

We Go Gardening

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

Volume 29—Issue 10—October 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: October 23

Meeting Time:

Meeting Location:

6:45PM Arrive & Mingle

7:00PM Business Meeting

7:15PM Program

St Andrew Lutheran Church
Corner of Prince Crossing & Geneva Rd

Bulb Bingo

Ruth Kyme

Autumn is a special time of year. So many fun things to look forward to; stunning fall foliage, the crisp fall air, taffy apples, jack-o-lanterns, pumpkin spice everything, and best of all.....BULB BINGO!

Join us at the October meeting for this fun fall event. Everyone is a winner in Bulb Bingo. Each time you get a bingo, you win a small bag of bulbs to plant in your garden for lovely flowers in the spring. We will play a couple rounds until all the bulbs are gone.



Please note that this is a MEMBERS ONLY EVENT. No guests for this event please.

This Month's Treats:

Host: B. Bizzarri

Sweet: B. Bizzarri, B. Melville, P. Pirrie

Savory: M. Edwards, E. Bassett

Reminder: Our November meeting will be on the 3rd Thursday due to the Thanksgiving holiday.

Where to find us online

Website: www.westchicagogardenclub.org



Facebook:

facebook.com/westchicagogardenclub



Instagram:

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

NEXT MONTH: NOVEMBER 20TH

**Potluck &
Garden Bucks**

Note from the President

Dan Beebe



Once again, I cannot believe that another growing season is quickly coming to a close. My plans for my yard and gardens have proven to be too big for the number of hours available, but I have set the stage for an outstanding 2026. Hopefully, we will all get to enjoy the cooler weather in our gardens and get a few bulbs planted for next Spring.

As a club, we have two great meetings left this year. In October, in accordance with West Chicago Garden Club tradition, we will host World Famous Bulb Bingo led by none other than our own Pauline Briggs. Bulb Bingo, one of our most popular programs, combines educational information on bulbs and numerous chances to yell 'BINGO!' and win a bag of super-cool bulbs. I encourage all members to attend and let new members know that they won't want to miss this unique experience.

In November, we will be holding our annual membership meeting. Board elections, potluck, and Garden Buck raffle all rolled into one fast-paced, exhausting meeting. More details on this meeting can be found throughout this newsletter and will be available at our October meeting.

I would like to close out my comments by acknowledging Kerry Perry, who is stepping down from her position as Treasurer on the board at the end of the year. Kerry became Treasurer in 2018, and over the past 7 years, she has been an excellent financial resource to the board. Kerry has managed all of the club's accounts, created annual budgets, processed numerous expense reports, paid club expenses, filed our IRS-required documents, and essentially kept the board out of financial trouble. In addition to her work keeping the books, she has managed the cashiers at our annual plant sales and maintained detailed records of every sale transaction, providing the plant sale co-chairs with insight into the number of plants sold and their prices. She has also maintained detailed cost and attendance records for every program, workshop, and event that the club has held, providing the board with a sense of how much 'bang for the buck' the membership gets out of each meeting. Finally, Kerry has also faithfully collected member dues and maintained our membership roster. Next time you see Kerry, please join me in thanking her for all of the work she has done as Treasurer, congratulating her on a job well done, and wishing her well in her future projects. Thank you, Kerry, for all you have contributed to the Club!

Best Regards,

Dan



Club Information

Website: www.westchicagogardenclub.org
P. O. Box 313, West Chicago, IL 60186
E-mail: 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

Join the Cookie Caravan

A number of people and organizations have generously helped make our club projects a success. We are asking members to donate batches of your favorite homemade cookies to be delivered to deserving folks at the West Chicago Park District and the Cantigny Greenhouse/Garden.

Each baker should bring 2–3 dozen cookies or bars to Kerry Perry's house on Tues. Nov 4th between 4–7 pm. Stay and help package the treats into festive boxes. Boxes will be delivered early Wed. Nov 5th via our "cookie caravan".

Kerry Perry



Join the fun!

Sign Up on Oct. 23rd
at the meeting

or contact Kerry at
847-721-0076.



If you ordered bulbs

The member bulb orders have hopefully all been received by the time you see this.

I, Pauline Briggs, will be at the Garden Club meeting on Thursday, October 23rd, with your bulbs and will expect payment then. Please arrive early so we can make the exchange before Bulb Bingo starts.

You should receive an email with the amount owed. If paying with cash, the exact amount will be needed, as I will not be able to make change. Payment may also be made by check, made payable to Pauline Briggs, or by Zelle using the email address: briggspm@gmail.com.

If you would like to pick up your bulbs earlier to get a head start on planting, text Pauline at: 630.254.2969. Please identify yourself as many members are not in my contacts. Be forewarned, though, I live near Morton Arboretum.

Thank you!

Pauline

Pauline Briggs





Paula Lambertz

Resident of: Life-long resident of Streamwood

WCGC Member: May 2023

How did you become a member: Blooming Fest

What is your current profession: Retired Design Drafter (30+ years at Fermilab)

What are you most proud of in your garden: The "Prairie Patch" that starts small with traditional spring flowers and ends tall with New England Asters, Cup Plant, Joe Pye Weed, etc.

A garden mistake you made: Enthusiastically over-estimating how much sunshine the yard gets. Wrong plants in the wrong spots! ...sigh...

What do you love most about gardening: Aside from just getting outside in the fresh air and enjoying the birds and critters that visit the yard. I love the variety of colors and textures in the plants and the surprises that each growing season brings.

What tip or words of wisdom can you share: Not so much wisdom, but gratitude. Thank you to the generous folks that share plants!

Favorite garden tool: Bypass pruners are nearly always with me when I step out the back door even if they aren't always the right tool for the job. lol

Favorite flower & love to grow: In spring, it's daffodils. In summer, I love bee balm. Last winter killed off a lot of the red which I'll need to improve next year so the hummingbirds have more to visit.

New Year's Resolution: Divide and transplant! Try more perennials in the challenging front yard.



News from Kruse: Ghouls in our Garden

Christina Covarrubias

Flowers in the garden are typically thought of as calming and cheerful but what about the plants that are dangerous? Some lovely flowers come with a warning like roses with thorns. Other flowers -though beautiful- need to be handled with caution. Keep reading for examples we have in our garden.

Monkshood *Aconitum v.* is a delightful, dark purple fall-blooming perennial standing approximately 36" tall -however all parts are poisonous.



Castor bean *Ricinus communis* is a unique annual, in our area, with palmate red or green leaves and bright red ball-like inflorescences, its fast-growing tropical appearance makes a unique addition to our sun-drench containers. Castor bean is EXTREMELY toxic and known as the poison ricin which is estimated at 12,000 times more toxic than rattlesnake venom.

Mediterranean spurge *Euphorbia characias* we consider this a thug in our garden as it spreads wildly. It and other more attractive euphorbias can cause skin irritation, rash and if the exposed to the eyes can lead to blindness. We found this out, unfortunately, through one of our fellow gardeners who had a horrible reaction to her eyes and required an emergency room visit. Please wear gloves when handling this plant and don't let it touch any part of your body.



Poison Ivy *Toxicodendron radicans*, what garden is complete without a little poison ivy supplied by birds? Interestingly poison ivy loves climate change, scientists note it grows bigger, sprout early and is more potent in response to higher CO2 exposure. Kerry Perry has taken one for the team to thoroughly eradicate our unintentional patch of poison ivy.

Please don't let these plants ever deter you from visiting our garden or gardening.

If you care to join us gardening in the Kruse garden next year we typically garden from 9-11:30am every Wednesday and the same time on the 2nd Saturday of each month starting in spring.

Visit the garden during any daylight hours, there are still plenty of plants blooming and we have been busy fall-dividing and planting perennials-come find them!

Kruse House Museum
527 Main St
West Chicago, IL 60185

Planting for the future

As you may remember back in the spring we lost 2 trees in the Kruse garden in 2 days. Now, thanks to your plant sale volunteer time, we had the budget to replace the lost trees.

We've hand-selected a native tree, a beautiful tulip tree *Liriodendron tuliperfera* which will have large, bright yellow leaves in the fall and orange-yellow-green flowers in the spring. Wasco Nursery (one of our newsletter sponsors) offered to take us into their tree farm field to handpick our tree where it can continue to grow until the ideal planting time in the spring.

We also selected a lovely fall flowering seven sons "Temple of Bloom" tree *Heptacodium miconioides* and is already planted in its new home in our garden.

Christina Covarrubias



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Your Gardening Source....



We Go Gardening

Care to Share?

These items were shared by members. Thank you to Janet Frogner & Amanda Skinner. The Items from Amanda are from a Facebook page called "Gardener Success Tips".



Milkweed doesn't just raise monarch caterpillars—it kills invasive lanternflies.

Monarchs can eat milkweed safely, storing its chemicals like living armor that makes them unappealing to predators. Lanternflies? Studies show 60–80% die within 24 hours of contact with common milkweed (SARE Project LNE25-494R).

That matters when lanternflies are costing the U.S. hundreds of millions in crop damage every year.

One plant, two missions: feeding monarchs and fighting pests. Sometimes, the best pest control is already blooming in your garden.



Milkweed is a monarch's nursery and a lanternfly's last meal. Proof that nature knows exactly who to nurture and who to knock out!

DID YOU KNOW? Sterilized eggshells in your bird feeder provide calcium that helps female birds lay stronger eggs! Just bake your breakfast shells at 250°F for 10 minutes, crush them up, and sprinkle around feeders.



Jade Plant—Dick Darrah

We're moving our office to a smaller location and no longer will have room for our large, mature Jade Plant. If anyone in Garden Club would like to have it, it can be picked up at our current office in Saint Charles. It stands about 4' high and is about 3-1/2' in diameter. It loves to be outside in the Spring, Summer, and autumn; but needs to come inside before the first frost. If this is of interest to you please email me



Share your Bulb Bingo flower photos

Before bulb bingo starts at this month's meeting, there will be a rotating set of photographs that have been sent in by our members. Did you get a photo of one of the bulbs you won at a previous Bulb Bingo blooming? Nine members have sent in their photos, why not send us yours? Since the slide show needs to be put together before the meeting, the deadline will be Monday (October 20th). Please email your photos to WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com.

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Growing Native—Time (Fire)flies When You Protect the Bugs!

Ruth Gauss

Hi, gardening friends! I realize I have spent a lot of time this year talking about bugs. I hope that doesn't bug you! One of the easiest impacts we can make to support our local critters is to look at one of the lowest members of the food web and that's bugs. I recently attended a talk by an Ambassador for the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation called "Protecting the Jewels of the Night". Why talk about fireflies in the fall? I bet you may have guessed that leaving the leaves is one of the most important ways to support fireflies! Here are some of the key ways to provide a habitat for fireflies. (all images from [Xerces Society website](#))

Food sources and protection: Firefly larvae eat a few of our common garden pests, including snails and slugs, as well as earthworms. When our yards are in balance fireflies should be able to help keep those "pests" in check. We can maintain that balance by not using any kind of pesticide in our yards and by walking on paths through the garden and avoiding tilling the soil. The leaves and stems from the plants help to provide a rich place for all of these critters, so letting things be a little wild ensures a light show in mid-summer from thriving fireflies.

Overwintering: You may have guessed that the leaves are also essential for firefly larvae over the winter. They provide insulation and cover for the larvae, which might take years to develop into an adult firefly. Deeply furrowed bark of trees can also provide a place for fireflies to overwinter, and underground burrows are also sometimes their preferred homes. It might seem like I'm repeating myself, but open ground is important for insects of all kinds. Try to find a place for it in your garden.

Plants and water: Even though fireflies don't feed on plants they do use them for shelter and are more successful when there are layers or different heights of plants, from ground covers, to shrubs and trees, the native plants in your yard provide food for their prey and shelter for the fireflies during the day and night. Also providing a clean source of water is important for lots of living things in your garden. Consider a small pond or even a bird bath to make sure everyone has access to water.

Let Them Shine: You may have heard about this before, but we just keep learning more and more about how artificial lights impact plants and animals. Especially during migration for birds and mating for fireflies, using outdoor lights only when absolutely necessary and keeping curtains closed when interior lights are on helps the birds to migrate safely and fireflies to easily find each other for mating. Xerces has a great page about this [here](#).

Your garden can be a jewel and when you add in consideration for how you can support these jewels of the night, its impact is even more meaningful!

I hope this was helpful! Happy (native) gardening!



Garden Bucks Tally Sheet

Remember to fill out your Garden Bucks* tally sheet for the November Potluck & Raffle. If you need a copy you can download it at:

<https://westchicagogardenclub.org/wp-content/files/GardenBucksTallySheet-1.pdf>

Please bring your completed tally sheet including your name to the October's monthly meeting (Bulb Bingo). You will receive your raffle tickets at the start of our November Potluck meeting.

See page 10 for more details.

* Members earn Garden Bucks when they participate in club activities, volunteer at events, and donate items! There is more information on the last page of every newsletter.

Use your Garden Bucks to win donated garden related items at our November meeting. We have a Tally Sheet that you can use to help you keep track of your own Garden Bucks. We work on an honor system and you need to add up your total yourself.

Janet Frogner

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

YEAR: _____

Each volunteer hour (planting, weeding, watering, etc.)	\$ 100	X		
Donate plants to Plant Sale (each time)	\$ 100	X		
Donate pots or blinks for Plant Sale	\$ 25	X		
Donate plants for Kruze 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	\$ 100	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

Seed Library

Kurt Schramer

Kurt Schramer (our Board Member at Large) is looking for clearly-labeled packets of seeds, for our formal seed exchange program between club members. Ornamental and edible plants are welcome, store-bought or hand-picked.

Kurt brings the seed exchange to our meetings and even some of our events!

E-mail Kurt Schramer if you have questions or concerns: kurtisschramer@gmail.com

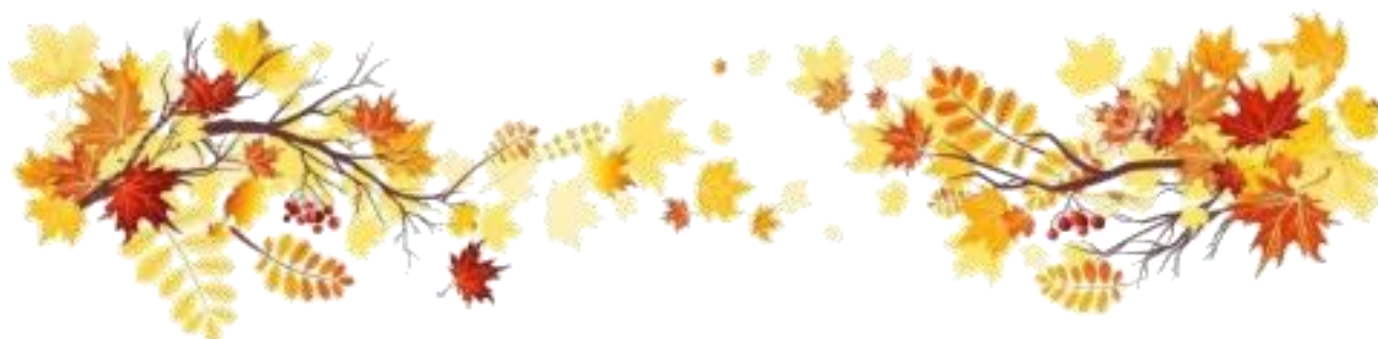
Adopt A Highway Thank You

Dan Beebe

Thank you to everyone who came out to clean up our adopted section of Hawthorne. We finished in record time.

We only had a few volunteers this time, but we were able to pick up everything along both sides of the road in less than 1 hour!

Our next clean up will be next April. Come on out and join us then—it is actually a lot of fun.



Nature Notes—Bird Brains

Looking out my living room window I often see the hummingbirds sipping nectar from the feeder and the salvia blossoms. It's important to put out fresh nectar about every other day. While filling the feeders the female hummers often fly within a few inches of my face. I can hear their chirps and their fluttering wings. I've thought they're either looking at their reflection in my glasses or perhaps telling me to hurry up and put their food out!



Female ruby-throated hummingbird

Well, according to the knowledgeable folks at Wild Bird Unlimited and the IL Dep. of Natural Resources, hummingbirds can recognize people and have remarkable memory skills, allowing them to identify individuals and remember feeding schedules.

Hummingbird brains (about the size of a grain of rice) are large in proportion to their body size, 4.2%, whereas the human brain ration is 2%. This small size belies their incredible intelligence, which includes complex navigational skills and a remarkable memory. Those tiny bird brains are incredible.

Hummers are migrating now, but nectar can be left out for the stragglers until Halloween. What a treat!

Kerry Perry



Male ruby-throated hummingbird

November's Potluck & Raffle Information

This year's Potluck Event will be held on Thursday, November 20 @ 6:30 p.m. To save time, this year you will turn in your completed Garden Bucks tally sheet at the October's Bulb Bingo meeting on Thursday, October 23. You will receive your raffle tickets at the November Potluck meeting which then you will be able to choose which items you'd like to take a chance at to win.

To claim your Garden Bucks you will need to fill out the tally sheet. Please be sure to include your name and which raffle tickets you would like to purchase. See page 9 for more Tally Sheet info.

Your choices for raffle purchases depends on your earned \$ Garden Bucks \$:

- Gift Certificate tickets @ \$500/ticket (may purchase multiples, but **ONLY win 1**)
- General Raffle tickets @ \$100/ticket (may purchase multiples and win multiples)

To participate in the raffle you will need to **bring 1 gently used or new garden-related item** to the November meeting, i.e., birdhouses, houseplants, decorative pots, bird items, garden statuary, garden plaques, garden tools, etc.

You will also be asked to **bring a food item to share** with fellow members. There will be again this year a sign up as to what you will be bringing to share.

Keep a lookout... a Signup Genius email will be sent to members in the next few weeks with further details along with RSVP information.

This is a Members only event. We ask that all Guests wait to visit us starting in January 2026.

If you have any questions, you may email me at westchicagogardenclub@gmail.com

Looking forward to another successful fun event!!

Janet Frogner



Upcoming Local Events for Gardeners

Patti Pirrie

Saturday, November 1. Fall Native Plant Propagation. Morton Arboretum (Lisle)

Cost: \$49. Member cost: \$42

<https://mortonarb.org/explore/activities/adult-programs/fall-native-plant-propagation/>

Explore methods for propagating your favorite native plants in this single-session program at The Morton Arboretum. Participants will learn:

- Which seeds need cold to germinate
- Which seeds should be sown in the fall or spring
- Seed starting techniques
- How to identify, collect, and store seeds



Saturday Nov 1 – Sunday Nov 30. Fall Flower Show. Wilder Park Conservatory (Elmhurst, IL).

Admission and parking are free.

<https://www.epd.org/facilities/wilder-park-conservatory>

Always a highlight of the season, this annual flower show is created and installed by the Elmhurst Park District's Horticulture Staff. Stop by for a picturesque display of seasonal flowers and plants. Make sure to pop over to the Formal Gardens for even more floral displays.



Saturday, Nov 1. 10–11:30am. ID That Tree. Forest Preserve District of DuPage County.

Fullersburg Woods Nature Education Center (Oak Brook, IL)

Cost is \$5 per person. Register online or at 630-850-8110.

Join us for a 1-mile guided hike through scenic trails, where you'll discover the unique features of native trees and shrubs and learn how to identify them in the wild. All ages welcome.

<https://www.dupageforest.org/things-to-do/calendar-of-events?trumbaEmbed=view%3Devent%26eventid%3D188549820>



Tuesday, November 4. 12-1 pm. Be Salt Smart and Protect Your Native Landscaping. The Conservation Foundation (northeastern Illinois)

This webinar event takes place over Zoom. Registration is free.

[Be Salt Smart and Protect Your Native Landscaping - The Conservation Foundation](#)



Winters in Northeastern Illinois bring the challenge of dealing with snow and ice, which generally means using salt. While we need to keep everyone safe, salt is very damaging to both our natural and built environments. Once salt goes down, it doesn't go away. Excess salt harms plants and soil, degrades our rivers, wetlands and groundwater, and damages vehicles and buildings. Learn from the Salt Smart Collaborative about practices that use less salt as well as salt-tolerant plant selections you can use to protect your home or business while not sacrificing safety during the winter.

Local Events Continued

Saturday, November 8. Growing an Indoor Herb Garden. Morton Arboretum (Lisle)

Cost: \$49. Member cost: \$42

<https://mortonarb.org/explore/activities/adult-programs/growing-indoor-herb-garden/>

Wondering how to easily access fresh herbs throughout the winter? In need of just a few basil leaves to garnish a meal? Learn to transform your kitchen into a culinary haven with the convenience of fresh herbs at your fingertips. If you're looking to start growing herbs inside or move your herb plants in for winter, this class at The Morton Arboretum covers the best practices—and common pitfalls—of growing herbs indoors. No matter the size of your living space, you can have a thriving herb garden in your home.



Saturday, November 8. Pumpkin Smash at Advocate Sherman Hospital (Elgin, IL).

9am-noon. Admission and parking are free.

<https://extension.illinois.edu/events/2025-11-08-pumpkin-smash-advocate-sherman-hospital>

Whether picking out pumpkins from a field or carving fun faces into them with friends, pumpkins show everyone it's the fall season. What happens when it's time to say goodbye as they melt on the porch?



- Launch your pumpkins (*That's right! The launcher is back!*) into a compost pile
- Dispose of your pumpkins in an eco-friendly way
- Learn about composting
- Enjoy free cider and donuts
- First 100 guests can take home a free countertop compost pail

Thursday Nov 13. 7-8 pm. Houseplant Pest Management. Park District of Oak Park/Oak Park Conservatory.

This virtual event is free. Registration is required.

<https://app.amilia.com/store/en/park-district-of-oak-park/shop/activities/6141052>

Pests aren't only in our gardens - they often end up on our houseplants, as well. You will learn about how to prevent pests from showing up, identify them if they do, and how to effectively treat them and keep them from spreading. Join the Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory for this free, virtual lecture. A zoom link will be sent out to participants in advance of the program.



Sunday November 16. 3-4pm. Greenhouse Tour. Cantigny Park (Winfield, IL).

Meeting Point: Greenhouse Parking Lot. Admission: \$25. (includes parking and one beverage)

<https://cantigny.org/event/greenhouse-tour-6/>

Capture some pre-holiday magic at this preview of our 2025 poinsettia crop! One of our talented greenhouse staff members will guide you through a stunning array of vibrant poinsettias (up to 16 varieties!), showcasing the beauty and tradition of this iconic Christmas plant. Learn about the history and care of these festive favorites, and discover how they are used around Cantigny for seasonal displays. Whether you're a seasoned gardener or simply love the color and joy of Christmas, this tour promises an enchanting experience.



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 meeting	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.



Upcoming Programs & Events for 2025

These are the currently scheduled programs. If there are any changes we will update this in future newsletters. The last column shows who has signed up to bring treats.

Oct 23	Bulb Bingo	Host: B. Bizzarri, Sweet: B. Bizzarri, B. Melville, P. Pirrie, Savory: M. Edwards, E. Bassett
Nov 20	Member Appreciation Dinner	

A poster of our 2025 schedule can be downloaded at <https://westchicagogardenclub.org/wp-content/files/2025PosterWithSchedule.pdf>