



WE GO GARDENING

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

www.westchicagogardenclub.org

Volume 17 Issue 3 March 2013

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Babysitting—The Club provides babysitting during its regular monthly meetings when held at Faith Community Church. There is no fee to you for the service and no reservations are necessary.

Rides— Need a ride to the meeting? Call Billie Childress at 231-1791 the Wednesday before the meeting.

March 28th Meeting: "Don't Squash That Bug!" with James Rowan

James studied zoology and geology at Northeastern Illinois University in Chicago. He was an animal keeper at Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago for seventeen years, having worked with large mammals, primates, great apes, and reptiles. He



also did a stint milking cows at the "Farm-in-the-Zoo." While a keeper, James began marketing his photographs for publication. He has had over a thousand images used by textbook, magazine and calendar publishers and as museum graphics. His photography exhibit, "Planet of the Arthropods," has been exhibited in a number of museums and nature centers around the country. Jim lectures on a variety of subjects relating to history and nature, for natural history groups, schools and senior centers. In his spare time, he re-enacts 18th and 19th century history.

Faith Community Church at 910 Main Street in West Chicago

6:45 - refreshments and gathering

7:00 - brief business meeting

7:15 - speaker

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 25th:

"New and Unusual" with Wasco Nursery

Happy Easter



Think Spring!

LOOK FOR NEW MEMBER Kathy Frost AT THE MARCH MEETING!



Upcoming events (outside the club)

Cantigny: What's New in the Gardens at Cantigny? Wednesday, April 3, 9:00 AM. Visitor's Center. No fee, but registration is required. Call 630-260-8162. Garden Photo Tips. Sunday, April 21, 2:00 PM. No fee, but registration is required. Limited to ten individuals.

Growing Place: Opening Day. Saturday, March 23, 9:00 AM. Aurora. Make a Spring Basket. Saturday, March 30. Aurora. Cost of materials. Blooming Beauties. Saturday, April 6, 10:00 AM. To register, call 630-355-4000.

Heinz Brothers Greenhouse: Vegetable Gardening Made Easy! Saturday, April 20, 10:00 AM—11:00 AM, St. Charles, \$5. Learn the best and easiest way to start vegetables, grow, and harvest.

Chicago Botanic Garden: Illinois Orchid Society Spring Show & Sale. Saturday, April 6, 10:00 AM. Antiques & Garden Fair. Friday, April 18, 10:00 AM. Midwest Daffodil Society Show. Saturday, April 27, 12:00 PM.

Prestige Nursery Garden Center: Sustainable Landscaping Done Right! Saturday, April 13, 10:30 AM. There is no charge for this seminar. Call 630-289-4868 to register.



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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 2013: 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

2013 WCGC BOARD:

President:

Keith Letsche 630-293-0192

Vice President:

Dick Darrah 630-584-1900, info@bwdarrah.com

Treasurer:

Barb Darrah 630-584-1900, info@bwdarrah.com

Secretary:

open

Program Co-Chairs:

Pauline Briggs 630-545-2234, pmb Briggs@juno.com

June Luther 630-876-1295, june@markluther.com

Information Director & Publicity:

Melissa Birch, 630-621-0128, melissabirch@gmail.com



Planned WCGC Events - 2013

| Date | Speaker/Organizer | Topic/Event | Date | Speaker/Organizer | Topic/Event |
|--------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| 24 Jan | Nancy Schumm-Burgess | Pioneer Gardens | 27 Jun | Bill Scheffler | Yogurt, Vinegar & Lawn Care |
| 28 Feb | The Growing Place | Vegetables | 25 Jul | All members | President's Picnic |
| 28 Mar | James Rowan | Don't Squash That Bug | 22 Aug | TBA | Monarch Magic |
| 25 Apr | Wasco Nursery | New & Unusual | 26 Sep | June & Pauline | Bulb Bingo |
| 18 May | ALL MEMBERS! | PLANT SALE! | 24 Oct | Bill Karges | Fall Garden Prep |
| 23 May | Dave Wanninger | Low Maintenance | 21 Nov | All members | Dinner & Garden Dollar Auction |

Remember to Collect Your Garden Dollars!

WCGC distributes Garden Dollars to members who participate in club activities.

Here's how to earn them:

Volunteer for workdays or plant sale

1-4 hours = 75

4+ hours = 150

Donate plants for the sale

<50 75

50-149 200

150+ 300

Donate Pots 50

Donate snack for meeting 75

Set up or clean up meeting 25

Trip attendance 25

Write newsletter article 100

Donate door prize 50

Meeting attendance 25

Donate to Kruse House 50



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Both locations open for Spring March 23!
Opening Weekend Events in Aurora!

March 23
 10am: Tree talk by Morton Arboretum. Free trees, tours, & demos!

March 24
 1pm: Magical Miniature & Fairy Garden Tour with Arlena Schott...be inspired & make your own. \$15.

The Growing Place
 thegrowingplace.com
 Naperville...630.355.4000 Aurora...630.820.8088
 25w471 Plank Rd 2000 Montgomery Rd



News from Kruse

by Billie Childress & Angie Sadauskas

“It was one of those March days when the sun shines hot and the wind blows cold: when it is summer in the light, and winter in the shade.” – Charles Dickens

March brings daylight savings time, the vernal equinox, and unpredictable weather. The snow melts and plants poke through. Weather is the primary determinate of garden activity in March. You may recall last year we had 9 consecutive days smack dab in the middle of March when the high temperatures held between 78 and 83 degrees. There was an explosion of growth. We were scurrying around to get cleanup accomplished before the plants were in danger of decapitation from the rakes. Of course the piper was paid with early April temperatures dropping below freezing eight times. That glorious unseasonably early plant growth took a big hit and some of the plants carried that damage through the seasons. This March appears to be more traditional weather. We are coiled to spring into Spring cleanup as weather allows and extend an open invitation for you to join us (Tom, Angie, Billie...call any of us for details) on our Monday morning workathons in the Kruse Garden.

This photograph was taken April 6, 2010 in the Kruse Garden. Grape hyacinths have



long been the stars of early Spring in this garden. They are prolific throughout and any new plant installation is sure to unearth a handful. They are small but mighty in their attraction. Thank you, Bertha and Celia Kruse, for the beginnings of this legendary planting. Soon these blue beauties will form a necklace around the house and stud the back garden with sapphire jewels. If any garden club members want a handful of these bulbs we can save them during the season. Watch the sharing table for these treasures.

Remember the picture of the tumbling down wall behind the pond that was included last month? We were asking for a volunteer(s) to rebuild this stone wall. We haven't heard from anyone....yet! You know that saying “many hands make light work,” well, we could sure use a hand. Contact Angie (630)231-5851 or Billie(630)231-1791 to volunteer.

Attention: Agri-horti-flori-cultural friends, aka garden club members, we would like to know what your Spring Resolutions are. You could help us charter a course for our work this year. You may have something up your sleeve that could be executed in the Kruse Garden. We have been tending the Kruse Garden for a number of years now and we find ourselves doing more of the same. We don't want to miss a chance for innovation so share your ideas with us. Better yet share a favorite plant with us. The garden is rich with pass-along plants. Those are the plants that flourish! Even if you just stop by and visit us some Monday morning we would be thrilled that you're interested.

Until next month...remember ...To a gardener, Spring is ceaseless work and ceaseless wonder. Pay more attention to the wonder. A&B



It's Potting Party Time!

We need members to pot plants for the Plant Sale (you'll also earn Garden Dollars!)

You can sign-up at the March meeting or contact Billie at (630) 231-1791 or email billiedc@sbcglobal.net. There are a variety of tasks needed to accomplish this job—something suited for everyone!

Dates: Sundays, April 7 & 14, 1-4 PM
Saturdays, April 20 & 27, 9 AM – 12 Noon

Location: Kress Creek Farms (formerly Manville Oaks) Barn
30W150 Wilson Rd, West Chicago

Potting Party Site →



Plant Sale Reminder—May 18th! Have you signed up to volunteer yet? Potting Party info is above, but we also need help with transportation and day-of-sale tasks! Sign up at the March meeting!

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Landscaping 101 by Heather Prince of The Growing Place

Spring is here and we are all anxious to get outside and start working in the gardens. As you pack up the kids to head to the garden center, there are a few basics that might come in handy as you think about what you want in your yard.

What is that plant? What is the difference between annuals, perennials, shrubs and trees? When you hear these terms tossed about, sometimes it can be confusing. **Annuals:** these plants grow only one year and will not survive our winters. They can produce lots of flowers and can require regular fertilizing, depending on the type. **Perennials:** these plants come back each year, but may die back to the ground over the winter. Usually, perennials have a shorter season of bloom. When you're picking out plants try to plant a variety of perennials that bloom at different times to give you a rich display throughout the season. **Shrubs:** these are plants with a woody stem that come back year after year and are generally not cut down to the ground. Some shrubs stay small and some can grow to the size of small trees. Usually, shrubs have several stems at the base. They also have a single season of blossom. **Trees:** these are single or multi-stemmed woody plants that are quite large and live a long time. Trees can grow anywhere from about ten feet high to more than seventy! Trees can have flowers and some have fruit.

Mother Nature doesn't always play by the rules, so there are some exceptions to the above. Butterfly bush, for example, has woody stems, but we generally cut it to the ground every year as those stems aren't winter hardy. It will sprout new stems from the base, so it's considered a perennial.

How much sun do I have?

This is important to know as you look at plant tags or labels. They'll tell you what kind of light the plant prefers, but how do you know what you have? Try to spend some time observing the sun patterns in your yard. **Full sun:** this means six hours or more of sun anytime during the day, usually found on the south and west sides of buildings unless shaded by structures or trees. **Part shade:** Lightly filtered sun or three to five hours of morning and/or late afternoon sun, usually found on the east side of buildings and under the light shade of trees. **Full shade:** Less than three hours of sun anytime during the day, usually found on the north side of homes, between buildings or under trees with heavy shade.

When should I plant?

Each plant has its own requirements, so read the tag and ask garden center staff for advice. April is a great time to plant trees, shrubs, most perennials as well as cool season annuals and vegetables while soil is nice and moist. Plus, you have many months for roots to get established. Some annuals and vegetables, especially tomatoes, prefer warm soil to grow, so wait until mid-May to plant them. You can plant all summer long, as long as you water carefully. Fall planting can also be ideal as warm soil and cool air are perfect for root growth.

What about my soil?

Before you get the shovel out, check the moisture of your soil. Squeeze a handful of soil. If it clumps into a solid mass it is too wet. If it crumbles, it's ready to be worked. When you dig in wet soil, it can compact so that the air and water spaces are squeezed out. This means roots struggle to grow. If you have heavy clay soil, you may want to mix in compost to loosen the soil and add micronutrients.

Where can I go for more information?

The Morton Arboretum, Chicago Botanic Garden and University of Illinois Extension all have help desks and excellent resources on their websites. Also, ask your local garden center, like The Growing Place. They have seasoned, knowledgeable staff, plus classes every Saturday, many of them free.



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