

We Go Gardening

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

Volume 24 Issue 10 October 2020



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: October 22nd

Meeting Time: 2:00 PM

**Meeting Location: Kress Creek Farms
30W150 Wilson Rd**

Program at Kress Creek Farms Park

Barb Melville

On Thursday, October 22nd at 2pm we will have Kim Hartman (one of our favorite presenters) from Countryside Flower Shop, Nursery and Garden Center join us for a fun program on how to make beautiful fall center pieces and put some spark into your outdoor containers. Kim will also bring several of her creations that will be raffled off to the lucky winners!

We will have cake and coffee and hopefully a beautiful day. Bring your own chair, dress for the weather and if it's a little chilly bring a lap blanket.

The event will be cancelled if we have rain.

If Kress Creek Farms sounds familiar it's because this is the area and the barn where we held our potting parties for the last several years. The city of West Chicago has turned this farm area into a beautiful park with lots of space for social distancing and a pavilion where we will meet. Come early and explore the many lovely areas of this newly developed gathering place.

Kress Creek Farms houses an 18 cage Disc Golf Course, Chicago Bears playground and a trail system. Located along Joliet Street on the south side of the city, Kress Creek Farms has rolling hills, native landscaping, and a small pond for catch and release fishing.



September at Sonny Acres Farm

In September, we had a small lunch “Garden Club meeting” at Sonny Acres Farm. The outdoor setting allowed us to social distance and enjoy the lovely weather. There were a large number of door prizes and everyone seemed to enjoy having a chance to see each other and socialize.



Notes from the President

Dan Beebe

I want to extend a big "Thank You" to Barb Melville for her dedication to creating programs that allow us to meet as a club in a socially distant, safe manner. This is not an easy task given that any gatherings must be outside in a well-lit area and easily accessible. The Kruse House Garden gathering, Sonny Acres lunch and this month's program at Kress Creek Farms Park (weather permitting... it is 2020... who knows) are all the result of her commitment to the club. Great work Barb!

I also want to share an email that I received from Mike Gasparini, Superintendent of Parks, of the West Chicago Park District. Mike, the Park District and the Garden Club have had a truly awesome partnership for many years. The appreciation for the club's donation expressed in Mike's email is the result of all club members hard work and dedication. Great job all!

"Good morning Dan. I wanted to let you know that most of the trees that the Garden Club donated came in today. 3 of the trees I ordered were out of stock so I am currently looking elsewhere to find them. We plan to plant the trees next week. I wasn't sure if you wanted to be around for the planting of these or not. I will be entering them into our ARC GIS tree app as we go and marking them as memorial trees donated by the West Chicago Garden Club. We have 3 of the tree app QR codes throughout the park that anyone can look at all the trees throughout the District and can see the ones that are memorial trees such as the trees the Garden Club donated. I will also send you a map with the type and location after we have planted them. Thank you SOOO much again for the kind donation. Talk soon. Thanks!"

As I mentioned last month, if you have any ideas on how we can "meet" as a club in a socially distant, safe manner, especially in the cold winter months, feel free to email your ideas to WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com.

As always... Stay well... stay safe,

Dan

Garden Notes Barb Bizzarri

How to Preserve Leaves

To make the season's foliage last a little longer:

Combine one part glycerin to two parts water in a shallow vessel such as a baking dish.

Add leaves (yellow leaves hold their color best), making sure they are completely covered.

Weight the leaves with a plate to keep them submerged.

Let stand for two to six days. They're ready when they look waxy. Remove from the solution and pat dry.

The leaves will be flexible and are perfect for use in wreaths or on your table.



October gave a party
The leaves by hundreds came
The Chestnuts, Oaks and Maple
And leaves of every name
The sunshine spread a carpet
And everything was grand,
Miss Weather Led the dancing,
Professor Wind the band.
— George Cooper

Getting to Know ...

Barb Bizzarri

Joanne Hellman

Resident of West Chicago: Since 1985

West Chicago Garden Club Member: past 6 years

Hobbies: Travel, hiking, biking, reading and gardening

Favorite Flower/bush/plant: Weigela and Rhododendron Bushes

Biggest Gardening Mistake: I planted a very large vegetable garden many years ago ...never again !

What gardening chore do you dislike the most? Weeding...of course

What do you plan on planting in your Fall garden: I'll be moving things around rather than planting new

Current Career: Real Estate Attorney, however, I plan on retiring

If you could travel now, where would you like to go: We had a trip planed for Norway to see the Northern Lights, which we had to cancel. So now, the change of plan is to visit Upper Peninsula of Michigan to hopefully see the Northern Lights there!

How did you keep busy these past months: Organizing my photos, putting my household in order, spending time with my adult children and grandchildren and wrapping things up at work.



Save Your Geraniums

Barb Bizzarri

Unlike most annuals, geraniums can survive in a dormant state for long periods. Here's how to save the plants for next Spring

CLEAN OFF SOIL: Carefully dig up the plant before the first frost. Shake off the soil so that the plant is bareroot.

STORE THE PLANT: Roll the plant up in newspaper or place in a paper bag. Some gardeners simply hang the plants upside down. Regardless, store in a dark dry, cool place (but don't let it freeze) — a basement is perfect. Two or three times during the winter, soak the plant in water for 1-2 hours, remove any dead stems or leaves, then return to storage **AFTER** it has dried.



REPLANT IN SPRING: When weather begins to warm, pot the plant up in fresh soil, keep it well-watered, and watch it grow.

This has not been an easy summer for any of us. I was thinking about this a couple of weeks ago when I was sitting on the deck of our summer cabin looking down on the lake surrounded by the oranges, yellows and red of a Wisconsin autumn. Now Wisconsin is dealing with a major Covid outbreak. How lucky we are that so many of our families and friends have avoided this and my heart goes out to those who haven't, and how lucky we are to have our yards and gardens to give us peaceful thoughts during this increased period of solitude.

Those of us working at Kruse have had a chance to meet each week to talk about plants, the weather and all those things that we gardeners enjoy. The new plantings have taken well and the front bed replacing the big oak has filled in beautifully and entices anyone passing by to realize that there is a garden inside the fence worth visiting .

We've started wrapping things up for fall – deadheading, cutting back daylilies and iris, and just basking in the last blooms of summer. Sometimes it is difficult for us to cut back the plants that we have nursed along so carefully all summer, but then there is that lovely spring morning when we see them shyly peeking their heads up once again. I would like to share with you a poem I came across that echoes this thought.

September Tomatoes by Karina Borowicz

The whiskey stink of rot has settled
in the garden, and a burst of fruitflies rises
when I touch the dying tomato plants

Still the claws of tiny yellow blossoms
flail in the air as I pull the Vines up by the roots
and toss them in the compost.

It feels cruel. Something in me isn't ready
to let go of summer so easily. To destroy
what I've carefully cultivated all these months.
Those pale flowers might still have time to fruit

My great grandmother sang with the girls of her village
as they pulled the flax. Songs so old
and so tied to the season that the very sound
seemed to turn the weather.



I sincerely hope we will be able to start holding meetings again and to see all of you again in the spring along with the returning plants.

Out and About

Barb Bizzarri

On a beautiful Fall day, my husband and I walked around Reed Keeper Park. We're fortunate to have such a lovely park right here in West Chicago. Below are several pictures from our tour.



The children holding our American flag was commissioned as a 911 Memorial.

Photo borrowed from City of West Chicago website.



The tree bark carvings are by artist Bill Baker and is entitled Wood Spirits



And the beautiful wagon is all ready for Fall!



This beautiful hummingbird photo was captured by my granddaughter, Ashley. I titled it: Face Off

Nature Notes

Kerry Perry

Looking out to my backyard is a real treat. Every day brings something new...a variety of birds have started their migration: eastern phoebe, tufted-titmouse and warblers are back. Flocks of robins and black birds have been bathing and drinking water in the gold fish pond. The coopers hawk comes in too and makes everyone scatter. They don't want to become "lunch".

The chipmunks are storing acorns and hickory nuts. One expert claims a chippie may store as many as 1,000 acorns. Early this morning a red fox chased a chipmunk across my deck. Darn, the chipmunk escaped – this time! It all happened too quickly to take a photo.

This afternoon the sun was making the colors of the Sumac and Shagbark Hickory trees incredibly brilliant. My Sumac may be a dwarf, smooth variety – can anyone identify it? Certain sumac can be used to make a "lemonade" called Sumac-ade or used as a natural dye. Frank Lloyd Wright's stained glass windows often incorporate the native prairie Sumac plant, in an abstract form. Such wonderful, warm, rich colors.

I'm anxious to watch what nature brings next to my backyard.



Tufted titmouse. Photo courtesy of D. Hosford, Cornell University



Sumac



Sumac, oak and shagbark hickory in my backyard

From our Facebook Page

Our West Chicago Garden Club Facebook Page has recently featured a couple of presentations by Doug Tallamy.

Pauline Briggs let us know about a free, online presentation that you can view on YouTube

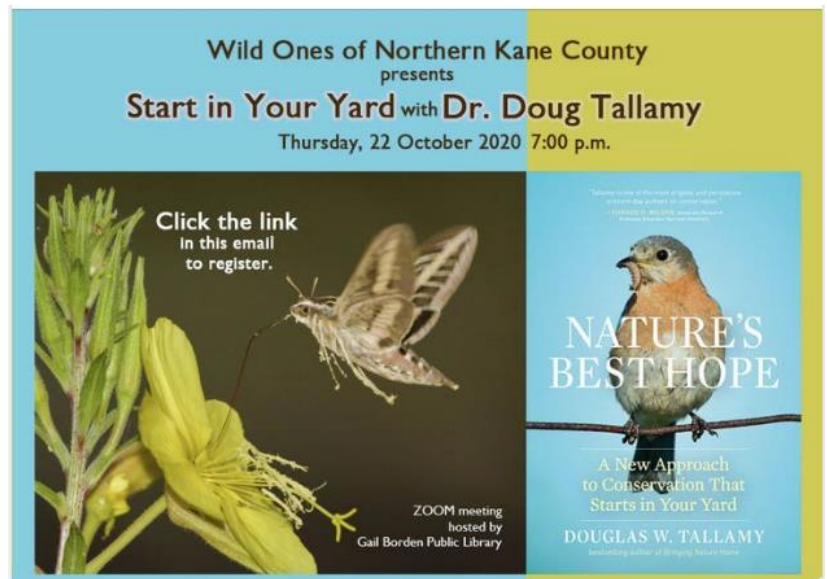
Dr. Tallamy, author of the popular book, *Bringing Nature Home*, is nationally renowned as an advocate for restoring landscapes with native plants. As he'll point out in this compelling webinar, "A Guide to Restoring the Little Things that Run the World," we must bring native plants to our landscapes to preserve the biodiversity upon which our own health and well-being depends. You can view this presentation on YouTube at:

https://youtu.be/xAbO1a67_mM



Billie Childress let us know about another opportunity to see a presentation by Doug Tallamy. This will be a Zoom presentation on October 22nd sponsored by the Northern Kane County Wild Ones.

Everyone is welcome -- from those who have never heard of Doug Tallamy to those who always tune in to hear the latest. See below to register to enjoy this most inspiring and knowledgeable presenter. You'll want to be part of it! And invite your friends, family and neighbors.



More information can be found at their website at <https://northernkanecounty.wildones.org/>

This Zoom webinar is being hosted by Gail Borden Public Library. When you click the link below, it will take you to the library's calendar, where you can register and receive a link to use on October 22nd to join the event.

<https://attend.gailborden.info/event/4594088>

Photos from my Garden

Barb Melville

These are pictures from my garden.



Colchicum, also sometimes called Meadow Saffron (Not related to true Saffron), Naked Ladies or Autumn Crocus. In spring, the bubs produce a spray of coarse leaves which disappear by early summer. The flowers emerge in the fall.



This is what started as one small Aster plant and has grown into a giant 4 feet tall by 6 ft wide plant that is just spectacular comes up every year blooms in the fall for probably four to six weeks and the pollinators love it!

Caputo's on North Avenue was selling Aster plants this week in every possible color for \$7.99.



This is the one I bought at Caputo's this week. It's a spectacular magenta color that I hope grows into a big plant like my other one.

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Club Information

Website: www.westchicagogardenclub.org
West Chicago Garden Club
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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

2020 WCGC BOARD:

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and add some beauty to your garden at

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