



# WE GO GARDENING

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

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

Volume 17 Issue 11 November 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.

## November 21st Meeting:

### Annual Dinner and Garden Dollar Auction

**If you've never been to our auction and dinner, you are in for a treat!**

**The auction:** We have several items for the Garden Dollar silent auction that will take place before, during, and after our dinner.

**For dinner,** a main dish, beverages, and tableware will be provided. Please bring a salad, side dish, or dessert to share, arriving no later than 6:30 p.m.

**For the auction,** bring your Garden Dollars with you—they are the only currency that will be accepted to redeem auction items. 25 Garden Dollars will be given to each attendee as they enter the meeting.

**Do you still have uncollected Garden Dollars from this year's activities?** (see sheet on page 5 for how to earn) Figure up how much you're owed, and collect them from the welcome table as you enter. Renew your membership at the November meeting, and earn 75 Garden Dollars!

**Do you still have items to donate for the auction?** Anyone wishing to donate to the auction can leave things on the back porch of President's Letsche's house, 215 East Washington Street, until Nov. 19th.

We will hold our Annual Business Meeting during this event—if you are interested in serving on the Board of Directors, please contact Keith Letsche.

**Faith Community Church at 910 Main Street in West Chicago. Arrive no later than 6:30, dinner starts at 6:45 p.m.**

**Be sure to greet our newest member, Kathy Reynolds!**

**RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP FOR 2014, EARN GARDEN DOLLARS—SEE LAST SHEET IN THIS NEWSLETTER!**



**Next Meeting: Thursday, January 23:**

**Home Grown Program**

**(Have you sent photos to Pauline yet? See page 5!)**



### Upcoming events (outside the club)

**Cantigny:** Celebrate the Season Holiday Festival. Dec. 7. Free event, parking fee applies.

**Growing Place:** Wreath, Container, Swag Make & Take. Nov. 23 and Dec. 3rd. Both Locations. Make a custom wreath or container (\$49) or swag (\$39) with fresh greens and help from their expert designers. 630-820-8088 Aurora, 630-355-4000 Naperville.

**Heinz Brothers Greenhouse:** Winter Planting Demonstration. Dec. 1st. St. Charles. Free program, but call for reservations. Staff will demonstrate an array of beautiful winter planters and how to accomplish at home. 630-584-0473.

**Chicago Botanic Garden:** Wonderland Express runs Nov. 29—Jan. 5. Exhibition of miniature trains. More information at: <http://www.chicagobotanic.org/wonderland>

**Community High School Educational Foundation:** Holiday Fundraising Event. Dec. 8. \$50/\$25 ticket options. Visit <https://d94.revtrak.net/tek9.asp?pg=products&grp=35> for tickets.



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### Club information

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

### 2013 WCGC BOARD:

President:

Keith Letsche 630-293-0192

Vice President:

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

Treasurer:

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

Secretary:

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Program Co-Chairs:

Pauline Briggs 630-545-2234, [pmb Briggs@juno.com](mailto:pmb Briggs@juno.com)

June Luther 630-876-1295, [june@markluther.com](mailto:june@markluther.com)

Information Director & Publicity:

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



## America In Bloom

by Merle Burleigh

At the West Chicago Park District Board of Commissioners Committee of the Whole meeting Tuesday, November 5, 2013, Dr. Martin Miller from Ball Horticultural Company and currently president of America In Bloom board of directors presented a plaque in recognition of West Chicago's 3 blooms rating with a special mention in Urban Forestry with population of 25,001 to 30,000. The highest is 5 blooms. "I am very happy to present this plaque and seeing the participation of West Chicago community for the first time in the 13 year of AIB program. The community performed very well for the first time: most often it is one bloom. The two judges, who were here in July, were amazed at all West Chicago had to offer." The park district spearheaded the first year of competition in the America in Bloom program, and to date is the only one in the United States to do so. Usually it is through cities or villages. The symposium and awards program took place September 19 and 20, in Orlando, Florida.

The judges, Jack Clasen and Jim Sutton were here for two days in July. Clasen is the contest Committee Chair, judge coordinator and trainer. Sutton is Design Manager for Longwood Gardens in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania. Judging is based upon six criteria, which includes floral displays, landscaped areas, urban forestry, heritage preservation and overall impression. The four areas judged are municipal, business, residence and community involvement. The judges' report is based on efforts in management, planning, maintenance, improvement and innovation.

Out of a possible 1,000 points, West Chicago received 629 points, 62.9 percent. In Urban Forestry, the special mention in the municipal highlighted the park district's "amazing job of recovering from a disastrous storm." The report cited, "The approaches to dealing with this magnitude of disaster have been very creative and inspiring," noting the whimsical faces carved on some of the trunks, the repurposing of the wood from the felled trees into furniture. Also there was a special mention of the special project of the community banner project, sponsored by the West Chicago Cultural Commission in overall impression. The project is outstanding. "Bringing art downtown and encouraging community participation is a wonderful way to increase community pride."

One of the remarks in comments in Landscaped Areas stated, "It is clear there is an active garden club in town. The gardens at the Kruse House Museum are lovingly cared for and display a nice diversity of plant material in a very pleasant setting. Entirely cared for and maintained by garden club volunteers, it is a testament to their dedication."

The community also scored well in most areas for Historical Preservation. The report stated, "The West Chicago City Museum is a gem...The museum makes great efforts to bring history to the community...has an extensive outreach program to schools...The genealogy section is expansive and popular...The inventory of items is well organized."

In overall impression, the report stated, "Downtown West Chicago was clean and attractive. The buildings were in good condition. Business and residential areas were clean and attractive."

America in Bloom is a national awards program that provides a framework for improving a quality of life in a community. It promotes nationwide beautification through education and community involvement by encouraging the use of flowers, plants, trees and other environmental and lifestyle enhancements." Felix said, "The program helps build community pride. It is more than a one-year competition, but one that constantly evolves."



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## News from Kruse

*by Angie, Tom & Billie*

Another year at the Kruse Garden—the shrubs are larger, the trees taller, perennials have filled in the bare spots, the need for annuals—very minimal. Overall the garden has structure, spring bulbs, summer flowers and fall color. In October we put the garden to bed.

Looking back at the start of our work, we are pleased in having incorporated many features of old gardens, though with some tweaks in plant material.

In the early part of the 1900's people gardened more for food and the flowers in the garden were those which were care-free or herbal, medicinal, etc. Shrubs as lilacs, peonies, bridal wreaths, mock oranges, etc. were grown many times as specimens, not part of a shrub border, with of course, the family standing in front for pictures. The early gardeners also prized some labor-intensive plants as dahlias and canna lilies, and certainly would not have put golden rod or joe pye weed into their flower garden. Garden circles in the middle of the lawn were popular, with uniform plants around a specimen plant in the middle edged with bricks, stones, or little fencing.

Seeds were saved, passed along. And again some of the flowers are back in favor—marigolds, zinnias, salvias, larkspur, sweet peas, poppies. Who can't like the old-fashioned petunia—not a low carpet of vibrant bloom as the wave petunias, but growing taller to two feet, self-seeding, in the softest of pastel shades, slightly fragrant, and so hardy it will grow in the most inhospitable spot, spreading and twining as it reaches for the sun. Grasses were prized since Victorian times, especially the non-native to the area, as were shrub roses, Japanese anemones, asters, lilies—all being care-free and floriferous.

We have many of these plants at the Kruse garden where we have the same need as in the old-time gardens, not only to adhere to the age of the museum but also for the need of self-maintaining plants. The native shrub *Viburnum triloba* (American cranberry)—with spring bloom, fall color and winter berries is effective as a background together with the native Pagoda dogwood and a few shrub roses. Pop in a clematis, a few red bud trees and for a semi-shady back area at the museum, the effect is quite striking. Peonies, lilies, hydrangeas, bulbs and some old-fashioned perennials in front—and we have our 1920's garden. In five years the shrubs and perennials have filled in to the point where there is no need for annuals.

You might ask—What about our sunny, dry area or those areas in almost total dry shade? What grasses, ground covers, natives have we used that have proved effective? To us that work at the Kruse garden, this is the place where we try out plants, some bought, most donated. We try combinations, make mistakes. You might ask—what mistakes have we made, what failed, what was pulled? What do we call “Not A Success,” “Awful,” “Sadly, Gone”?

These questions will be answered in another News from Kruse.

A, B, and T





## Garden Dollars 2013 — last chance to collect them!

WCGC distributes tokens (Garden Dollars) to members who participate in club activities. At the **November meeting**, you will be able to use them at the **auction to bid on fabulous prizes**. Here's how to earn them:

To receive your Garden Dollars after earning them, pick them up at special events from the event organizer, or see club officers at the information table at any meeting, and let them know what you've earned.

Volunteer for workdays, plant sale or garden contest (1 to 4 hrs , >4hrs)	75 - 150	Donate plants for the sale <50, 50-149, ≥150	75, 200, 300
Donate pots	50	Write newsletter article	100
Donate snack for meeting	75	Donate door prize	50
Set up or clean up meeting	25	Meeting attendance	25
Trip attendance	25	<b>Pay dues before Garden Dollar Auction in Nov 2013</b>	<b>75</b>
Donate to Kruse House	50	<b>Pay dues before February 2nd</b>	50

**Pick up the Garden Dollars you've earned before the auction in November!**

### We're **STILL** thinking ahead...

To next January. And, we're asking for your help.

We would like to do a home grown program. Since we don't get to see everyone's gardens, we'd like to put together a slide show of our gardens. Or, maybe you would like suggestions as to what to do with that problem spot. Or, maybe you would like to tell us about your favorite tool? So, take pictures throughout the seasons.

Please e-mail your best, or worst, pictures to Pauline: [briggspm@gmail.com](mailto:briggspm@gmail.com) or

mail to: 3S071 Cypress Dr, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137-7311.

THANK YOU!

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## Enjoying Birds in Winter

by Heather Prince of The Growing Place

Birds brighten our winter days with their winged acrobatics and musical songs. Welcoming birds to your yard can be easy with a little planning. Birds require food, water, shelter, and nesting sites.

There are many ways to feed birds, but to create a lasting refuge, create a landscape that feeds them year-round. Each species of bird has its own specific needs, but in general include plants with fruits, seeds, berries, and cones. The more diverse types of food you provide, the more species of birds you will attract. Think about having plants that form seeds or fruits at different times of the year. For example, the new cultivars of crabapples have small, hard berries that persist through winter to feed birds in early spring when there are few options. If you choose to put out feeders, select high-quality bird seed with a small percentage of millet to attract the greatest variety of birds. Consider adding a suet feeder for woodpeckers and other birds that enjoy the high-fat treat.

A heated birdbath is a favorite place for our feathered friends in winter. There are several types of heaters designed for birdbaths available. Fresh water not only provides a drink but helps birds preen and clean themselves. If you don't have a heater, try adding warm water on a sunny day.

Consider adding dense shrubs, evergreens and trees for birds to hide and build nests. Many birds nest between five and eight feet above the ground. A mix of open areas and denser plantings creates habitat for a large range of species. Many birds will look for roosting spots on cold winter nights. Add a birdhouse or two that can be used as roosting spots. New ones will weather nicely or you can re-use existing ones if you give the interiors a good scrub to remove traces of nests or debris. You can add a layer of wood chips in the bottom for insulation.

For a fun project, get the kids involved to make a gift for your backyard birds by creating pinecone bird feeders. **You'll need: Large, open pine cones, Peanut butter, Birdseed, chopped dried fruit, and/or chopped nuts, Fishing line, twine, ribbon or string, Plate or dish, and a Butter knife.**

Cut a piece long piece of twine and tuck it up under the top sets of scales on the pinecone, then tie securely. Spread the peanut butter on the inside and outside of the cone. Sprinkle seed mixture on top of cone, then roll it in a dish of seed to get maximum coverage. Hang the cone from a branch near where birds are likely to shelter such as evergreens or dense shrubs. Tip: If you have collected cones from the neighborhood, consider drying them on a foil-lined cookie sheet in a 200 degree oven for about 45 minutes with the door cracked. This will kill any critters and allow the sap to melt, making them much less sticky to work with.



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# West Chicago Garden Club Membership Application - 2014

Our club year runs from January 1st through December 31st. Membership dues for 2014 are due by the February meeting and will be considered over-due as of March 1st. The board would appreciate receiving dues as soon as possible.

With your paid membership you receive a copy of the monthly newsletter and membership in the Garden Clubs of Illinois, which includes the quarterly publication Garden Glories.

**Individual Membership:**

**\$15 per year**

**Family Membership:**

**\$25 per year**

(for multiple members at a single address)

Our meetings in 2014 will be held on the 4th Thursday evening of each month from January through October and the 3rd Thursday of November (no meeting in December).

Please make checks payable to West Chicago Garden Club. You can bring this form and your check to a club meeting, or mail both to:

West Chicago Garden Club  
c/o Mike Saad  
27W206 Manchester Rd  
Winfield, IL 60190-1440

**Application**

Type:  New or  Renewal

Class:  Individual or  Family

Name(s) (please print):

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Address:

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---

City/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

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