

We Go Gardening

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club



July 23rd Meeting

Dan & Pamela's Yard
479 Colford Ave

6:00PM

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President's Picnic

Pamela Darrah

This month's meeting is our traditional annual President's Picnic. The first picnic was hosted in July 1999 by one of our early club presidents, Carole Bates. She provided some basics and everyone was asked to bring a dish to share and your own food to grill. We all had a such a wonderful time and we continue to hold our President's Picnic every July. Our venue has changed over the years and members only have to bring themselves for a fun evening of food and lively discussions with fellow gardeners.

This year's picnic, like last years, will be held in the Beebe/Darrah back yard. As you can see in the photo taken during last year's event, there is a lot of space and we will have tents to provide

shade. The event starts earlier than a normal meeting (at 6pm) since we will be having dinner.

If you submitted your RSVP for the Picnic, you should receive an email with all the details on Tuesday, July 21st. If you do not receive an email, please [email us](#) so we can figure out what happened and get the information sent to you.

If you are unsure if you submitted your RSVP, you can check at the SignUpGenius page.

Unfortunately, it shows the list in the order everyone signed up, not alphabetically, so you will need to look through the full list to find your name



Nature Notes - Do you know?

Kerry Perry

Vernal ponds, also known as ephemeral ponds, are a unique type of wetland that form in the spring and then eventually dry up in late summer. The word “vernal” simply means spring-related. Ephemeral ponds are essential to wood frogs, leopard frogs, salamanders and dragonflies.

Now you know.



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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It's time for Fall Bulb Orders

Pauline Briggs

It's been the tradition of West Chicago Garden Club to pay shipping on members' orders placed through the club. Shipping is 15%, and the club will cover up to \$15 in shipping costs per member order. So if you order over \$100 of bulbs, then you may need to pay some of the shipping! You will still be responsible for taxes.

Like last year, we would like to collect all orders by email. After checking the websites below, email Pauline Briggs at briggspm@gmail.com with:

- The site you saw the item on
- The name of the bulb
- The item number
- The quantity
- The price
- Your name and contact information

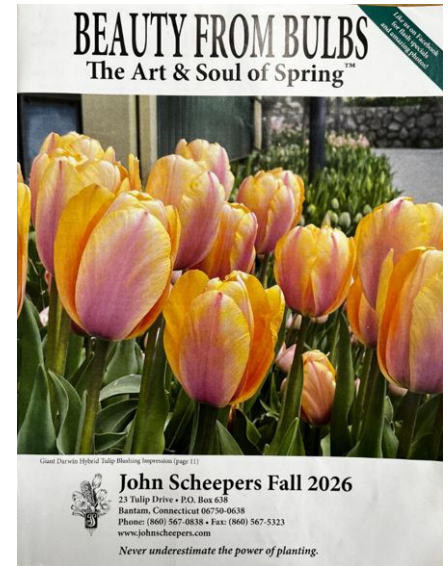
We will be ordering through John Scheepers (retail), johnscheepers.com, and Van Engelen (wholesale), vanengelen.com. Although minimum quantities may be larger on the wholesale site, that is not always the

case. However, wholesale prices will always be less, even if the minimum quantity is the same as the retail minimum quantity. So, before letting me know what you want, check both sites.

DO NOT PLACE YOUR ORDER THROUGH THE WEBSITES.

If you do, the club will not pay your shipping.

All orders should be sent to Pauline by July 31st.



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Getting to Know

Janet Frogner

Barbara Lundeen

Resident of: Recently moved (6/18) to West Chicago after selling my home near Dixon

WCGC Member: Blooming Fest while visiting my son and his family

What is your past profession: Interior designer for about 30 years, working in the Chicago area

What are you most proud of in your garden: When my husband retired, we moved to our home at Lost Lake near Dixon. One of the first and best things we did was to give our above ground pool to our new neighbors. They gave us dirt to fill the depression (and I mean dirt). We planned to use the space for a garden. As I looked at the dirt, mostly clay, I asked how does anything grow in that. My neighbor replied "just water it". I made gravel paths and short walls of landscape stone and I planted. Mostly annuals gradually adding small trees and perennials. Long story short, native plants moved in as well. I learned to protect the garden from deer and rabbits. I have to say that I'm most proud of making a hole in the ground into a garden. I will miss it but I will start again in West Chicago.

A garden mistake you made: One mistake I will not repeat is allowing invasive plants. Like letting an obedient plant get a foothold before I knew what it was capable of.

What do you love most about gardening: I love to see everything come back to life in the spring.

What tip or words of wisdom can you share: Always be willing to take a chance on a plant you've never tried (make sure it's not invasive).

What is your favorite houseplant: A fern our friends gave my husband while he was in the hospital. I kept it alive for 2 whole years. Houseplants are not my thing. I use artificial foliage wherever I feel the need indoors.

Favorite garden tool: I have a weird whirlingig tool that you twist to work up any kind of tough ground.

Favorite flower and what do you love to grow: I love any kind of flower that works in the shade, probably

Lenten Rose (Hellebore) most of all. They grow in the snow for goodness sake. Clematis is a close second.

Favorite garden related place/garden you love to visit: I saw Dale Chilhuly's glass flowers in a conservatory once and was amazed. Any conservatory really. Also the roses at Van Der Veer Park in Quad Cities.

What would you like to learn and participate in as a member: I have never seen yards and gardens like some of those in West Chicago. I want to learn how to make my new garden half of what I've seen.



Care to Share?

From Barb Bizzarri:

Remember, there's a July 31 deadline for sending your Bulb Bingo orders for Pauline by July 31st I've included some photos of the 3 Amaryllis that I ordered last year. They were "After Christmas" Amaryllis. They don't open until a month after Christmas. They are beautiful and fun to watch grow. The ones I ordered were called amaryllis 40\White Royal Dutch, Glistening White. You can see by the Photos that they grew as tall as a yardstick and they had four and even five flower heads on each bulb.

Consider ordering one of these bulbs and you won't be disappointed.

Thanks again, Pauline for putting together the annual October Bulb Bingo every year. You do a great job!



From Barbara Lundeen:

"I am a new garden club member just moving into West Chicago. My backyard needs help and so do I. Not as young as I used to be, Hip arthritis. I can still pull weeds but not dig. I would be happy to pay someone who might be interested in helping me dig a couple of flower beds and install a River pebble path. My # is 708-273-0934. -Barb"

From Janet Frogner:



Help needed after the Picnic

Pamela Darrah

Once again, our picnic will be held in our president's back yard as it was the last couple of years. Many thanks to all of those who have signed up to help setup the tents before the event and for setup/cleanup the day of the event.

We are still looking for some help to move the table and chairs back out and take down the big tents. This is scheduled for 9:00am on the Saturday after the picnic (July 25).

Thank you to all our members who always seem to step up and get the work done!

To volunteer, please [visit our Sign Up Genius](#) for this event (The Saturday morning signup is at the bottom of the page—you may need to scroll down to see it.)

News from Kruse

Marilyn Santos McNabb

Gardening this July is not easy, with the excessive heat and all the heavy rain, we struggle to keep up with the weeding, pruning, and deadheading! After the successful removal of a huge pile of "garden debris" The Kruse Crew did manage to install a couple of imaginative compost bins, one made of dog play fences and garden fence panels; the other a donated compost bin from Kerry! We will continue to find other means to collect and compost our garden trimmings to showcase how these methods can be applied to other people's yards.

What do we, the Kruse Crew, do in July? We deadhead, cut back plants to encourage a second flush of blooms, check what plants need to be divided in the fall, what plants need to be moved because they've been crowded out, admire the color combinations of the pots, eat cake and cookies during breaks, or just enjoy how the garden is coming about!

Talk about application! We want to focus our attention this month on the educational side of volunteering. We continue to learn not just from our monthly speakers, visits to other's gardens on our Twilight Tuesdays, field trips to different nurseries but also from *each other*! Kruse house is the application side of all this knowledge, not just to showcase the Museum but to showcase plants,

techniques, color combinations, and color successions that you might be apprehensive in starting in your own home. In volunteering, we learn firsthand what the most aggressive weeds are, what to plant in the front of the garden, the back of the garden, what colors go well, when to divide plants, wintersowing, composting, etc! We experience firsthand successes and failures! So, if you want to get your hands dirty, join us for a couple of hours, maybe weekly, maybe once or twice a month, a couple times in the summer, we don't ask for much! You might gain a new plant, some seeds, or a tremendous knowledge of gardening! If you have questions or are interested in volunteering, please talk to Christina, Kerry, Dee, Jean Ann, Chris, Barbara, Mary A, Judy, or Marilyn at the President's picnic.



Kruse Garden 2nd Saturdays

Christina Covarrubias

Thank you to the wonderful gardeners who joined us this month in the Kruse garden. We had a very productive, albeit HOT, day. We brought out the mulch closer to the drip line around the Dawn Redwood (have you checked out our local Sequoia tree?), mulched our buckeye & seven sons tree, freshened up the pond and mulched paths/garden beds.

Extra special thanks to Kerry, Pam, Mary, Jean, Barb, Paloma, Parker and Marilyn for sharing your time and



muscles! Thanks to Chuck Strayve Landscaping for the mulch donation. If you weren't there just know you also missed out on homemade cinnamon rolls fresh from the oven that morning!

Join us next month Saturday, August 8th from 9-11:30am with a break at 10am. There is no requirement to stay for the whole morning, just come when you can! A regular Kruse gardener will be there to guide throughout the morning.



Ball Field Trip Update

Ruth Kyme & Pamela Darrah

We currently have the full limit of 35 members signed up for this local field trip. We do have a waiting list available and should anyone who has signed up be unable to make it, we will notify the next person on the waiting list.

Our visit is scheduled for 8:30AM on Monday, August 3. This is a self guided tour which averages about 1.5 - 2 hours. There is no charge for this event. If you are signed up and need to cancel, please let us know so we can add a member from the waiting list.

If you would like to add your name to the waiting list, please [visit our Sign Up Genius page](#) for this field trip.

Additional information regarding location, parking, meeting place, etc. will be sent by email to everyone registered for the Ball Field Trip a few days prior to the event. Car pooling is encouraged.



Kruse Garden Event Recap

Christina Covarrubias

The 90-something temperatures didn't keep gardeners away from Twilight Tuesday! It was a wonderful evening of learning something new about gardening, enjoying mandolin music, and munching on inventive garden veggie foods and sweet treats. Thanks to all who came and brought friends who have never seen the garden.



Twilight Tuesday Photos

Various Photographers

We have had two more Twilight Tuesday at member gardens. Here are some pictures from Deb & Mark and Cheryl's gardens,

Photos by Pamela Darrah, Christina Covarrubias and Kerry Perry & Dick Darrah.



Growing Native—Freedom to Plant Native (part 2 - white)

Ruth Gauss

Hi, gardening friends! I am continuing my series where I was inspired by a post I saw on social media to think about red, white, and blue plants and thought it'd be a fun theme over the summer. I'm sharing the native plants that have been here since before the US was even a thought that represent our flag colors as we get into the patriotic months of Flag Day, Fourth of July, and Labor Day. [Last month](#), I shared quite a few red native plants. This month I'll be covering white and I hope you enjoy the selections I've chosen to share! If I don't mention flower color assume that it is white and why I am sharing the plant. If there is another feature, I will make note of what the white feature is.

Starting with shade loving plants, one of the earliest ways to support pollinators is with having a few [Dutchman's Breeches](#) ([Dicentra cucullaria](#)) plants in your garden. This is a plant that thrives in full shade, has delightful flowers as well as delicate foliage, supports early bumble bee queens very effectively, stays a compact 6" - 1' in height, and prefers moist soil conditions.

Another plant to spotlight for the spring shade garden is [Solomon's Plume/False Solomon's Seal](#) ([Maianthemum/Smilacina racemosa](#) - this plant has undergone some reclassifications both in common name and scientific names).

I appreciate the newer Solomon's Plume common name because I feel like it captures the look of the flowers much better. This plant does well in part



Such a charmer! (photo from Illinois Wildflowers website)



Flower detail (photo from Prairie Moon Nursery)

shade, is very attractive to a number of insects for pollen and nectar while blooming in late spring and early summer (the red berries are also appreciated by birds in the fall), grows to 2-3' tall, and prefers moist to dry soils. Moving on to fall blooming woodland plants, [Big-Leaved Aster](#) ([Eurybia macrophylla](#)) is an important source of late-season nutrition and a sweet addition to a

woodland garden. Thriving in part shade to shade, it supports such a wide variety of animals that I recommend that you check out the link for Illinois Wildflowers

shared above, it grows to 1-2', and prefers medium soil moisture.

[Calico Aster](#) ([Symphyotrichum lateriflorum](#)) is another late-season source of pollen, blooming in fall, and also provides food in many other ways to numerous animals, grows in light shade to about 2-3', and prefers moist soil.



Big leaves, small flowers (photo from Mt Cuba Center)



The tiniest flowers (photo from Prairie Moon Nursery)

Let's go into plants that thrive with a little more sunlight! First, let's talk about a milkweed for dappled shade, [Poke Milkweed](#) ([Asclepias exaltata](#)). If you don't have a lot of sun in your yard, first, congratulations on keeping things cool as temps heat up, but also, you might struggle to provide plants that support Monarch butterfly caterpillars. This is not a common plant to find at native plant sales or growing in wild areas, but I did find a source for seeds [here](#) and I plan

Growing Native—Freedom to Plant Native (part 2 - white)

Ruth Gauss

on getting a few to try in my yard with some protection as it appears to be a plant that can be enjoyed by cottontail rabbits. As with all milkweeds this plant will support bees and butterflies,



It's like a white firework! (photo from IllinoisWildflowers.info)

grows 2-6' tall and 2-3' wide, and it is drought tolerant, but may look a little droopy if it gets too dry.

Getting into full sun, I selected three stand-outs for supporting local wildlife. [Common Elderberry](#) (*Sambucus nigra canadensis*) is a large late spring to mid-summer blooming shrub that supports a wide variety of animals from insects and birds to turtles which feed on everything from the pollen to the foliage and the fruit, which is a dark, shiny black berry. It gets to be 8-12' tall and wide and will gladly fill in an area with offsets (that can be controlled through mowing), and it prefers moist, loamy soil. [Common](#)

[Mountain Mint](#) (*Pycnanthemum virginianum*) is another plant with a misleading name. While common, it loves moist areas, hosts many insects (including the endangered Rusty Patched Bumble Bee) with



A profusion of blooms (photo from IllinoisWildflowers.info)

its nectar and tends to not be a favorite food of cottontail rabbits, grows to 3-4' tall and 1 - 1 1/2' wide. Lastly in the spotlight is [Culver's Root](#) (*Veronicastrum virginicum*) which thrives in sun to part sun, is also a favorite of the endangered Rusty Patched Bumble Bee along with numerous other insects, grows to 5' with its tall flower stalks and can

spread by rhizome, and prefers a moist to average soil.

There are numerous other white flowering and white named trees and shrubs that are well-adapted to our soils and weather and are beautiful as well as important food sources for animals.

I've covered a few of them previously, but I want to make note of [Eastern White Pine](#) (*Pinus strobus*), [White Oak](#) (*Quercus alba*), [Gray Dogwood](#) (*Cornus racemosa*), [Wild Black Cherry](#) (*Prunus serotina*), [Bladdernut](#) (*Staphylea trifolia*), and [American Basswood](#) (*Tilia americana*).



Beautiful lacey blooms (photo from IllinoisWildflowers.info)



I hope you feel inspired to give these plants a try in your garden!

Bee friend on Culver's Root (my picture)

Happy (native) gardening!

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Local Events for gardeners

Patti Pirrie

Succulents & Cacti Sip & Shop.

Oak Park Conservatory

Thursday July 30, 2026. 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM. Price:

\$20.00 - \$25.00. [Click here for details](#)

Make it a fun night out at our new Sip & Shop event at the Oak Park Conservatory. Enjoy two complimentary drinks & appetizers while you browse our selection of unique succulents and cacti. Get hands-on guidance to create your own custom succulent arrangement. Plants sold separately. Registration required.



Conservation@Home Will County Garden Showcase. The Conservation Foundation

Saturday August 1, 2026. 9:00 am - 1:00 pm.
Registration required. [Click here for details](#)

Join us for a self-guided garden showcase and be inspired by our community's stunning Conservation@Home certified gardens!



Explore a variety of landscapes featuring native plants, water-wise gardening techniques, and thriving wildlife habitats throughout Will County. This free event is part of the Conservation@Home program, designed to help homeowners create more sustainable, environmentally friendly yards that contribute to a healthier ecosystem while adding some extra beauty to our everyday lives.

Making Native Gardens Easy. La Grange Public Library. La Grange, IL.

Monday August 3, 2026. 7:00pm–8:00pm.
Registration required. [Click here for details](#)

Supporting native plants is an excellent way to improve your local environment! Wyatt Widmer gives practical guidance on the mindset, ethics, tools,

and resources needed to care for their ecosystem while saving time and money.



The World of Edible Flowers. The Morton Arboretum. Lisle, IL.

Thursday, August 6, 2026, 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Cost: \$49. Member cost: \$42. [Click here for details](#)

Journey through the world of edible flowers with this photo-based presentation from Marcy Lautanen-Raleigh of Backyard Patch



Herbs. Discover the delicious flavors and beneficial properties of many common garden plants. Learn about over 20 edible flowers—like daylilies, anise hyssop, and flowering herbs—and get tips on how to harvest, preserve, and prepare them. We'll also discuss the culinary and medicinal properties of purslane and garlic mustard.

Designing for Change in the Native Perennial Garden. The Morton Arboretum. Lisle, IL.

Saturday, August 8, 2026, 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. Cost: \$39. Member cost: \$32. [Click here for details](#)

In a native perennial garden, some plants will establish and die out quickly, while others may develop slowly but live for many years.



Some plants are aggressive, others are shy. Understanding these dynamics will help you design, plant, and care for a native plant garden that will flourish and grow in beauty for many years.

Continued on next page

Local Events for gardeners (Continued)

Patti Pirrie

Mid-America Bonsai Show & Sale. Chicago Botanic Garden (Glencoe, IL).

Friday, Saturday & Sunday August 14 (noon – 5 p.m.)
August 15 & 16 (9 a.m. – 5 p.m.) [Click for details](#)

A judged show including 200 bonsai trees reflecting all types of bonsai styles. Over two dozen vendors selling bonsai trees, raw



nursery stock, pots, tools, and supplies Free demonstrations. Workshops for beginners and accomplished bonsai growers to collect growing information. (registration fees apply). To register and see the full list of workshops visit midwestbonsai.org

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Future 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	Volunteers
August 27	Nicole Jagielski	Grow Your Vegetable Garden Year Round- Even in Chicago	Jean M, Patti P, Rose C, Barb B, Deidre L, Mary S, Barb L.
September 24	DuPage County Forest Preserve	Civic Outreach: Blanding's Turtle	Candy T, Susan J
October 22		Bulb Bingo	Barb B, Barb M
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.

TRACK THE GARDEN BUCKS YOU EARN AND USE THEM TO WIN PRIZES AT OUR NOVEMBER POTLUCK!

YEAR: _____ NAME: _____

Each volunteer hour (potting party, Kruse Garden, plant sale, etc)	\$ 100	X	_____	=	_____
Donate plants to Plant Sale (each time)	\$ 100	X	_____	=	_____
Donate pots or blinds for Plant Sale	\$ 25	X	_____	=	_____
Donate plants for Kruse Garden	\$ 50	X	_____	=	_____
Set up chairs & tables before meeting	\$ 50	X	_____	=	_____
Put away chairs & tables after meeting	\$ 25	X	_____	=	_____
Host Refreshment Table	\$ 100	X	_____	=	_____
Provide refreshments	\$ 75	X	_____	=	_____
Attend a monthly meeting	\$ 25	X	_____	=	_____
Bring a guest to a meeting	\$ 50	X	_____	=	_____
Attend Field Trip	\$ 25	X	_____	=	_____
Write newsletter article	\$ 100	X	_____	=	_____
Host Twilight Tuesday	\$ 150	X	_____	=	_____
Attend Twilight Tuesday	\$ 25	X	_____	=	_____
Pay current year dues by Feb	\$ 50	X	_____	=	_____
Pay next year's dues by Nov	\$ 75	X	_____	=	_____
GC RAFFLE:	_____				
REGULAR RAFFLE:	_____				
			TOTAL:		_____

WE APPRECIATE YOU!
Thank you for volunteering and for participating!
Our excellent programs and field trips are possible when everyone pitches in!