

We Go Gardening

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club



March 26 Meeting

St. Andrew Lutheran Church

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

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Plant Propagation

Ruth Kyme

If you are interested in making more plants for free, Dolly Foster's program, *Plant Propagation From Stem Cuttings, Layering, and Divisions*, is for you. Propagating plants is one of the best garden practices to do, but propagating at home can be tricky.

This program will cover the procedures and pitfalls of propagating your own plants.

Dolly Foster, has been a Horticulturist for 25 years, and a Certified Arborist since 2008, she holds a Masters in Agriculture from U of I. For the past 25 years, Dolly has been presenting lectures on many gardening topics. She has been butterfly gardening from the very beginning of her gardening career. Her garden at home has been a Monarch Waystation since 2011. Dolly also runs a micro plant nursery at her home selling plants exclusively for pollinators June-October.



Her website can be found at <https://hort4u.weebly.com/>.



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 savory treat for this month's meeting. [Click Here to sign up using Sign Up Genius](#)

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.

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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WestChicagoGardenClub.org

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WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com

Facebook:
facebook.com/westchicagogardenclub

Instagram:
westchicagogardenclub

Board Members

President: Dan Beebe
Vice President: Janet Frogner
Treasurer: Karen Sherman
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Program Director: Ruth Kyme
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Information Director:
Pamela Darrah
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Lisa Marie Vogt
Plant Sale Chair:
Mary Schramer & Dan Beebe
Kruse Garden Chair: Open

June Field Trip: Save the Date

Christina Covarrubias



Save the date! Our garden club's next bus field trip is to Rockford and the lovely Anderson Japanese Gardens a "twelve acre landscape of streams, waterfalls, winding pathways, and koi-filled ponds".

Date: **TUESDAY, June 2, 2026**

Time: Bus departs 8:30AM returns to St. Andrew Lutheran Church (our club meeting venue) 4:40PM
Cost: \$30 per member which includes admission to the garden with guided tour and any tips.

Field trip Attendees will have the opportunity to take a guided tour, as well as time to tour the gardens independently, bring your brown bag lunch and then possibly enjoy one more stop at a garden center.

Adopt a Highway

Dan Beebe

It is time for our Spring Adopt A Highway roadside pickup. We will be meeting on **Saturday, May 2nd** at 8:45am in the parking lot of the Park District garage at 830 W Hawthorne Lane ([Click here for Google Map](#)).

We will start our cleanup at 9:00am Expect to spend

about 1 to 2 hours walking on relatively flat sidewalk & grass.



Once a year, all volunteers will need to sign a liability

waiver stating that you won't blame the city if you get hurt during the roadside pickup. Copies of the waiver will be available at Saturday's event. In addition, all participants should watch the State of Illinois' Adopt a Highway video that can be viewed by clicking on this link: [AAH Video](#).

Orange safety vests, grabbers and garbage bags will be provided. Some roadside trash can be soggy, especially in the Spring, so please bring your own gloves to protect your hands. As the weather in early May can be a bit unpredictable, please check the weather forecast and dress accordingly.



Important Plant Sale Dates

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

Plant Sale News

Mary Schramer

Blooming Fest is May 16th this year!

All club members are encouraged to participate in one or more plant sale activities each year.



This is our main fundraiser which allows us to bring in quality speakers and activities for our meetings, plan field trips, engage in philanthropic projects in the community, and maintain the Kruse house garden. Potting parties and other pre-sale activities provide opportunities to get to know each other better and they are a lot of fun. We will hold four perennial potting parties this year beginning April 4th. The plant sale is May 16 this year.

As in past years, we rely on garden club members and friends of the garden club to donate plants from their gardens. Many plants can be divided in spring, some even before they begin to send up new stems if you know where they are located. Perennials benefit from being divided about every 3 years. After you divide your plant, replant what you are keeping and donate the rest, as is, to the sale. While we appreciate having 12 to 18 or more of the same plant, we can also use smaller numbers. We will accept just about any healthy plant you have to offer but we cannot sell plants on the Illinois Invasive plants list, or diseased or infested plants. While issues like rust (usually appears as small orange spots on the leaves), and powdery mildew are common and often do not affect the blooms, they likely will not sell and risk infecting other plants in our inventory.

We ask that you sign up if you are donating plants so that we know you are coming. We sometimes finish potting early and when we run out of plants we start cleaning up. If we know you are on your way we will hold the team. That said, we need your plants at least an hour before the planned end of the potting party.

If you wish to donate plants but cannot attend, you may deliver them beforehand—just label each variety with the plant's common and botanical name (if known), bloom color, sun or shade preference, and your name. Place this information in a plastic bag inside the container to protect it from rain. Keep roots moist and separated by variety, ideally using individual containers or plastic grocery bags. Wet newspapers or paper towels can be used to prevent roots from drying out.

Follow this same format if you are bringing plants the day of the potting party. If your plants are labeled, you can simply add them to the queue and avoid waiting in line to check in your plants. If you would like your containers to be returned, please label them with your name, or transfer your plants into garden club containers upon arrival and promptly return your own containers to your vehicle.

You can sign up to donate perennials or help pot them by visiting this [Signup Page](#), or going directly to signupgenius.com and searching for "signup@westchicagogardenclub.org" and clicking the potting party signup from all the available signups. We also need help watering the plants each day. You can sign up to help water by visiting this [Signup Page](#). If you have questions about volunteering for plant sale activities, reach out to Mary Schramer, plant sale co-chair at signup@westchicagogardenclub.org.

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](#).

WCGC Plant Sale

Everything You Ever Wanted to Know

If you have been a member for a while, then much of this information will look familiar. We have pulled information from past newsletters to create this Plant Sale Overview document. Most of this was written at some point by Billie Childress, Dan Beebe, Pamela Dantah and Mary Schramer. Rather than repeat the same information in every year's newsletter, this document will put it all into one location.

Whether you are a new member who is looking to learn about what is involved in preparing for our plant sale event, or an existing member who is just looking up a detail we hope that this is helpful!

If you have suggestions on information that we should add please let us know.

What, Where, When, Why ...

The WCGC Plant Sale is our main fundraiser for our club. Aside from our annual dues, this is the only revenue stream for our club. It allows us to bring in speakers for meetings, schedule workshops and field trips, cover the costs of the annual president's picnic, and the November talk, and these are just the direct to member benefits. Our club also supports our community with donations for various garden related causes in the West Chicago area and beyond.

The sale is held in downtown West Chicago during the Bloomings'not event in mid May. Many of the plants are dug up from our members' gardens and gifted at our "bring a plant" parties.

The Plant Sale offers many opportunities for members. We get to know each other better, we work together, we learn more about plants, and we can shop at the members only pre-sale to the used plants you've never "buy" it's also a chance for us to share our knowledge, passion for plants with the public, further our mission to "Open Gardens, Add it's other

News from Kruse

Barbara Darrah



It's a little difficult to write about Kruse this week. I've been out of the country for a week. When I left, the temperature was in the sixties. The daffodils were bursting out of the ground. Now they are covered with snow and it is well below freezing. Well, that is spring in the Midwest.



Because so many of us were traveling in March, we decided to postpone spring cleanup. What a good idea since everything is now covered with snow. However we will be back in April so if you have an hour or two on a Wednesday or Saturday morning, we would love to have you join us.

In Istanbul, it was early spring, but they had canceled their tulip festival and everything in the palace gardens was BIG – grasses, trees and ponds - so I am still missing our small ponds and flower filled borders.



During the last few weeks, the Kruse crew has met for coffee and discussions of this year's plans.

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.

Thank you for
90 years of growing together!
1936-2026

Both locations open
April 1 - December 23

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Nature Note: Beautiful Music

Kerry Perry

It was 70 degrees a couple of days ago. I was out at the edge of my wetland pond removing buckthorn. The sounds from the pond were almost deafening. Frogs! Lots of frogs!!

Chorus frogs are the primary species that start singing in our area around early March. These small frogs (3/4" - 1 1/4") produce a high-pitched, creaking sound often described as running a finger over a comb. They are the earliest sign of spring!



Getting to Know: Colleen

Janet Frogner



Colleen Gloss

Resident of: West Chicago for 37 year

WCGC Member: I rejoined 2 years ago after a long absence

How did you become a member: Interested in finding a club that I could learn from and found WCGC online

What is your current

profession: Office Manager

What are you most proud of in your garden: Saving and growing vegetables, herbs, and perennials from my own heirloom seeds

A garden mistake you made: Started seeds too early

What do you love most about gardening: Just being able to get my hands in the dirt each spring

What tip or words of wisdom can you share: Enjoy the time you have in the garden while the sun shines...

What is your favorite houseplant: Orchid

Favorite garden tool: Long-handled hand shovel

Favorite flower and what do you love to grow: I like them all, but mostly enjoy putting together combinations for window boxes and planters

Favorite garden related place/garden you love to visit: Cantigny Gardens in the summer



Growing Native—Save the Stems?

Ruth Gauss

Hi, gardening friends! This is such an exciting time of the year with some days that call us out to the garden and others that keep us needing more inside distractions so we don't get discouraged that Spring just isn't Springing! Recently a gardening friend sent me a post from the [Mt Cuba Center](#) about the effects of Spring cleanup and it got me thinking that this would be a great topic for the March newsletter this year! The information I am sharing is adapted from a 12 page document from the Xerces Society titled: [Nesting & Overwintering Habitat for Pollinators & Other Beneficial Insects](#). I'm going to break down the essentials for what we can do right now.

To be honest, I had not given much thought to the details about leaving standing stems. There appears to be a sweet spot for how much to leave and when. I am going to start by pointing out that if you have deer browsing in your garden regularly, you might not need to do a thing, but for anyone with tall standing stems hopefully you will find this information helpful for yourself and the creatures in your garden.



Common Elderberry flowers



Pasture Thistle

We do all of this for stem-nesting native bees (and other insects) which use hollow or pithy plant stems for overwintering or building a nest. Some species of plants with this kind of stem that are native in our area are [Black raspberry](#), [Common Elderberry](#), [Smooth Sumac](#), [Staghorn Sumac](#), [Prairie Rose](#) and [Climbing Wild Rose](#), [Wild Bergamot](#), [Pasture Thistle](#), and [Cup Plant](#). It is recommended to

consider having plants with different stem diameters to support a wider number of bee species (cup plant has a wide stem, wild bergamot a narrow one). Also, be sure to think about woody plants, like the elderberry as well as perennials like the pasture thistle as being important parts of the habitat in your garden.

Now is the time, when weather allows, to cut the dead stems of these plants (and any others that you have a desire to "clean up") to a height of 8-24" varying the height of the cuts on the same plant. The part above the cut can be composted or it can be left where it falls to create other nesting opportunities. Those stems that are standing will disappear into the new growth for the year and help support plants that tends to lean or flop. Be sure to always allow the remaining stems to decay and fall on their own as some species of bee take longer than 1 year to develop.

It's so exciting to think about all of the potential life waiting to buzz into action in our gardens! Happy (native) gardening and try to be patient while awaiting Spring!

(The top 2 photos are from the Illinois Wildflowers website and the bottom image is from the Xerces Society publication which provided much of the data shared in this article)



Local Events for gardeners

Patti Pirrie

The Greens: Lettuces, Spinach, Cabbages and More. Grow Your Own Groceries. Uofl Extension. Mon, March 23. 6-7pm. Price: \$5.00. Location: Online.
<https://extension.illinois.edu/events/2026-03-23-greens-lettuces-spinach-cabbages-and-more>

Would you like to grow your own fresh produce? Are you new to gardening or an experienced pro? Or do you want to learn more about the crops we can grow in our backyards? Join



University of Illinois Extension Horticulture Educator, Nancy Kuhajda, and Extension Program Coordinator, Holly Froning for a lively discussion of growing vegetables.

Preparing for the Growing Season. Wednesday, April 8. 7-8pm. Price: Free. Registration is required. Location: Oak Park Conservatory Rubinstein Room.
<https://app.amilia.com/store/en/park-district-of-oak-park/shop/activities/6663301>

Ready, set, grow! It's time to get back into the garden, but there's a lot to do



besides deciding which plants you're interested in. Learn how to prepare your soil, tools, pots, and compost to get the most out of the upcoming season.

Spring Bulb Planter Workshop. The Growing Place. Sunday, April 12. Naperville, IL. Price \$40. Registration required. Drop in anytime between 11am – 2pm.
<https://www.thegrowingplace.com/event/spring-bulb-planter-workshop/>

Pot up a tabletop planter of instant spring color! In this hands-on workshop you'll choose from a selection of sprouted tulips, hyacinths and daffodils

to plant in a container and finish it with moss for a fresh, seasonal look. Our container designers will guide you through the process.



Tomatoes 101. Wednesday, April 15. 7-8pm. Price: Free. Registration is required. Location: Oak Park Conservatory Rubinstein Room.
<https://app.amilia.com/store/en/park-district-of-oak-park/shop/activities/6663302>

Tomatoes are the most popular crop to grow, yet even experienced gardeners can still struggle to do it successfully. Learn about the essentials for soil, sun, and water, as well as the basics of caging, pruning, and fertilizing.



Native Plants, Real Spaces. The Growing Place. Sat., April 18. Aurora, Price: Free. 11am-1:30pm
<https://www.thegrowingplace.com/event/native-plants-real-spaces/>

Join us for free talks on how to make native plants work for your lifestyle and your space. Learn which species are best for home gardens and how to keep things looking polished, not messy.



Get planting with a starter kit of native plugs appropriate for smaller spaces selected for sun, part sun and shade conditions.

Continued on next page

Local Events for gardeners (Continued)

Patti Pirrie

Arbor Day Plant Sale. April 23-25. The Morton Arboretum. Location: Collections and Operations Center.

Ticket prices range from free up to \$47, depending on day/time/membership.

<https://mortonarb.org/explore/activities/events/arbor-day-plant-sale/#tickets>

Shop the Arbor Day Plant Sale for an exciting variety of plants chosen by experts for success in your Chicago-area garden.



Invasives to Avoid

Christina Covarrubias

Plant Sale activities are upon us! Have you ever wondered, "Does the garden club want this" as you're ripping out some vigorous groundcover or flourishing perennials? An invasive plant is one that was introduced to our geographical area by humans, typically, but not found here natively and deemed damaging. It will outcompete native plants, create monocultures, change soil composition, and/or harm wildlife.

Here is a quick guide to Illinois' Top Invasive Plant Species List. These should be unwelcome in anyone's garden and unfortunately turned away if donated to our plant sale.

Japanese honeysuckle,
exotic bush honeysuckles,
multiflora rose,
purple loosestrife,
buckthorn (common, saw-toothed, dahurian,
Japanese, Chinese, or glossy varieties),
kudzu,
exotic olives,
salt cedar,
poison hemlock,

giant hogweed,
Oriental bittersweet,
teasel, and
knotweed.

New to the list this year are nine additional plants: tree-of-heaven, garlic mustard, leafy spurge, sericea lespedeza, Japanese stiltgrass, Amur corktree, black swallowwort, and pale swallowwort.

Information can be found at <https://extension.illinois.edu/invasives/regulations> and just to reiterate the invasiveness of these plants is so detrimental that it is illegal to sell them in Illinois. Other source for more information can be found at <https://extension.illinois.edu/news-releases/nine-new-invasive-species-regulated-illinois-expansion-exotic-weeds-act> or check out the Conservation Foundation's website: [Common Invasive Plants in Illinois - The Conservation Foundation](#)

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For the Love of Gardening...

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	Shade Gardening with Natives	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: Blanding's Turtle	
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.