

# We Go Gardening

## Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

Volume 29—Issue 11—November 2025



*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.*

**Meeting Date: November 20**

**Meeting Time:**

**Meeting Location:**

**6:30PM Arrive & Mingle**

**6:45PM Annual Dinner & Raffles**

**St Andrew Lutheran Church**

**Corner of Prince Crossing & Geneva Rd**

### Potluck & Raffle for Members Only

—Must be present to win—

**Potluck** - Please bring your appetizer, salad, side dish, or dessert to share. Please label your dish along with any allergy ingredients such as nuts, seeds, etc. on a tent card. Don't forget your serving utensils and extension/power cord (if needed). Please bring your own beverage. Only coffee will be provided.

**Raffle Donations** - Each member should bring with them one gently-used, new, or handcrafted garden or plant-related item for the general raffle such as gardening tools, books, birdhouses, or houseplants. Please fill out a notecard describing or listing the item you are donating. Note: If your item is not won or claimed, we ask that you take it back home with you.



**Raffle Tickets** - Pick up your raffle tickets from the table before our meeting begins. You will have time before and after the meeting to drop your tickets in the bag(s) of your choosing for a chance to win that specific item. All items will be numbered and will match to a numbered bag.

Remember there are 2 separate raffles to participate in. If you have chosen the "Garden Center" raffle you will receive a special ticket(s) that you will need to write your name on. Reminder~you may only win 1 Garden Center raffle. For the General raffle of donated items you will receive regular numbered tickets that, for simplicity, may choose to write your name on the ticket(s). Please bring a pen with you. You may win multiple General raffle items.

**Tip:** If you have small return address labels that sometimes come in the mail, sticking them on your raffle tickets is easier than writing your name a bunch of times!

### Where to find us online

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



Facebook:

[facebook.com/westchicagogardenclub](https://facebook.com/westchicagogardenclub)



Instagram:

[westchicagogardenclub](https://www.instagram.com/westchicagogardenclub)

**Janet Frogner**



# Potluck

*You need to be present to win.  
You must take all of your winning items with  
you that evening.  
Remember if your item is not claimed by the  
end of the night, we ask that you take it  
back home with you.*

**We do not have a  
December meeting. See  
you in January!**

## Note from the President

Dan Beebe

Wow! Another growing season has passed... how is it possible... it seems like Spring was just last week.

As has become an annual tradition, I want to thank all of you who have participated in any way this year. Whether you attended monthly meetings and field trips; helped set up & take down the tables and chairs at our monthly meetings; volunteered to bring snacks, or drinks to meetings; donated plants, helped pot & care for plants, or volunteered during the Plant Sale; donated pots or helped sort them at the Barn; worked on the Kruse Garden; worked at or attended events at the Kruse Garden; or helped the Club in any way in the past year, your work and effort are seen and appreciated. It is through your active participation and hard work that the Club can offer all of the activities and learning opportunities we all enjoy.

I want to give a special 'shout out' to our great community partner, the West Chicago Park District. The team at the park district goes out of their way every year to help us with our annual Plant Sale. Whether it is allowing us to use the Barn for material storage, letting us conduct our potting parties in the field behind the maintenance shop building, assisting with obtaining potting material for the plants, or helping to move all the plants to the sale site downtown, they always come through for us. Their assistance and support enable us to provide educational opportunities throughout the year and offer financial assistance to other groups that align with the club's mission.

Please let them know how much we appreciate them every chance you get.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to every member of the 2025 WCGC Board. Once again, the board members have worked hard this year to bring you all the Club's great programming; their hard work makes my job as President look easy. Communications with members and or social media presence have been excellent again this year. The Club's financial position remains strong, allowing the Club to make some well-placed donations this year. Your board members make good things happen. Please join me and give each member of the board a 'Thank You!' when you see them at our meetings and events.

Hope to see all of you at our final meeting of the year!

Best Regards,

Dan



### **Club Information**

Website: [www.westchicagogardenclub.org](http://www.westchicagogardenclub.org)  
P. O. Box 313, West Chicago, IL 60186  
E-mail: [westchicagogardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:westchicagogardenclub@gmail.com)

### **Membership Information**

Dues for 2025: Individual: \$20 Family: \$30 (2 people)

### **Board Meetings**

2nd Thursday most months at 7 p.m.

### **Regular Meeting Location**

St Andrew Lutheran Church—155 N Prince Crossing Rd

### **2025 WCGC Board & Committees:**

President:	Dan Beebe
Vice President:	Janet Frogner
Treasurer:	Kerry Perry
Secretary:	Christina Covarrubias
Publicity Director:	Ruth Gauss
Information Director:	Pamela Darrah
Program Director:	Ruth Kyme
Member Services Director:	Lisa Marie Vogt
Director at Large:	Kurt Schramer
Plant Sale Chair:	Mary Schramer & Dan Beebe
Kruse Garden Chair:	Open

To Contact any Board Member, please send email to [WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com](mailto:WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com)

## Cookie Caravan

Kerry Perry

### Thanks to Our Club Supporters

This is the 11th year WCGC held its annual "Cookie Caravan". This year fifteen club members baked, packaged and delivered more than 50 dozen cookies to our loyal supporters!

- The West Chicago Park District provides an area for our club to pot and tend plants prior to the annual plant sale. Their staff helps transport plants from the staging area to the big tent in town at Blooming Fest. The Park District staff is invaluable to the success of our Sale!
- Cantigny shares extra plugs used in their gardens. Those "babies" are potted by our members and several weeks later those plants go to the Kruse House Garden or to our Plant Sale.
- St. Andrew Lutheran Church is the venue for our Club meetings. It's a great location.



Mike Gasparini,  
Supt. WC Park District



Robert Carr, Cantigny  
Greenhouse Manager



Mayra,  
St. Andrew Secretary



The WCGC "Cookie Brigade"

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& inspiration  
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**Aurora** | 2000 Montgomery Rd  
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**Kathleen Hankins**

**Resident of:** Winfield, 4 years

**WCGC Member:** May 2025

**How did you become a member:** Found the club on the website

**What is your current profession:** Marketing manager/advertising writer for Princess Cruises and other cruise lines

**What are you most proud of in your garden:** I most like the garden that surrounds my she shed/potting shed

**A garden mistake you made:** Not amending the soil enough

**What do you love most about gardening:** The activity and the results; I am blessed by beautiful acreage near the Blackwell Forest Preserve and up against a large pond. I inherited an already stunning yard and am the humble caretaker. Little by little I am adding my own touches with my husband's help.

**What tip or words of wisdom can you share:** My tip is to get as much help as possible with lawn care, yard cleanup and hardscape additions. I worked with MTZ Landscaping (Marco) to add in a rock walkway with boulders and it turned out beautifully. My husband has built a shed, and we put in a hot tub with a gazebo. I am also planning another walkway to a patio for the ideal view of the pond and surrounding trees.

**What is your favorite houseplant:** We are lucky to have a large sunroom with a southern exposure—home to 23 houseplants, large and small. My favorite would be an impressive philodendron that has quadrupled in size.

**Favorite garden tool:** Hand clippers

**Favorite flower & love to grow:** I love peonies, roses, and have recently discovered the Maximillian Sunflower which grew into a giant this year. But my special favorites are the Mexican Sunflowers that I grow from seed every year (I have never seen them in nurseries. I fell in love with their vibrant orange (favorite color) flowers on a visit to Cantigny when I first moved nearby. I also love hardy hibiscus and have been adding them to the yard over the years. The size of the blooms and the vibrant colors are spectacular.

**New Year's Resolution:** To plant more trees for fall color, to prune the peach tree for less fruit and to plant fewer tomato plants—we were overwhelmed this season. Also to spray the roses for bugs in the spring because they seem to get really ravaged in the early months. If I have the time and energy, fertilize the flowers/plants once in a while.





## News from Kruse

Christina Covarrubias



The Kruse garden is still looking glorious in its autumnal hues! The monkshood wins the award for latest perennial to flower here this year and our small clump of trout lily is growing and flowered in its very orchid-like way.



A special thank you to our Wednesday Kruse Crew- Kerry Perry, Barbara Darrah, Chris Gicela, Dee Soustek, Marilyn Santos-McNabb, Jean Ann Saarnio, Mary Anderson, Judy Knaak, and Karen King- for your gift of time, plant knowledge, talent and muscles over the past 6 months. Your fellow Kruse gardeners bundled up for our last day in the garden, October 29th. We celebrated the end of another beautiful garden season and walked around with pencil, paper and camera in hand for over an hour planning for next year. We will need about 3 times as many hours and gardeners next year if we want to check everything off our plans! Anyone else a little delusional with their garden plans or is it just me?!?



Last month we shared our Wasco trip selecting a new tree. As we were looking around for another tree, the Wasco tree expert kept suggesting tree varieties and we had to reply “we already have one of those” to so many of the trees he suggested. It’s the sign of a great garden legacy to have such diversity of established trees in our almost one acre garden. With this tree diversity comes multi-seasonal interest and an extended autumn season.

Enjoy the fall foliage photos!

Photos by Kerry Perry



## 2026 WCGC Board Members

**Pamela Darrah**

Our November meeting includes our annual business meeting. At this meeting we elect our board members for next year. The following nominees have volunteered to be a WCGC Board Member for 2025.

President:  
Dan Beebe

Vice-President:  
Janet Frogner

Treasurer:  
Karen Sherman

Secretary:  
Christina  
Covarrubias

Publicity  
Director:  
Ruth Gauss

Information  
Director:  
Pamela Darrah

Program Director:  
Ruth Kyme

Member Services  
Director:  
Lisa Marie Vogt

Director-at-large:  
Kurt Schramer



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Your Gardening Source....





## Garden Bucks Tally Sheet

Did you RSVP for the November meeting? Have you returned your Garden Bucks Tally Sheet so that your raffle tickets will be ready and waiting for you when you arrive?

If you haven't returned your Tally Sheet yet, please do the following steps:

- Download a copy from our website: <https://westchicagogardenclub.org/wp-content/files/GardenBucksTallySheet-1.pdf>
- Print it out and fill it in. (Don't forget your NAME!)
- Take a photo of it and email it to [WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com](mailto:WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com).

For all Tally Sheets, we work on an honor system and you need to add up your total yourself.

If you are not able to take a photo and email a copy to us, then please bring your completed tally sheet to the meeting. work on an honor system and you need to add up your total yourself.

If you send in your Tally Sheet in advance, we will have your raffle tickets ready for you to pickup.

If you bring your completed sheet to the meeting, there may be a wait while we process the sheets and get your raffle tickets ready for you.

If you have any questions about Tally Sheets, please send us an email at [WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com](mailto:WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com) and we will try to help.

**TRACK THE GARDEN BUCKS YOU EARN AND USE THEM TO WIN PRIZES AT OUR NOVEMBER POTLUCK!**

YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_

each volunteer hour (potting party, house garden, plant sale, etc)	\$ 100	X	_____	+	_____
Donate plants to Plant Sale (each time)	\$ 100	X	_____	+	_____
Donate pots or blinds for Plant Sale	\$ 25	X	_____	+	_____
Donate plants for House Garden	\$ 50	X	_____	+	_____
Set up chairs & tables before meeting	\$ 50	X	_____	+	_____
Put away chairs & tables after meeting	\$ 25	X	_____	+	_____
Host refreshment table	\$ 100	X	_____	+	_____
Provide refreshments	\$ 75	X	_____	+	_____
Attend a monthly meeting	\$ 25	X	_____	+	_____
Bring a guest to a meeting	\$ 50	X	_____	+	_____
Attend Field Trip	\$ 25	X	_____	+	_____
Write newsletter article	\$ 100	X	_____	+	_____
Host Twilight Tuesday	\$ 150	X	_____	+	_____
Attend Twilight Tuesday	\$ 25	X	_____	+	_____
Pay current year dues by Feb	\$ 50	X	_____	+	_____
Pay next year's dues by Nov	\$ 75	X	_____	+	_____
TOTAL:					_____

**WE APPRECIATE YOU!**  
thank you for volunteering and for participating  
our excellent programs and field trips are possible when everyone pitches in



Thank you to the club members who have already paid their 2026 Membership Dues.

If you haven't sent in your payment, a [Membership Application](#) can be found on our website. Please bring the form and your renewal to the November meeting or mail it to the PO Box shown on the form.

We can also accept credit cards using our online "store" where you can pay your dues. If you choose this option please write a note

that this is a renewal in the spot for a comment. The online store is at :

<https://west-chicago-garden-club.square.site/>.

**Remember, you get another \$75 Garden Bucks if you renew by November 20th!**

## **Growing Native—Covering up & staying safe in the native garden! Ruth Gauss**

Hi, gardening friends! Continuing in the tradition of gifts for gardeners as my last newsletter topic for the year, this year I thought I would address how to dress comfortably for the work that we do outdoors. Let's dive in, head first (pun intended)! (Look for sales on these items at this time of year.)

**Head Covering**—a garden hat protects you from the sun, and especially with its wide brim it makes my dermatologist happy, but I find it helps to keep branches off of my face as well. This one is lightweight so I don't feel like my head gets super hot even on those mid-summer days and the chin strap keeps it in place no matter what the wind or my head is doing (think leaning over for digging or weeding)

I'll include a women's style here that is newer than mine. There are lots of different choices out there and I encourage you to find what works best for you.

Women's Global Adventure™ Packable Hat III (from [Columbia](#))



**Arm and Hand Covering**—I don't know about you, but sometimes I just need to head out for a quick watering or weeding session and I don't want to have to take the time to put on sunscreen but also don't want to chance getting too much sun if/when I accidentally stay out longer than expected. One solution is the [Farmer's Defense Protection Sleeves](#). I have a previous style that is just a fun print, but now they have lots of additional options like solids, pro-mesh (for extra cooling on the upper arm), and insect repellent. I find that even my old-style sleeves keep me cooler than I expected as well as keeping my arms clean and irritation free. They also have hats, gloves (including nitrile, which is my favorite since I have a rubber sensitivity), and neck gaiters, most of which come in fun patterns or more sedate colors if that's what you like.



**Shirts and Pants**—If you've seen me in the outdoors you know that I love to wear clothes that keep me comfortable in many ways. My skin is very sensitive, the sun, protection products (DEET), plants, and bugs, can all cause problems and I am happiest all covered up. I may look uncomfortable to you, but the clothing I wear is usually as cool and comfortable as short sleeved shirts and shorts would be for someone else. The key is construction. The fabrics I wear are meant to breathe and move and that works very well for me. I love [Eddie Bauer products](#) because they are very durable and last for years! Some other products I've seen recently have insect repellent incorporated into the clothing. Some recent finds are: [Craghoppers](#) (which is where I found the hat pictured—going on *my* Christmas wishlist this year!), [LLBean](#), [REI](#), and the obvious [Insect Shield](#), which also will treat clothing that you send to them and would be a great option for something that has lost its effectiveness.

I hope this was helpful! Happy (native) gardening and happy holidays!





## Upcoming Local Events for Gardeners

Patti Pirrie

**Wed Nov 26-Sun Jan 4. 10am-5pm. Winter Flower Show: Merry & Bright, Garfield Park Conservatory (Chicago, IL). Non-Chicago Adult (18-64) \$10. Non-Chicago Senior (65+) \$5. [Website Link](#)**

This year's Winter Flower Show "Merry & Bright" evokes the festivity of the season. While the outdoor landscape is gray (and maybe white!), the indoor Show House reveals a cheerful selection of poinsettias including 'Viking Cinnamon', 'Lemon Glow', 'Chorus Hot Pink', and 'Candy Winter-green'. Other plants include favorites such as brightly colored Coleus, flowering Lantana, and red Begonias along with freshly cut Frasier Fir trees adorned with multi-colored LED lights.



**Tuesday, December 2. 6-7:30pm. Porch Arrangement Workshop. Blumen Gardens (Sycamore, IL). Cost: \$69. [Website Link](#)**

Join the Blumen Gardens design team for a creative, hands-on workshop where you'll craft a beautiful porch arrangement perfect for the season. Our staff will guide you step by step in designing with fresh greens, seasonal accents, and festive touches to create a welcoming display for your home. Whether you're a beginner or seasoned decorator, this workshop is a fun way to embrace your creativity and leave with a stunning arrangement to greet your guests.



**Saturday, December 6. 1:30-3:30pm. Wild Spices Workshop. The Conservation Foundation. McDonald Farm (Naperville, IL). Admission: \$25. [Website Link](#)**

Learn from The Conservation Foundation and Shane Alden about how to identify and prepare wild spices from local plants that surround us in the landscape. We'll taste different wildcrafted spices and discuss how they can be used in cooking and baking. Explore the wild side of plant spices and flavors!



**Saturday, December 6. 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. Plant Stories: Tales From The Garden, Morton Arboretum (Lisle, IL). Meeting Place: Cudahy Room. Admission: \$24. Member cost: \$17 [Website Link](#)**

Join author and naturalist Cindy Crosby for an engaging journey into the adventurous stories behind the garden plants we know and love. Discover how these plants made their way to our backyards—thanks to the daring efforts of plant hunters across the globe and close to home. Along the way, we'll explore how different cultures throughout history have viewed and celebrated them. You'll leave inspired, seeing your own garden with fresh eyes and imagining the stories it might tell in the seasons ahead.



**Sundays – Dec 7, 14, 21. 1-3pm. Composting Demonstration.**

**Garfield Park Conservatory (Chicago, IL). Non-Chicago Adult (18-64) \$10. Non-Chicago Senior (65+) \$5. [Website Link](#)**

Join GPCA's volunteers on Sunday afternoons to learn more about composting at the top of the ramp in Horticultural Hall. Composting demos will take from 1:00pm to 3:00pm, through the fall into early spring. Various topics will be covered monthly from starting your own vermicompost bin at home to how to harvest your finished compost. The demonstration will move outdoors once the weather warms up. This drop-in program is included with your general admission ticket.



## Local Events Continued

**Saturday, December 13. 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Winterscaping: Beauty in the Quiet Season.**

**Morton Arboretum (Lisle, IL). Meeting Place: Cudahy Room.**

**Admission: \$49. Member cost: \$42** [Website Link](#)

Creating garden landscapes is perhaps the most challenging in winter, when the color palette shrinks and emphasis must shift from colorful blooms to the form and structure of plants. In this talk, participants will learn how to evaluate plants for their architecture, their resilience to snow cover, and the simple pleasures of bark and berries—to create a garden that's interesting to look at all year round.



**December 17. 7pm-8:30pm. Fruit Tree Pruning Fundamentals Virtual Workshop. University of Illinois Extension. This is a zoom webinar. Cost \$5** [Website Link](#)

Join our comprehensive apple pruning workshop and discover the essential skills that separate thriving orchards from struggling trees. This class will teach you the science and artistry behind proper pruning, empowering you to maximize your harvest while maintaining healthy, beautiful trees for years to come. The skills you learn in this course will prepare you to prune your fruit trees in the dormant season of mid-December to late February when pruning should be done.



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## Nature Notes—Ginkgo

**Kerry Perry**

Ginkgos are large trees (65-115 feet) that are long-lived, disease-resistant with unique fan-shaped leaves. They have brilliant yellow autumn foliage. Ginkgos are native to East Asia and first appeared over 290 million years ago. A beautiful specimen is in the Kruse House Garden.



Leaves in Fall



Leaves in Summer



## Garden Bucks

Members earn Garden Bucks when they participate in club activities, volunteer at events, and donate items. Use your Garden Bucks to win donated garden related items at our November meeting.

The chart below shows how to earn your Garden Bucks. Keep track of your dollars earned. Downloadable Tally Sheet: <https://westchicagogardenclub.org/wp-content/files/GardenBucksTallySheet-1.pdf>

Come out and volunteer. Your participation keeps our club going strong.

Each volunteer hour (potting party, Kruse garden, plant sale, etc)	100	Donate plants for Plant Sale (each time you donate)	100
Donate pots or blinds for Plant Sale	25	Donate plants for Kruse Garden	50
Set up tables & chairs before meeting	50	Put away tables & chairs after	25
Host Refreshment Table	100	Provide Refreshments	75
Attend a monthly meeting	25	Bring a guest to a meeting	50
Attend field trip	25	Write newsletter article	100
Host Twilight Tuesday	150	Attend Twilight Tuesday	25
Pay current year dues by Feb	50	Pay next year's dues by Nov	75

Refer a new member and participate in a raffle for a gift card at the Nov 2025 meeting.

## Newsletter Changes

For over 25 years our newsletter has been created using Microsoft Publisher. There have been a few redesigns over the years, but Publisher has been a constant. Next October, Microsoft is discontinuing Publisher. Not only will it be removed for anyone using Office 365, but there will not be any "viewer" type app that will enable you to at least look at or print Publisher files. I am looking at a couple alternative programs and once one is selected, the newsletter will be completely redesigned using the new software. It is very likely that the look will change.

If you have any suggestions/input/ideas about possible software (I am looking at Scribus and Affinity at the moment.) or about how the newsletter should be designed, now would be a great time to put in your two cents. If you want to reach out, contact me at [WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com](mailto:WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com).

## Pamela Darrah

The collage shows three issues of the West Chicago Garden Club newsletter. The top issue is dated February 10th and includes a 'Next Meeting' announcement for February 10th at the Fox Community Center. The middle issue is dated January 25th and features a 'PLANT SALE' announcement for January 25th at the Fox Community Center. The bottom issue is dated January 18th and features a 'PLANT SALE' announcement for January 18th at the Fox Community Center. Each issue also includes a 'Garden Club Field Trips' section.