

We Go Gardening

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

Volume 25 Issue 10 October 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: October 28

Meeting Location:

**St Andrew Lutheran Church NE
Corner of Prince Crossing &
Geneva Road.**

Meeting Time:

**7:00PM Business Meeting
7:15PM Program**

Park District Arboretum update & BULB BINGO!

Barb Melville

Mike Gasparini, Superintendent of the Parks Department, will join us for a very short presentation how the WCGC has contributed to our parks being accredited Arboretum Status!

The West Chicago Park District was established in 1972 and since has been committed to creating an enhanced quality of life through effective programs, progressive facilities and preservation of parks and natural resources. The District has over 400 acres of parks, woodlands, trails and gardens. In 2018 the Park District took a new stance on tree management by completing a tree inventory and report; this launched the initiative to become an accredited Level II Arboretum. Research efforts revealed a 2,394 tree population of 106 different species in managed areas alone. Notably, Reed-Keppler Park is home to a community center, water park, artistic gardens, dog parks and band shell among many other amenities. The 100-acre park has the largest tree population in the District with 1006 trees of 87 distinct species and a recognizable 625 tree remnant oak stand.



MEMBERS ONLY, NO GUESTS!

Our September meeting on the 28th will be our ever fun "BULB BINGO" event! As always our bulb bingo expert, Pauline, has ordered bulbs for our games and everyone that participates will go home with at least two prizes! If you're anything like me, you will be surprised when in the spring all of a sudden something new is popping out of the ground and I think to myself...."what is that?" and then I remember...."oh, it's those beautiful bulbs that I won last year at my wonderful West Chicago Garden Club!



See you on the 28th, please come on time as we will have Mike from the park district speak first and Dan will have a short presentation and promptly start our bingo games. Bring your own refreshments (coffee, soda or water and anything else that you want to snack on).



NOVEMBER 18TH MEETING

Raffle & Craft

See Page 3

Notes from the President

Dan Beebe

At last month's meeting, I talked about the club's need to fill vacancies on the board and we have volunteers for most of the open positions. Thank you to all of you have stepped up to help move the club forward and share your thoughts and ideas with the board! If you are interested in any of the open positions or have a suggestion of who might be interested, please let me know at a meeting or send an email to WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com.

The following positions still need to be filled for 2022.

Kruse Garden Chair (our biggest, longest running public project and the reason the club was created)

Refreshments Chair (in anticipation of a return to pre-pandemic normalcy)

As with many organizations, the Garden Club needs to continually attract new members to help keep the club vibrant and active. In talking with members of the current and proposed 2022 board members and chairs, there are many great ideas on how we can attract new members, however, I think that many of our members probably have more ideas that may help us recruit and retain members. I would like for each of you to think about why you joined the club, what you like about the club, what you don't like about the club (please be constructive), what you think would help bring others gardeners into our extended gardening family and share your thoughts with a board member at an upcoming meeting. If enough of you express an interest in helping with a 'special committee' focused on increasing membership, we will hold future, small group meetings focused on the topic (in person and on Zoom).

More at the next meeting,

Dan



Kruse Garden Praying Mantis

Kerry Perry



This five-inch long Praying Mantis was seen on the shed in the Kruse Garden Oct 13th.

Praying Mantises have a habit of standing with forelegs folded as if in prayer. The name “mantis” comes from the Greek word for a prophet or a seer, a reference to the belief that the insects possess supernatural powers.



Yikes! What big eyes you have.
(Photo courtesy of IL DNR)

Mark your Calendars!

Barb Melville

Our November meeting will be on the 3rd week of the month rather than the 4th week due to the Thanksgiving Holiday. This will be a super fun meeting for all club members that attend (no guests). Kathi from Kaleidoscope Floral Arrangements will provide everyone with the following items to make their own beautiful long and low holiday centerpiece and will show everyone how it's done:

- *container
- *5 different types of greens
- *ribbon tuffs
- *pinecones
- *small ornament bunches
- *snowman

EACH MEMBER WILL HAVE TO CONTRIBUTE \$10.00 AND THE CLUB WILL PAY THE REMAINDER \$\$\$

The picture is an example of a similar centerpieces but not exactly what ours will look like (OURS WILL BE MORE BEAUTIFUL) - if you want to customize your creation you may want to bring a couple small things to put into your centerpiece, but not necessary. This will be a RSVP event and the date for that will be sent out soon.

We will also have a raffle instead of our usual silent auction.....start saving your new/like new donations if you wish to participate in the raffle.



Recap of September's Meeting

Barb Melville

Last month's meeting presented by Diane Blazek, the executive director of All America Selections was one of the most educational programs that we have had at our meetings. Since 1932, each year All America Selections has judged plants, flowers and vegetables and puts the winners on their website along with where these items can be purchased. The judges are all professional horticulturists with many years of experience working in this field. Since 1933 there have been 853 AAS winners, 466 ornamentals and 391 edibles. All America Selections continues as the oldest, most established international independent testing organization in North America.

Sign up for emails: www.aaswinners.com You can actually put in both the AAS website (all-americaelections.org) and the National Garden Bureau website (ngb.org) for even more information! I have already received several emails from these websites and find the information to be very useful!

Photos from Barb Melville



Fun Garden Moment!

Hayley Hawkinson



On September 22nd I was able to see the rare phenomenon of the Corpse Flower (Amorphophallus Titanium) blooming at the Chicago Botanical Garden. She dropped her last leaf on 9.18.21 and was ready to bloom at any moment - and on 9.22.21 - she did. What a TERRIBLE smell - like a dead animal in the

woods, limburger cheese maybe? This smell is produced to attract pollinators! The bulb is 75lbs under the ground and first broke the soil in mid-august. Only 6 weeks to build all that you see in the picture. However, it took 7 years for the bulb to gain enough energy to flower. So rare to see it in person, as the bloom only lasts 24 hours. I just so happened to be there as I was taking a Botany class. What an exciting moment for a gardener!



September 18th



September 22nd

CAREcrows at Cantigny Park

Cantigny Park visitors have something new and thought-provoking to check out during their next visit. Four DuPage nonprofit agencies, selected by Cantigny Horticulture, have created a themed "CAREcrow" display outside the park's Visitors Center.

Cantigny's CAREcrows will be displayed throughout October. The CAREcrows support local nonprofits. CAREcrow creators each receive a \$1,000 grant from the Robert R. McCormick Foundation. They also collect 100% of optional donations made by Cantigny Park visitors, who are encouraged to vote for their favorite CAREcrow display. The agency gathering the most votes receives an additional \$1,000.

The local non-profit organizations include West Chicago's own The GardenWorks Project (TheGardenshop) and SCARCE (SCARCE) who provided one of our Zoom meetings earlier this year.



Here's the Dirt

There was lots of activity at the Kruse Garden recently. The lawn at Kruse had several dips and low spots that made walking in the yard a bit challenging. So, volunteers gathered on an incredibly beautiful Wednesday morning to spread dirt, disperse grass seed and straw, and water. Five cubic yards of a really nice garden mix dirt was delivered by a big dump truck. If you don't know how much five cubic yards is, it's a lot!



Thanks to the crew: Tony Wdowiarz, Tom Fessler, Linas Cepaitis, Dick Darrah, Keith Letsche, Jeff Handel, Barb Melville, Barbara Darrah, Chris Gicela, and me.

Special thanks to our expert advisor Chuck Strayve the owner of Chuck Strayve Landscaping in West Chicago. His crew maintains the lawn at the Kruse Garden. Chuck gave us advice and loaned us some of his equipment for the task. Within a little more than three hours, the job was done. The weather has been perfect and the new grass is growing like crazy.

The Kruse House was built in 1917 for Frederick and Bertha Kruse. Their daughter, Celia, lived in the house until her death in 1975. Chuck knew Celia and recalled he was 11 years old when Celia passed. Chuck's dad was the assistant manager for the National Grocery Store which was adjacent to

the east side of the Kruse property. Celia didn't like the noise at night from the delivery trucks nor the blowing trash that landed up in her yard. Chuck said "she hated the store, but liked my dad who took her complaints and did the best he could with them." Chuck remembers the garden plants and how proud Celia was of them.



350 Elliot Avenue
West Chicago, IL 60185
<https://chuckstrayvelandscape.com>
(630) 231-7075



Laura Young



Resident of West Chicago: Since 1999

WGCG Member: Since 2018

Hobbies: Woodland restoration, Monarch Butterfly breeding

Favorite Flower/Plant/Bush/Vegetable: Savanna Blazing Star (it's a type of liatris and a perennial wildflower)

What is your earliest memory of a favorite garden ? My father was an avid gardener and enjoyed his Chicago 'Back of the Yards' small garden. As a novice gardener, he decided to plant one of his favorite flowers, a Bird of Paradise. Imagine his dismay when he found out that they wouldn't last a Midwest Winter!

Who taught you to garden or are you self taught? Self-taught

Some gardeners do everything 'by the book' others 'wing it and watch'. Are you a 'wing it and watch' Gardner or a 'by the book gardener? "wing it and watch" I believe we are the stewards of nature. Your yard/garden will tell you what it wants.

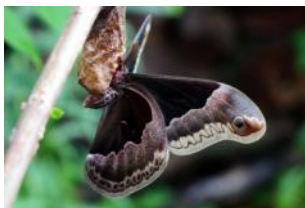
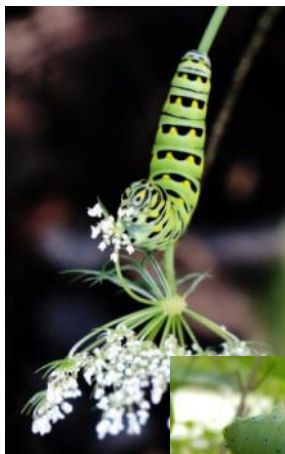
What is your summer garden success? My first year native plants were in bloom continuously and I raised 50 Monarch Butterflies and release them! I have diversity in my garden and the eco system reveals garter snakes (they're big!), turtles, caterpillars, warblers and an assortment of other birds.

What's the hardest plant you ever tried to grow? Spice bush

Recent special garden projects? Raising Monarch Butterflies

What advice would you give a new gardener? Go native, watch you garden grow. If you have nothing eating your plants, that means you're not true 'native' and your soil is sterile.

Books you've read lately? Braiding Sweet Grass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants by Robin Wall Kimmerer and Nature of Oaks: The Rich Ecology of Our Most Essential Native Trees by Douglas W. Tallamy





New Plantings - Dwarf Bush Honeysuckle



Billie placing rocks around newly planted Tall Sedum from her garden

Continued on Next page



Beauty Berry Bush - Jan's donation last fall



Beauty Berry is a native plant with long, arching branches and clusters of glossy, iridescent-purple fruit. The showy clusters, persist after the leaves have fallen in winter. The foliage is a favorite of White-tailed Deer. American Indians used the roots of the plant for a number of medicinal purposes.



Jan and Keith dug out a lot of aggressive plants in the back bed. The discussion at break-time was if the plant is Boneset? Dee interjected “boneset is connected to the leg bone, and the leg bone is connected to the hip bone... “. Very funny. After a bit of research, Billie determined it is White Snakeroot



White Snakeroot

Dee planting Primula from Billie's garden

A Growing Legacy

A lot has changed over the years but our commitment to our customers and to our community has not. Our goal remains providing 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

Find everything you need for your beautiful garden



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



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

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

LARGE TREES &
SHRUBS, ROSES,
PERENNIALS,
& ANNUALS

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



Naperville | 630.355.4000 | 25w471 Plank Rd
1 block south of Ogden Ave/Rte 34
& 2 blocks west of Naper Blvd

Aurora | 630.820.8088 | 2000 Montgomery Rd
2 blocks north of Ogden Ave/Rte 34
& Rush-Copley Medical Center

thegrowingplace.com |



Garden Center | Gift Shop | Gardens

Club Information

Website: www.westchicagogardenclub.org
West Chicago Garden Club
P. O. Box 313, West Chicago, IL 60186
E-mail: westchicagogardenclub@gmail.com

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:

President:	Dan Beebe
Vice President:	Barb Bizzarri
Treasurer:	Kerry Perry
Secretary:	Cherie Kraft
Program Director:	Barb Melville
Plant Sale Chair:	Dan Beebe
Information Director:	Pamela Darrah
Kruse House Chair:	Billie Childress
Hospitality Chair:	Jan Grismore
Director at Large	Mary Schramer

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

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
Your Gardening Source....

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
plants@springbluffnursery.com

Growing, learning and educating since 1979...