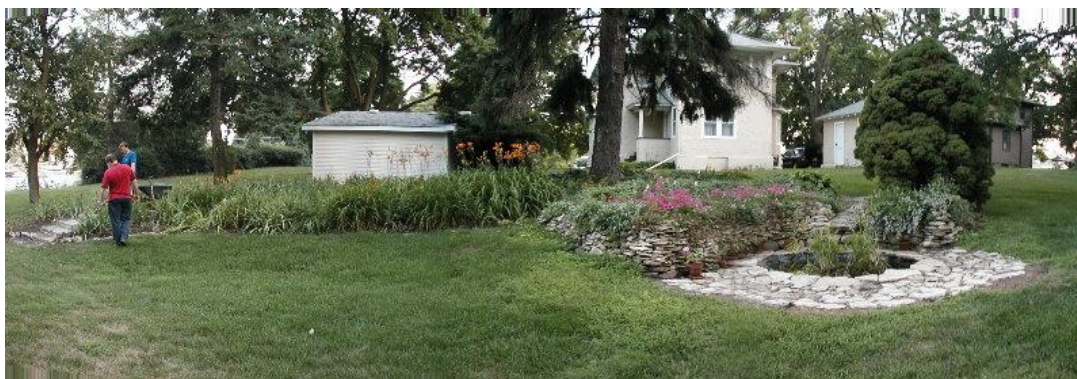
## Kruse Garden History

Billie Childress

Twenty years ago, when the long dormant Garden Club restarted, one of its main goals was to provide a workforce dedicated to restoring and maintaining the Kruse House Gardens. In those early years, work in the garden was required by all members. But like all things the approach to the task has evolved. But one thing remains the same. It takes significant effort to do it well. A brief outline follows.

- 1999-2004. Chris Baxter and Nancy Asian, both Historical Society members and city alderman, were the initial garden champions. Chris, the main player, moved, leaving the job to Dan Beebe, assisted by Pamela, and Dick and Barbara Darrah. There were good times but by 2004 we were struggling. That Fall, Dick Darrah addressed the board saying that we had to change our approach or drop it.
- 2005 Angie Sadauskus and I started weekly work days. There was no such thing as a break while we worked and I quickly adapted to the common sense of “good enough”. We began banishing invasives, planted the member donations and just kept on working.
- 2008 Tom Fessler joined our work days. We started the monthly newsletter “News from Kruse” articles. And we saw a need for more garden bones. Dick solicited shrubs and trees from local nurseries and we added more than a dozen shrubs as well as ornamental grasses and roses. And we kept on working.
- 2014 Kerry Perry joined the work crew and every pair of hands made a big difference. By now we were hiring help with the Spring cleanup and aspired to fill garden space with sturdy perennials. Most of our garden perennials were donated by members. But you know, Gardens are not static ...the true lilies, once gorgeous, faded, and too much sun/shade, bully plants, drought, or bugs disappeared other plants. It was always tough at the start of the year because we considered our Plant Sale our first priority. We often started mid May and by then we were way behind! But we plugged along doing the best we could.
- 2016. Slowly more members volunteered. Keith Letsche, Jan Grismore, Barbara Darrah, Chris Gicela, and Shirley Schramer joined. Of course Tom retired and Angie moved but I’m NOT complaining! Our present work crew can perform wonders in just a few hours! I’m always amazed!
- 2020. We continue to take on big jobs in the garden. Two years ago a major pruning of the bridal wreath hedge was done and this year we did major lilac pruning. We have hired tree trimming (climbers) a couple of times and brought in big loads of mulch. We donated an American Hornbeam tree this year and added hibiscus, Aurelia, bottle brush buckeye, and other plants.

So who knew 20 years ago that our garden maintenance job would go on so long?! I’m thankful that I’ve been part of this effort over the years and I’m EVER THANKFUL for the volunteers who work every week and for member support with donations.



Kruse Garden,  
August 2001



## Upcoming Programs for 2020

These were the tentatively scheduled programs for the year. As of now, all meeting for this year are tentative and changes are likely.

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August 27th		Native Plants
September 24th		Butterflies & Other Interesting Creatures
October 22nd		TBD
November 19th	Silent Auction	Pot Luck Dinner

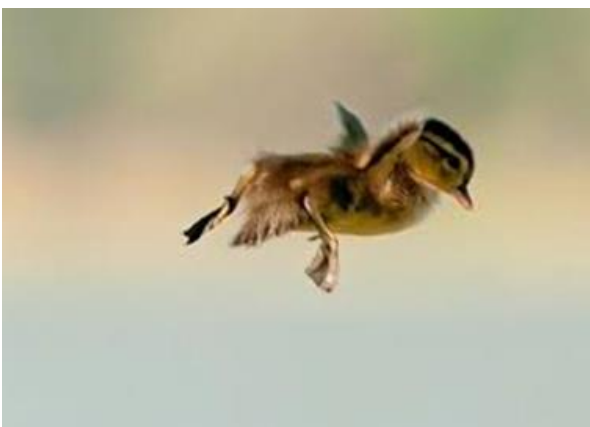
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## Nature Notes

Kerry Perry

The view from my kitchen widow overlooks an ephemeral pond shared by four neighbors. On July 4th a mother Wood Duck and her four babies zig-zagged across the pond through the duck weed. Aaahh, time to do a little research.

Shortly after hatching, young Wood Ducks jump out of their nest and land on the ground or in the water. They can survive a jump of up to 50 feet! There's a Wood Duck nest box in the weeping willow next to the pond that mom and pop checked out early this spring. Unfortunately the squirrels had taken over.



Juvenile Wood Ducks feed on aquatic invertebrates, such as dragonflies, beetles and spiders. They also feed on duckweed. (Do you think duckweed got its name because ducks like it?) As adults, their diets change to plant material, including acorns, grains, fruits and seeds. Much of their food is obtained by foraging on the ground.

Unlike most ducks, Wood Ducks have claws on their feet that make them especially well adapted for perching. They quite often perch in the oak trees in my yard.

Nature is so incredibly beautiful!



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### Club Information

Website: [www.westchicagogardenclub.org](http://www.westchicagogardenclub.org)  
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E-mail: [westchicagogardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:westchicagogardenclub@gmail.com)

### Membership Information

Dues for 2020: Individual: \$15 Family: \$25 (2 people)

### Board Meetings

2nd Thursday each month at 7 p.m.

### Regular Meeting Location

St Andrew Lutheran Church—155 N Prince Crossing Rd

### 2020 WCGC BOARD:

President:	Dan Beebe
Vice President:	Barb Bizzarri
Treasurer:	Kerry Perry
Secretary:	Cherie Kraft
Program Director:	Barb Melville
Plant Sale Chair:	Dan Beebe
Information Director:	Pamela Darrah
Kruse House Chair:	Billie Childress
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To Contact any Board Member, please send email to  
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