

We Go Gardening

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

Volume 20 Issue 6 June 2016



Meeting Date: June 23, 2016

Meeting Location:

Kruse House Gardens

527 Main Street, West Chicago

Meeting Time:

6:45PM Refreshments

7:00PM Business Meeting

7:15PM Program

From the program coordinators desk: June 2016

June Program: *Evening in the Kruse House Museum Garden.*

The real star of this show is the garden so make sure you spend time having a look around. But the show doesn't end there. You will also have the opportunity to get a garden tool or knife sharpened. John Wills from John's Sharpening Services will be on hand offering his expert services. The GC will pay for sharpening one tool per member. Most tools can be done on site but if your tool requires dismantling (i.e. grass shears where the blades overlap) the tool may be returned later. We don't want to hold up the line.

And if you aren't excited already, we have yet a third event to offer. Tracy Atkinson, floral designer extraordinaire, will be demonstrating how to use materials from our gardens to create beautiful arrangements. She will use "stuff" gathered from the Kruse Garden to work her magic. I know from the member survey completed last Fall that this is a topic of interest.

I'm really looking forward to this meeting and I hope you are too. Please remember, you are always encouraged to bring a guest. And a guest can be a guest as many times as they want! Our mission is to Grow Gardeners so share our wealth with others whenever we can.

Posey Mosey Recap

Many of us enjoyed the Posey Mosey in May despite the overcast and inclement weather. Many thanks to Dick and Barbara Darrah, Jeff Handel, Keith Letsche, and Ed Max for opening their gardens to us. Every garden was unique and the diversity of plants so suitable to the particular garden. Thanks again!

Next Meeting: President's Picnic 2016

Next month, on July 22nd, we will have our President's Picnic so be sure to save the date. This year we will have a Luau! Like always, this is a time for members and immediate family or household to enjoy a little socializing. Our picnic will be held at the home of Pamela and Dan again and more details will be available in the next newsletter and by Calling Post.



Gardener's Art Festival
35+ local artists, live music, garden talks, Toasty Cheese Food Truck & more!
June 25 in Naperville



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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:
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WCGC 2016 Calendar					
Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event	Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event
23 Jun	John Wills and Tracy Atkinson	AT Kruse Garden	22 Sep	TBA	Birds
28 Jul	President Dick Darrah	President's Picnic	27 Oct	TBA	Birds
25 Aug	TBA	Butterflies	17 Nov	All members	Dinner & Garden Dollar Auction

May Program Recap: Guided Stroll through Cantigny's Gardens



At Right: Linda Harlson enjoying the fancy yellow chair, which perfectly matched the fun "goodie" bags that Kerry Perry put together for the members.



At Left: Barb and John Springer contemplating a planting in one of the spectacular garden beds.



Members milling around the Idea Garden

There were 40 members and guests that gathered at the visitors center to pick up a "goodie bag," break into 3 groups, and head out with our master gardener tour guide. The weather was perfect, the chestnut trees were in full bloom, and we were grateful for a Spring evening in a beautiful garden. Of course we all wanted to soak up as much information on the plants and trees as possible and found that if our guide didn't know often a member could answer the question. It was fun! The feedback on evaluations was positive. I overheard many talking about going back to visit the garden again.

A special thank you to Kerry Perry for assembling the goodie bags and to Linda Harlson, Marion Martin, and June Luther for providing goodies!

-Billie



Plant Sale 2016: Work Day at the Barn!

Post Plant Sale Work Day Help Needed Saturday, June 25, at "The Barn" 8:30 a.m. until the work is done

First, we want to thank everyone for their help in pulling off another very successful plant sale. We couldn't do it without everybody pitching in.

Second, there are still some things that need to be taken care of and we're asking for your help. We need to tidy up the barn so that it's ready for next year's potting parties and all things plant sale. The leftover soil needs to get moved into the barn - bring wheelbarrows and shovels. Pots and flats need to be sorted and stacked. The shade covering needs to be removed and folded. Signs need to be put away. Supplies need to be inventoried, etc... You get the idea. The more folks we get to help, the faster we'll be done.

Lastly, **we ask that you bring all things plant sale related to the Work Day instead of to the meeting:** signs; pots; garden club aprons (washed, please); venetian blinds - **we are especially in need of blinds**; painted popsicle sticks; and so on.

And, remember, all volunteer time earns Garden Bucks! THANK YOU! - Pauline



Great photos of labeling/pricing plants
pre-sale courtesy of Annette Wulffe.

Thank you to everyone who helped with this year's
Plant Sale!





News from Kruse: There's quite a buzz in the garden

The garden is spectacular in June. The warmer weather has brought out lots of blooms as well as **buzzing bees**. This past week we saw butterflies, including a yellow swallow tail, and a few dragon flies.



A few of my favorite perennials this month are the Memorial Day Poppies that actually started blooming by Memorial Day. They stand tall with bright reddish-orange flowers. Several varieties of peony were fabulous....they fade too quickly. The White Bearded Iris has gigantic beautiful flowers. Common Milk Weed self-seeded from last year and is already showing the beginning of blossoms. Giant Fleece Flower (*Persicaria Polymorpha*) blooms close to the ground from June and continues throughout the summer atop 6-foot-tall stems. The large, white, astilbe-like blossoms fade to pink and then reddish-brown as the season comes to a close.



About five years ago Marion Martin donated a *Kniphofia* "Red Hot Poker" also called *tritoma*. It has bloomed for the first time and is a "must see". Billie donated a large Silver Bay Hosta whose bluish color provides a nice contrast against the dark green ferns. Thanks, Marion and Billie.



We've been **busy as bees**...weeding, planting and spreading mulch. Much has been accomplished to make the garden so glorious. Working with the gang of four (Angie, Billie, Tom and Kerry) are Keith Letsche, Jan Grismore, Sandy Nicholson, Barb Melville and Linda Fisher. Our tasks are much easier and really fun. We welcome volunteers...Wednesdays, any time from 9 am to noon.

The Winfield Garden Club held their monthly meeting in the Kruse Garden June 7th. Twenty-six of their members attended and were all **a-buzz**. They were truly impressed with the beauty of the garden. Billie gave a wonderful talk about the history of the Kruse House, how the garden was resurrected and how it is currently maintained. She then led a tour of the garden. One of many interesting facts is that the large spruce tree in the center of the garden appears in photos of the Kruse House perhaps as early as 1917. So, the tree is about 100 years old. The trunk of the tree shows in the back ground of the photo of Barb Melville...a happy volunteer.

Buzz on down to the Kruse House anytime and enjoy a stroll through the fabulous garden. It is tucked away, behind the black, wrought-iron fence, at 527 Main Street, West Chicago, IL 60185.

-Kerry



Bountiful Herb Gardens

The Growing Place

Fresh herbs are the perfect complement to your homegrown vegetables. Even in the smallest yard, you should be able to find room to grow a few useful and flavorful herbs. It can be as simple as a few plants on your windowsill, using herbs as accents (such as using thyme as an edging), or an entire garden dedicated to these fragrant and beautiful plants. These are some of our favorite herbs, both basic and specialty, known for their culinary and ornamental usefulness.

Basil: This tender annual is best planted outside after May 15 in our area. The common basil that is referred to in most recipes is the Sweet Green Basil. Aristotle, Boxwood, Greek Columnar, Medinette, Magical Michael, Napoletano and Spicy Globe Basil all have the aroma and flavor of Sweet Basil, but with different looks and growth habits. Lime, Mrs. Burns Lemon & Lesbos all have citrus scents perfect for salads and seafood dishes. Purple Ruffles, Red Rubin, Siam Queen and Thai Basils have attractive dark foliage that look fabulous in the garden border or in a container. They have a stronger spicier flavor than the Sweet Basil. Holy Red & Green Basil has a mild clove scented foliage that is useful for making tea. It is grown in houses, garden near temples all over India. African Blue Basil has a strong flavor with a hint of camphor. Always in bloom, it's the perfect plant for attracting butterflies, hummingbirds & beneficial pollinators.

Surely, there is at least one basil to suite your culinary and ornamental needs!

Rosemary: In our area, Rosemary is treated as an annual. It has a distinctive flavor and aroma similar to pine. Even its leaves look like little pine needles. In addition to the classic Rosemary, we carry Barbeque Rosemary, which produces extra-long, straight stems that can be used as skewers for grilling shish kebobs. Creeping Rosemary is useful for spilling over the edge of a container or window box. It is the easiest to grow indoors for use in the winter. Madeline Hill Rosemary is said to have improved cold hardiness and is covered with blue flowers in the spring.

Parsley: Although parsley is technically a biennial, we treat parsley as an annual. Curly Parsley is a beautiful plant that can be used as an edging. Flat Leaf-Italian Parsley has the most flavor. Laura Parsley has a mild parsley flavor with a hint of citrus. All types of parsley are host plants for the Black Swallowtail Butterfly Caterpillar.

Sage: There are hundreds of varieties of Sage plants, both culinary and ornamental. A prized culinary herb today, sage was mainly cultivated in the past as a medicinal herb. Sage (*Salvia Officinalis*) can be grown in any ordinary garden soil as long as it is sunny and well-drained. It is best known for flavoring stuffing, soups and casseroles and has warm, strong flavor. Its flowers are flavored by bees and butterflies. Berggarten Sage can be used as a culinary sage, but is extremely useful as a boarder plant. It forms a robust mound of silvery green foliage. Golden, Pineapple, Purple and Tri-color Sages have a wonderful foliage color in addition to their fabulous flavor. They are useful as a colorful addition to the flower garden as well as in containers.

Thyme: Most Thyme have a distinctive, slightly tangy aroma and flavor that is useful for flavoring meats, soups and stews. English & French Thymes are the most popular varieties used in cooking. They are the tallest growing up to 12", making them the easiest to harvest and to use in herbal bouquets. They also have the strongest flavor. Lemon and Lime Thymes (as their names suggest) have a marvelous hint of lemon and lime flavor in their leaves. Besides being used in cooking, there are other thymes that are useful in the garden as a ground cover, an edging or between stepping stones, where their wonderful fragrance is released when walked upon.

If you plant your herbs out in May, you will be able to start harvesting them by mid to late June. July & August are the peak months to harvest herbs in our area. By then the plants should be nice & bushy with plenty of new growth. You can find over 100 varieties of non-GMO herbs grown using organic products at The Growing Place!