

We Go Gardening

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

Volume 25 Issue 5 May 2021



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 environment in which we live.

Meeting Date: May 27

Meeting Location:

Kruse Garden

527 Main Street, West Chicago

Meeting Time:

6:45PM Refreshments

7:00PM Business Meeting

7:15PM Program

Bee Amazed!



You will **bee** delighted when you come and see how **bee**autiful the Kruse House Garden looks and the

incredible **bee** creations made by your fellow garden club members. Come early so you have time to spend visiting with the other club members before the presentation begins at 7pm.

Please bring your own chair and refreshments and use your own judgement regarding wearing a mask.

In case of bad weather (not a few tiny rain drops) we will be moving this meeting to our previous location at St. Andrew Lutheran Church which has reopened and will be available to our group each month if we have indoor meetings. If we have to move this meeting to the church we will send out an email the day of the meeting by 5:00pm to notify all members.

If you love nature and **bees** you should not miss this meeting! Our speaker is well known and respected as the famous **bee** keeper, instructor/trainer and presenter and will split his presentation between native **bees** and honey **bees** to hopefully cover everything we ever wanted to know about **bees**! He is also going to bring a " **bee** house" with him so we can see how the **bees** live and how the worker bees service the **QUEEN BEE**! Everyone that comes to this fun event will go home with a sweet surprise!

Barb Melville



Bill Whitney, the owner of City Bee Savers, has kept honey bees for over 28 years. His small honey bee farm cares for about 200 beehives distributed around DuPage County. Some of his clients include caring for the honey bees at the Shedd Aquarium and rooftops around the Loop.

He is deeply concerned for the future of these magnificent creatures, the honey bees. The vulnerability of the bees as well as other pollinators has prompted Bill to become a certified member of the Illinois queen rearing initiative. This group is developing a superior honey bee suited for the rigors of Illinois. He is also the VP for the Cook-DuPage Beekeepers Association, and a certified structural pest control technician. This certification qualifies him to remove honey bees from buildings throughout Chicagoland. In 2020 City Bee Savers rescued over 80 honey colonies from homes and buildings.

You can find Bill speaking with garden clubs about our pollinators, teaching beekeeping classes in the community centers, or mentoring families as they learn to care for their bees. He has a wealth of knowledge and would love to share what he knows with you, just ask!

JUNE 24TH MEETING

These are a few of my favorite things!

Presented by Carol Cichorski

Notes from the President

Dan Beebe

Wow! It looks like we may be starting to put the pandemic behind us. A special thanks to all of you who have been vaccinated against COVID-19 as you have helped make it possible for us to start on the path to normal in-person meetings and social interaction. As reported by Barb Melville, our regular meeting place, St. Andrew Lutheran Church, has reopened. At this time, we will try to continue to meet outside for the summer, but it is nice to know that we have somewhere to go when the weather will not cooperate. When meeting, we will follow the current CDC guidance. At the time I am writing this, outside meetings will be "masks optional" and inside meetings will be "masks required". If you feel more comfortable wearing a mask around others outside, feel free to do so.

On May 30th, a little later than usual, there will be a small Plant Sale at my house. I have grown tomatoes and peppers and have a few other perennial plants that were potted up in preparation for plant sales that were cancelled. So if you can, leave a few spaces in your gardens for some truly unique and tasty tomato varieties that you just won't find in the big box stores. Watch your e-mail a day or two before the sale for more details.

In July, it has become a club tradition to have the President's Picnic. After much thought and consideration, I think that this year's picnic will actually be an actual picnic in my yard. The tradition started a long time ago (at least it feels like it) when the club members were invited to bring sides, salads and your own items to cook on the grill at Carole and Wayne Bate's deck overlooking her beautiful gardens and his really, really cool model train setup. As I am not yet comfortable with the idea of buffet style service, we will be providing somewhat basic fare as a homage to the original picnics. We will be working to put together more details over the next few weeks and share more with you in next month's newsletter. I sure hope that I can get my yard cleaned up some before the meeting... not that it really matters... I will just be glad to see all of you in person again.

In the meantime, I hope to see you all at the meeting at the Kruse House on the 27th and at least some of you on the 29th for the Barn cleanup.

- Dan

Barn Cleanup—Saturday May 29th, 9am to Noon



If you are able to help with the sorting and stacking of pots, please email westchicagogardenclub@gmail.com or let Dan know in person at the May meeting on the 27th.

As you plant your gardens, save your pots and mini blinds (for plant labels) and we will allow drop offs at the Barn during the cleanup sessions. We are most in need of 'trade gallon' pots, but will take other pots, too. We also use a lot of 3 1/2" round pots and trays at the sale and can always use these, too. We do **not** need any large pots (over 2 gallons) that would usually hold shrubs or trees.

The Fence is done! It is eight panels in length and is placed two feet in front of the chain link fence in the west corner of the back garden. Its primary purpose is as a backdrop to that garden area. For many years we had sections of old picket fence attached to the chain link for our backdrop but it was time to move on and we love the new fence! Tony Wdowiarz



(Historical Society) tenaciously labored through the permit process, and with help from Keith Letsche the permit was finalized this Spring. Installation required nine significant post holes! Kerry's friend, Rush, from out of town came to help. Tony and Rush, with some help from a handyman, did a perfect job of installation! It is a major piece of hardscape to enhance the garden and we are thrilled to have it! Many thanks to all involved! We are grateful for all the hours of work and expertise involved to get this done!

The Shed: while I'm on hard scape I'll also tell the tale of the shed. The yellow utility shed in the middle of the yard had developed a significant backward leaning problem. It was in danger of collapse. Again Tony Wdowiarz from the Historical Society to the rescue. He consulted with Kent Orlandini from the Historical Society who has experience in these matters and together they performed the magical straightening of the shed! It was amazing to see crooked as all get out one day and pin straight the next. The shed is our tool storage spot and we would be lost without it. Thanks guys! Great job!



The Gardeners: Spring is no doubt the busiest time in the garden. Every Wednesday morning six regulars show up and dig in. I am so indebted to these generous souls! A thousand thanks to Jan, Kerry Chris, Keith and Barbara for all your hard work.

HOT FLASH we had a special invitation Saturday morning when Annette Musil, Mary Schramer, and June Luther spent the morning working the garden with Kerry and Billie. Annuals got planted and mulch was distributed. Woo Hoo! Thanks!

The Bees Landed in the garden on May 5 and it was a buzz! What a fun evening!!! I didn't work too hard but there were many who did. Dick & Barbara Darrah, Barb & Dan Melville, Kerry and Billie drove the bees to the garden and the artists were on hand to assemble and install these unique art pieces. Even the mayor showed up to help and meet the artists!



Tony Wdowiarz, Historical Society on left and Rush, Kerry's friend right. Rush is an honorary garden club member. He has helped water plant sale plants, put out and gather up plant sale signs, cleaned the pond, fixed the leaking hose connectors, and built the fence at Kruse Garden and more.

Garden Notes

The best gardening tools

I'm "packing heat" when gardening. No, I'm not carrying lethal weapons to guard against ferocious wild animals. But, I do feel like the Lone Ranger or maybe Annie Oakley. Empowered!

Holsters, clipped to my jean pockets hold a pair of nippers and my favorite tool, an A.M. Leonard Deluxe Soil Knife. The soil knife has a good grip, a 6" stainless steel blade, serrated edge on one side. The tapered slicing edge lets you dig, cut or saw. You can easily attack nasty weeds and remove the root. It makes weeding easy! The orange handle makes it less likely to lose.

Several garden club members have used an A.M. Leonard Soil Knife for years. We made two converts while gardening at the Kruse House last week. If you're interested, check out the website AMLEO.com

Happy trails and happy gardening.

Kerry Perry



Out and About



Took a ride out the other day to see the Batavia eagles! Here's mommy in the nest guarding her one baby and daddy standing guard!

Barb Melville



The hummingbirds and the orioles are back! Funny how this oriole is the exact same color as the orange that he just loves....and then he goes to drink out of the hummingbird feeder. Almost impossible to describe how beautiful nature is!



The American Daffodil Society lists growing tips and directories of display gardens and shows at daffodilusa.org. For help identifying the daffodils in your yard, check out daffseek.org. Daffodils are typically organized into 13 divisions based largely on shape and size; if you want a display that lasts all Spring aim for a mix of bloom times.



Online Rain Barrel Sales Underway

If you don't have a rain barrel in your yard, or you'd like a second one, now is the time to get it. The West Chicago Environmental Commission spearheads the annual Rain Barrel Sale in conjunction with The Conservation Foundation.

It's easy to order your rain barrel online through [The Conservation Foundation and Upcycle Products, Inc.](http://TheConservationFoundationandUpcycleProducts.com)

A rain barrel is an easy way to collect a consistent supply of clean, fresh water for outdoor use to water plants, to wash your car, or to top a swimming pool, FREE!

The barrels are repurposed, industrial-sized food containers that would otherwise be shredded and possibly sent to a landfill. The tops are screened for safety, with a spigot and overflow pre-installed on the barrels. Barrels hold 50-60 gallons and come in multiple colors.

Consider the many rewards of having a rain barrel for your home, one of which is knowing you are doing something kind for the planet.

Please note: As there is no scheduled pick-up at City Hall currently this year due to uncertainty of COVID-19, all prices include home delivery to DuPage County, Illinois addresses only. There is an option to pick up rain barrels at the Conservation Foundation's Naperville location to save on the delivery cost.



Bees Take Flight in the Kruse Garden

Billie Childress

..... What a journey it was !

First Kerry created the bee pattern, then Billie's neighbor Keith cut them out of plywood sheets. There were 2 wings and a body making a structure measuring 48 x 48 inches. Then there was sanding and 2 coats of primer followed by drilling the holes. Twelve artists claimed them and created works of art. Stan Grismore made the name and bee fact signs. Kerry applied coats of sealer, and bought posts, nuts, bolts, and washers. And.....May 5th the artists gathered to install them in the garden. All the while in the background Rosemary was getting the word out on the project with press releases and postings on the city web site.



This is a photo of Keith Nelson. Billie's neighbor who cut out all the bees.

That small paragraph represents hours and hours of work (and some fun) by **many** volunteers. And we loved every minute of it!

Through the work we connected as a Garden Club Community and we are delighted with and proud of the BEES on display in the Kruse House Garden.

Dare I say, they couldn't be cuter! They are a must see for your family, friends and neighbors. The garden is always open. And our meeting this month will be held in the Kruse Garden so I really hope you can come see the bees and each other.

We hope the project promotes an interest in the welfare of bees who are having a tough time surviving out there. We, the people, have done much to take away their habitat, food, and polluted their environment with pesticides. It's time to turn that around. We need the bees to pollinate flowers so fruit and seed can be produced for our food. Also because bees are unique and interesting insects that are fun to observe and we love the honeybees honey!



Local Events for Gardeners

“STROLL AFTER SUNSET” AT CANTIGNY

[Cantigny Park](#) plans to stay open late on Wednesdays beginning May 5 and through the summer. The “Stroll After Sunset” program, new for 2021, aims to satisfy higher public demand for outdoor pursuits and introduce more guests to the park’s recent enhancements, including new pathways and lighting.

Cantigny’s usual closing time is sunset. On Wednesdays, it will now be one hour *after* sunset. In early May that means about 9 pm, but as the days grow longer the park will be open as late as 9:30 pm.

“The work we’ve completed through Project New Leaf makes this possible,” said Matt LaFond, executive director of Cantigny Park. “One of our key goals for the project was to make the park more accessible in every way. Stroll After Sunset is just the beginning of our ability to now host additional evening events and programs in the gardens.”

The later close on Wednesday includes the First Division Museum at Cantigny Park, which will keep doors open until 8 pm. Due to the pandemic, the museum currently operates on a timed-entry system—tickets are free, but advance registration is required via the museum’s website.

Main attractions during Stroll After Sunset will be the Cantigny gardens, accented by the park’s new lighted fountain, and the First Division Museum exhibits and tanks. McCormick House is closed for renovation until 2022.

Magan Ascher, director of visitor services, sees potential for “pop up” attractions, too, such as a strolling violinist.

“Nothing is currently planned, but I like the idea of adding elements of surprise, especially on warm summer nights,” Ascher said. “Pop ups could add to the fun.”

Cantigny Park is open daily from 9 am to sunset (7 am starting May 1). Parking is \$5 per car and free on the first Wednesday of the month. Cantigny Park members receive free parking, invitations to exclusive events, and other benefits. More information is online at [Cantigny.org](#).



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Club Information

Website: www.westchicagogardenclub.org
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Membership Information

Dues for 2020: Individual: \$15 Family: \$25 (2 people)

Board Meetings

2nd Thursday each month at 7 p.m.

Regular Meeting Location

St Andrew Lutheran Church—155 N Prince Crossing Rd

2021 WCGC BOARD:

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To Contact any Board Member, please send email to
WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com

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