



WE GO GARDENING

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

www.westchicagogardenclub.org

Volume 18 Issue 5 May 2014

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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.



May 22nd Meeting: "Summer Fun—Secrets from the Garden" by Nancy Carroll, Master Gardener Alumna

Put your trowel in the soil—and let the fun begin—It's Summertime! Fresh veggies, fragrant lilies, outstanding containers, blueberries, herbs, colorful flower arrangements and more—all add to these glorious days, Our speaker will share wonderful gardening tips from the best way to plant a tomato plant, how to water resourcefully, to how to help prevent bunnies from munching on your prize flowers, This lecture is a delightful collage of summertime ideas with something interesting for everyone, Food samples and terrific handouts will be provided with delicious recipes and great ideas to help you have the best summer in your garden ever!



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, June 26th

LOCATION: At the Kruse House Gardens!



Upcoming events (outside the club)

Cantigny: Spring Bulb Sale. June 3, 8AM—11AM. Visitor Center Parking Lot. 15 bulbs for \$5.

Growing Place: For the Birds Weekend. May 31—June 1. Quick Tips: Top Plants for Birds. Both locations. Gardener's Art Festival. June 21, Naperville. More than 40 garden artists. 630-355-4000 for more details.

Morton Arboretum: Full Moon Tram Tour: Nature at Night. June 14 or July 12. 7PM—9:30PM. \$8 Member/\$10 Non-Member. Visitor Center Entry. Advance purchase required. 630-968-0074.

Chicago Botanic Garden: Northern Illinois Hosta Society Show & Sale. May 31—June 1. 10AM—4:30PM. More than 100 cut-leaf specimens of hosta, incl. rare and unusual varieties. Growers will have garden-ready plants for sale.

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and add some beauty to your garden at



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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 2014: 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

2014 WCGC BOARD:

President:

Keith Letsche, 630-293-0192, keithletsche@aol.com

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



Planned WCGC Events - 2014

Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event	Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event
24 Apr	Ed Max	Spring Ephemerals	24 Jul	All members	President's Picnic
17 May	ALL MEMBERS!	PLANT SALE!	28 Aug	Chicagoland Gardening	Made in the Shade II
22 May	Nancy Carroll	Summer Fun	25 Sep	June & Pauline	Bulb Bingo
26 Jun	Bill Karges	*at the Kruse House	23 Oct	Jo Ann Loebel	Pressing Flowers
			20 Nov	All members	Dinner & Garden Dollar Auction

We will be doing a craft at our October meeting.

Right now is the time to be thinking about what kinds of flowers you might want to press.

If you know how to press, start now. A couple quick tips: smaller, flatter flowers work best (pansies are a good candidate); and, phone books or large books with non-glossy paper work well.

If you're not familiar with pressing flowers, more detailed instructions will follow in next month's newsletter.



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News from Kruse

by Billie, Angie, Kerry and Tom

What a happy day it was!!! We welcomed our new Kruse Museum volunteer, Kerry Perry, on clean-up day. Two truckloads of leaves and debris were hauled away. And even happier news—Kerry is still with us! We look forward to spending many more work days with Kerry. We spent another session digging plants for the plant sale from the garden. Over the years plants have multiplied. We had also heeled-in plants that were donated for the plant sale during last year. We held them over the winter.

The garden is blooming with spring bulbs, grape hyacinths, tulips. The pasque flowers donated a few years ago by Jeff are exceptionally beautiful. They have developed into sizable clumps, start blooming in time for Easter, and continue blooming. There are still many buds that have not opened. They are in a poor, clay soil with no summer watering. From checking our plantings we have found winter damage on our cotoneasters, the new, short varieties. The old large shrub variety cotoneasters are doing very well with no winter die-back. The other shrubs are mainly native varieties and withheld well. The shrub roses did well, especially John Cabot, donated by Carole. It is of the 'explorer' series and actually roared into spring, feeling right at home to a winter that was like the explorer, Canadian. Rosa Glauca looks very fine, an old rose from the 1600's.

Some of the euphorbias took a beating, especially the Donkey tail. It should have been in bloom on cascading tails, but the weight of the snow and the wetness caused much damage. Our two newest tree donations, the gingko and the weeping spruce look very much alive and healthy, settling in well.

We saved seeds from the old-fashioned petunia and zinnias. Both grow very well directly sown and quickly sprout when the weather warms. The old-time petunias are a great favorite of some of us. They come only in pastel colors, but one plant will grow 2ft by 2ft. They thrive in heat and need no extra watering. We noticed many of the old time flowers are making a comeback—as seen by some of the greenhouse seeding at Cantigny. People are getting tired of the short and stunted look and remember with nostalgia grandmother's garden—sweet peas, petunias, hollyhocks, morning glories, iris and larkspur—zinnias and marigolds, probably a Jackmani clematis, a climbing rose or two on the fence, everything mixed together, smelling wonderfully and full of bees and butterflies. There wasn't much weeding since the plants were tightly grown. Besides, what grandmother had time to weed—she knitted, crocheted, cooked and baby-sat—right?

So much for musings and remembrances—at the museum garden we look forward very hopefully to more bloom, better vistas, improvement in plant combinations, new additions—sometimes anticipated like a new addition to our family of plants. We have many discussions, what to pull, what to move. Is this plant to tall, too short? Can we give Tom free reign to cut? Trim? Shear? OR NOT? Working in the garden is fun. Everyone is welcome, 9-12AM, Mondays. Join us!

By A,B,T, and K

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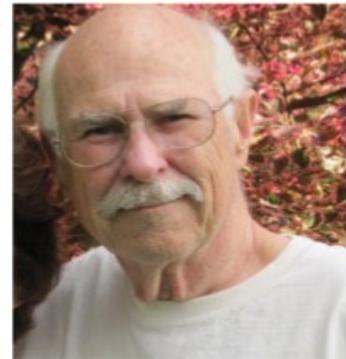




Please join us for a very special event!

The “Best of What’s New in the Perennial Garden”

That’s what Master Gardener Lou Horton will discuss at 1 pm on Sunday, June 22. Lou is a twelve year veteran Master Gardener (DuPage unit) who has evolved into a shade gardening and hosta specialist, largely due to the nature of his property in West Chicago. He is past president of the Northern Illinois Hosta Society and Midwest Regional Hosta Society. Aside from hostas, his gardens include collections of ornamental trees and shrubs as well as shade companion plants. He will address some of the great new selections for both sunny and shady gardens.



Sunday, June 22 at 1 pm

Meyer Landscaping Garden Center

27W067 North Ave, West Chicago, IL 60185



Buy Plants, We’ll donate to the Historic Kruse House Garden

That weekend we are partnering with the West Chicago Garden Club to further enhance the period gardens at the 1917 Kruse House Museum in West Chicago. The gardens were restored and are maintained by the West Chicago Garden Club. A portion of the sales from Saturday & Sunday, June 21 & 22, will go to the Kruse House garden project.

Hope to see you then!



Grow Great Tomatoes!

by Heather Prince of The Growing Place

A homegrown tomato is one of the most beloved experiences of summer. There's nothing quite like it! Tomatoes can be grown in the ground or in containers. Try more than one variety to stretch your season and give you plenty of this favorite vegetable.

Planting

Tomatoes require full sun – at least 6 hours or more. They only really start growing once the soil temperature has reached 60° F. Wait to plant them in the ground until after at least mid-May and to protect plants from temperatures below 45° F. Space plants 1 ½ to 3' apart. Wide spacing assures good air circulation which discourages diseases. Container grown tomatoes can be planted in the ground deeper than they were growing in their pots if they seem leggy. Pinch off some of the lower leaves. Tomatoes can be planted upright in a hole deep enough so the remaining leaves are just above the soil surface. Give them a good soaking to settle the soil. Roots will grow along the length of the buried stem, resulting in stronger plants. Consider adding companion plants such as basil, marigold, chives, and bee balm to your garden as they improve the growth and flavor of tomatoes.

Fertilizing

Most experts recommend fertilizing at planting time, but, go easy on the fertilizer. Less is best because too much nitrogen results in vigorous vines with few tomatoes. We recommend mixing *Espoma Tomato-tone* into the soil following package direction.

Provide support

One method is to support each plant with a single sturdy stake 6 to 8 feet tall and at least one inch thick. Drive the stake into the ground about 4" from the plant. As the plant grows, attach stems to the stake using strips of soft fabric. Leave a little slack around the stems. Supporting tomatoes in wire cylinders or cages is also possible and eliminates the need for tying.

Water wisely

Tomatoes are 93.5 percent water! Watering them correctly is critical. Check soil moisture by putting your finger into the soil at least two inches. When dry, give them one to one and one half inches of water weekly. Try not to splash water on the leaves to avoid fungal diseases.

Mulch

About a month after planting – once the soil has really warmed up – apply a three to four inch layer of organic mulch such as weed free straw. If you mulch too soon, the soil will stay cool, delaying the harvest.

Pruning

If the plants are staked, regularly pinch off the small suckers that sprout between the leafy branches and main stems. Don't cut – a knife can spread disease.

At The Growing Place, we will have large sized tomato plants from mid-May through early June, so if you need instant gratification or to replace a plant, check us out! You'll find hybrid varieties, heirlooms and grafted tomatoes to choose from. Some of our favorites are Sun Sugar, Early Girl, Brandywine, Roma, and Super Fantastic

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