



# WE GO GARDENING

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

[www.westchicagogardenclub.org](http://www.westchicagogardenclub.org)

Volume 19 Issue 5 May 2015

## Inside this issue

Club News, Contact Information & Non-Club Events	2
Planned WCGC Events	3
News from Kruse	4
Plant Sale	5
Growing Place Article	6

**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.

Don't forget to pick up Garden Dollars for your volunteer hours contributed to the Plant Sale!

## May 28th Meeting: FIELD TRIP to Blumen Gardens!

Meet at Faith Community Church, 910 Main Street in West Chicago at **5:45PM** to carpool to Blumen Gardens, 403 Edward Street Sycamore, IL 60178

What began as a humble horticultural endeavor in Joan & Joel Barczak's backyard has grown into an award-winning landscape design business. It now inhabits over 4,500 square feet of indoor and outdoor space for their retail Gift & Garden Shop. Over the past 20 years, Joan & Joel have refurbished and re-purposed the property's historic factory and surrounding structures, giving Blumen Gardens its distinct ambient setting. We'll spend some time exploring the gardens, and then Joel will talk to us about easy care perennials and what's new on the market.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, June 25:**

**Speaker TBA—Meeting OUTDOORS at the Kruse Garden!**

Please continue to make note of the date change for the President's Picnic to:

**JULY 30, 2015**



## Upcoming events (outside the club)

**Cantigny:** Morning Garden Tours, first Tuesday of the month, April—October. 11AM—12PM. Bird Walk, June 13, 7:30AM.

**Growing Place:** Gardener’s Art Festival. June 20, 9AM—5PM, Naperville location.

**Chicago Botanic Garden:** Meet the Horticulturist. June 16, 1PM. Call (847) 835-6851 for more information.

**Aquascape:** 2015 Pond Tour, Naperville Area, June 20. 10AM-5PM. For more information call (630) 659-2057.

**City of West Chicago:** Railroad Days Fireworks, July 11, dusk (viewing at Reed-Keppler park). Parade on Sunday, July 12, at 1:00PM. More information at <http://westchicago.org/news/2015-railroad-days-an-abbreviated-version/>

You're invited to come explore, get inspired, learn  
and add some beauty to your garden at



2010 East Main St. (Rt. 64), St. Charles  
630.377.6288 [www.HeinzBrothers.com](http://www.HeinzBrothers.com)

Your Gardening Source...



**PLATT HILL NURSERY**

222 W. Lake St. • Bloomingdale • 630-529-9394

2400 Randall Rd. • Carpentersville • 847-428-6767

Hours: Mon-Sat 9am-6pm • Sun 10am-5pm • [www.platthillnursery.com](http://www.platthillnursery.com)

### Club information

[www.westchicagogardenclub.org](http://www.westchicagogardenclub.org)

West Chicago Garden Club

P. O. Box 313, West Chicago, IL 60186

[westchicagogardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:westchicagogardenclub@gmail.com)

### Membership information

Dues for 2015: 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

### 2015 WCGC BOARD:

President:

Dick Darrah, 630-584-1900, [info@bwdarrah.com](mailto:info@bwdarrah.com)

Vice President:

Keith Letsche, 630-293-0192, [keithletsche@aol.com](mailto:keithletsche@aol.com)

Treasurer:

Barb Darrah, 630-584-1900, [info@bwdarrah.com](mailto:info@bwdarrah.com)

Secretary:

Annette Wulffe, 630-462-0208, [annetwulffe@yahoo.com](mailto:annetwulffe@yahoo.com)

Program Co-Chairs:

Pauline Briggs, 630-254-2969, [briggspm@gmail.com](mailto:briggspm@gmail.com)

Marcy Kozlowski, 630-846-3466

[marcellakozlowski@yahoo.com](mailto:marcellakozlowski@yahoo.com)

Information Director & Publicity:

Melissa Birch, 630-621-0128, [melissabirch@gmail.com](mailto:melissabirch@gmail.com)



## Planned WCGC Events - 2015

Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event	Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event
22 Jan	Cindy Tyley	Tips for Lazy Gardener	25 Jun	TBA	At Kruse Garden
26 Feb	Don Guzan	Basics of Pruning	30 Jul	All members	President's Picnic
26 Mar	Shawn M. Odneal	Vertical Gardening	27 Aug	TBA	TBA
23 Apr	Billie Childress	Kruse House History	24 Sep	Bulb Bingo	Pauline
16 May	ALL MEMBERS!	PLANT SALE!	22 Oct	TBA	TBA
28 May	Blumen Gardens	FIELD TRIP!	19 Nov	All members	Dinner & Garden Dollar Auction



**90 YEARS A Growing Legacy**

A lot has changed in 90 years but our commitment to our customers and our community has not -- provide high-quality, locally-grown plant and landscape material, expert advice and professional installation and design services.

**Since 1925**

**WASCO NURSERY & GARDEN CENTER**

**630-584-4424**

6 miles west of Randall Road on Route 64, St. Charles  
1 mile west of Wasco  
[www.wasconursery.com](http://www.wasconursery.com)

Find everything you need for your beautiful garden

**Spring Bluff Nursery, Inc.**

*Specializing in growing landscape quality trees and shrubs*

**Retail Garden Center**  
**Landscape Design & Installation**  
**Trees, Shrubs & Perennials**

41W130 Norris Rd. 630.466.4278  
Sugar Grove, Illinois 60554 [www.springbluffnursery.com](http://www.springbluffnursery.com)  
[plants@springbluffnursery.com](mailto:plants@springbluffnursery.com)

*Growing, learning and educating since 1979...*



**News from Kruse**

*by Billie, Angie, Kerry and Tom*

*“I’m late, I’m late, I’m late for an important date,” said the White Rabbit in ‘Alice-in-Wonderland,’ hopping to his tea party.*

We at the Kruse garden were also late, not for a tea party, but for our spring clean-up. But we didn't have the Rabbit's spryness or enthusiasm. Spring came early and caught us by surprise. In early April the one project that was done in the garden was the cutting and pruning of trees. We participated.

In mid-April I stopped at the Kruse garden and saw a lot of yellow in the distance—surely not! The daffodils couldn't be blooming! Perennials were coming up amid the leaves, dried flower stalks and debris from last year. I was quite startled and hesitant to look closely—maybe woodcocks were nesting in the grasses? Were rabbits thriving? Could foxes have made a den in the debris? I couldn't bear to look up at the pear tree for fear pears were already hanging down. Spring had truly sprung and caught us unprepared. The time had come and gone when we should have slapped on our gardening gloves, bravely stepped into our Wellingtons, and firmly gripped those trusty rakes.

My dear friends that garden with me at the Kruse garden have been patient. We always work together. I'm very sure they were anxious to rake and haul and get a bit of spring mud on their shoes. They were looking forward to the bracing wind and lungfuls of fresh, biting air. And a little rain? Short of a thunderous downpour, it would not hinder, but be just a refreshing touch of spring.

I'm sure they've spent the many months studying, perusing gardening books, dreaming of beautiful garden vistas and fragrant roses. They have scouted out garden centers for trees. They've seeded and checked on the best prices and selections. They know of new equipment, better shovels, rakes and gardening methods. They know of new plants, better plants, great colors. They have a grip on hardier cultivars, hard scapes and soft scapes and every kind of garden décor. We had to go to the garden.

So finally we got our clean-up underway. The day was beautiful and the work went well. We finished up on a second Wednesday, dug some plants for the plant sale and planted some annuals. And of course we admired our work and congratulated ourselves on a job well-done. Oh, the joy of gardening!

Angie—Tom, Billie, Kerry



# Plant Sale 2015

Thank you to all our volunteers and coordinators for another successful sale!




*An Investment That Grows*  
**THE GARDEN CENTER IS BLOOMING WITH IDEAS!**

**MEYER LANDSCAPING, INC.**  
 Nursery, Landscaping Design & Construction

27W067 North Avenue  
 West Chicago, IL 60185  
 Tel: (630) 293-4800

**LARGE TREES & SHRUBS, ROSES, PERENNIALS, & ANNUALS**

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR SPECIALS!!!  
 WWW.MEYER-LANDSCAPING.COM

SPRING HOURS  
 MON-SAT: 9-5  
 SUN: 10-4 (4/15-6/30)

**Spring Bluff Nursery, Inc.**

*Specializing in growing landscape quality trees and shrubs*

**Retail Garden Center**  
**Landscape Design & Installation**  
**Trees, Shrubs & Perennials**

41W130 Norris Rd. Sugar Grove, Illinois 60554

630.466.4278  
 www.springbluffnursery.com  
 plants@springbluffnursery.com

*Growing, learning and educating since 1979...*



## ***Tomato Planting Time!***

***by The Growing Place***

There's nothing better than a BLT sandwich with a freshly picked tomato slice. Yum! Our mouths are watering just thinking about it! The key to great tomatoes is simple, they just need the right combination of sun, water, soil, nutrients and, of course, love. Here's how to do it:

### **Choosing Your Site**

Tomatoes need lots of sun. Make sure that the area you want to plant them gets a least 6-8 hours of direct sunlight per day, has good air circulation and well-drained soil. If growing tomatoes in the ground or in raised beds, it's a good idea to change the growing location within your garden each year to avoid soil-borne diseases. If you don't have a sunny spot in your gardens, you can plant some varieties containers and put it in a sunny spot on your porch or patio. Make sure your container has at least a 12"-18" diameter.

### **Amending Your Soil**

Tomatoes grow best in fertile soil, so prepare your beds by incorporating compost to help hold moisture and provide nutrients to tomatoes as they grow. You can also mix in some Espoma® Tomato-tone. This organic fertilizer is formulated with calcium to help prevent blossom end rot and to produce consistently plump, juicy tomatoes.

### **Choosing Your Plants**

Look for plants that are compact and healthy looking—not stretched or with yellow leaves. If you are feeling adventurous, plant several different varieties. We love the yellow cherry variety 'Sun Sugar'. It has a wonderful flavor and produces a ton of tomatoes. We also find the heirloom 'Rainbow Beefsteak Mix' a treat with its mix of pink, red, yellow, green, black and orange fruits. Unless you're planning to can or freeze your harvest, a good rule of thumb is 1-2 plants per person in the household who will be eating tomatoes.

Tomatoes can be either be determinate or indeterminate. Determinate tomatoes are bush varieties that grow to a set height from 18" to 36" and then form tomatoes at the ends of their branches. These tomatoes ripen during a concentrated period, usually within 4 to 6 weeks. Indeterminate tomatoes are vining type plants. They will grow, blossom, and set fruit all through the season, but they have fewer mature tomatoes at any one time. These plants can reach 3' to 6' or more and need staking so they don't sprawl on the ground. Each variety we carry is labeled on its sign whether it is a determinate or indeterminate variety.

### **Planting Your Plants**

Tomato plants thrive in the heat, so don't plant them outdoors until after the last frost and the soil temperature has reached 60 degrees. If you do want to plant them sooner, remember to protect them from cold night temperatures.

...continued on next page



**Tomato Planting Time! ...continued**

**by The Growing Place**

When you plant your tomatoes, remove the first set of leaves and bury about 3-4" of the stem. Roots will grow from that point and will give your plants a better root system and a faster start. Be sure to leave enough space between each plant. Depending on the variety and type, you should space them 24-36" apart. Check your tomato labels for specifics. Don't worry if your plants are not looking great the first week they are in the ground. They are most likely suffering from a bit of transplant shock and will be just fine.

Tomatoes should be staked, trellised or caged for support. This will keep plants off the ground and make it easier to harvest. It's best to install stakes or cages when planting to avoid disturbing the roots later. As your plants grow and flourish you might need to tie branches to the stake, trellis or cage. Avoid damaging tender branches by using soft ties, such as pipe cleaners, strips of rags or panty hose to secure branches to supports.

Water plants well immediately, then check the soil every day for the first two weeks by sticking your finger in the dirt about 2" below the surface. When dry, water to get the plants established. It's also a good idea to add about an inch of mulch—shredded leaves or straw— around plants to discourage weeds and to retain moisture.

**Maintaining Healthy Plants**

Tomato plants need about 1-3 inches of water per week. To reduce disease issues, it's best to water the soil rather than the foliage, and to water in the morning, rather than evening. Tomatoes are fairly heavy feeders, so fertilize with a plant food recommended for vegetables, starting about one week after planting, and then about every two weeks according to label instructions. To give your plants a mid-summer boost, spread a couple of handfuls of nutrient-rich compost around the base of each plant and water well.

**Pruning Tomatoes**

When pruning indeterminate tomatoes, pinch off suckers. This will help the plant produce better fruit and a stronger stem. If you miss one and it gets bigger than a pencil, you can leave it alone. Do not prune determinate tomatoes as this will reduce production. Remember if you use pruners in the garden, clean the blades between each plant, otherwise you could spread disease from one plant to another.

**Enjoy the fruits of your labor!**

Depending on variety and growing conditions, your tomatoes will ripen 65-90 days from transplant. It's best to pick tomatoes at the peak of ripeness or even just before they are fully ripe to keep them from falling prey to squirrels and birds.

*Experience*  
**The Growing Place**  
 Garden Center

Growing Place grown plants • Beautiful gardens  
 Special events & activities • Landscape services

<b>Naperville...</b>	<b>Aurora...</b>
630.355.4000	630.820.8088
25w471 Plank Rd	2000 Montgomery Rd
<a href="http://thegrowingplace.com">thegrowingplace.com</a>    Find us on Facebook!	