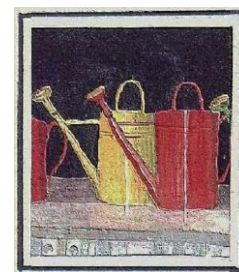


We Go Gardening

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club



October 22th Meeting

St. Andrew Lutheran Church

6:45PM Arrive & Mingle
7:00PM Business Meeting
7:15PM Program

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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

October meeting help - please sign up!

We are in need of more volunteers for the October Bulb Bingo meeting. We need a sweet & a savory refreshment and help setting up & cleaning up. This is usually a very well attended



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

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

meeting, so extra help is needed!

If you can help, please sign up on the volunteer page on [SignUpGenius \(click here\)](#).

Sensory Garden Event

Pamela Darrah

Thank you to the members who came out for the ribbon cutting on the Sensory Garden at Reed Keppler Park. The first date was rained out, but it was great to see a number of you show up for the second try.

The Kaleidoscope that the club donated is a wonderful centerpiece to the garden.



About our Club

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.

Meetings & Dues

We meet on the 4th Thursday from January to October, the 3rd Thursday of November and do not meet in December.

Most meetings are at St. Andrew Lutheran Church in West Chicago (155 N Prince Crossing Rd) at 7:00pm. Occasional meetings may be held elsewhere and that information can be found in our newsletter or website.

The Board meets on the 2nd Thursday at St. Andrew Lutheran Church at 7:00pm.

Dues for 2026: Individual \$20
Family \$30

Contact Us

Website:
WestChicagoGardenClub.org

Address:
P.O. Box 313
West Chicago, IL 60185

E-mail:
WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com

Facebook:
facebook.com/westchicagogardenclub

Instagram:
westchicagogardenclub

Board Members

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

Sustain DuPage Tour

Janet Frogner

Saturday, October 17 at 12:30 p.m.

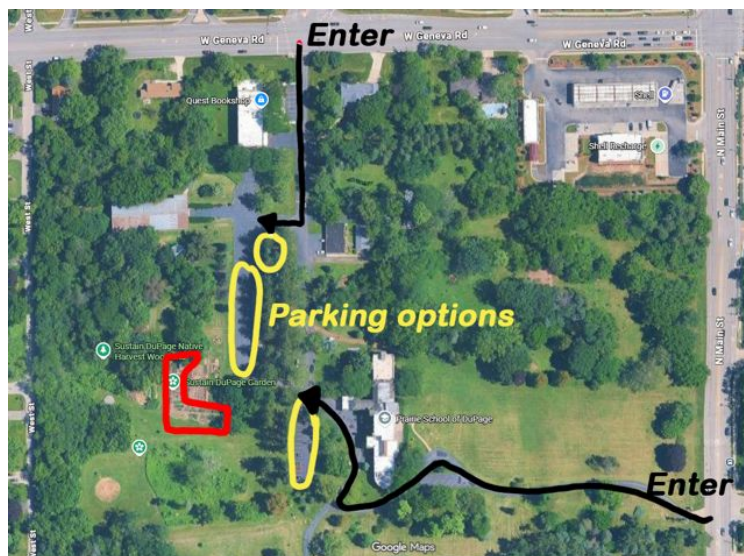
This local field trip was announced last month. To see that information, see the [September Newsletter](#).

They have sent us information on how to find it and parking:



The location of our garden is on the grounds of the Theosophical Society. We are on the west part of the campus, so we are behind the main building which is located at [1926 Main Street, Wheaton, IL](#). The easiest way for finding the garden and parking is to enter from Geneva Rd. at the Quest Bookshop entrance, which has a traffic light. I've attached an image with entrance and parking information. Feel free to park near the green garages or in the parking areas behind the main building. There are signs pointing to our garden space, so hopefully it should be easy to find.

Once you've arrived, we can meet under the arch near the dark green garden shed in our garden (near the fire pit), and we'll start the tour there.



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For the Love of Gardening...



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You're invited to come explore, get inspired, learn and add some beauty to your garden at

HEINZ BROTHERS
Greenhouse Garden Center

2010 East Main St. (Rt. 64), St. Charles
630.377.6288 www.HeinzBrothers.com
Your Gardening Source...

November Meeting Info

Janet Frogner

This year's Potluck Event will be held on Thursday, November 19 @ 6:30 p.m. (3rd Thursday)

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 22.

You will receive your drawing 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 drawing tickets you would like to purchase.

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

- Gift Certificate tickets @ \$500/ticket (You may only purchase 1 ticket and win 1 gift card)
- General tickets @ \$150/ticket (may purchase multiples and win multiples)

To participate in the drawing 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 soon 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 2027.

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

**YOU NEED TO
BE PRESENT TO
PARTICIPATE
AND WIN (no
exceptions)!**

TRACK THE GARDEN BUCKS YOU EARN TO PURCHASE DRAWING TICKETS AT OUR NOVEMBER POTLUCK!

YEAR: 2026 NAME: _____

Each volunteer hour (potting party, Kruse 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 Kruse 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	_____	=	_____

TOTAL: _____

Gift Certificate Drawing: _____ \$500 (only allowed 1 ticket)

Regular Drawing: _____ \$150 each TOTAL: _____

Thank you for volunteering and for participating!
Our excellent programs and field trips are possible when everyone pitches in!



Getting to Know: Carol

Janet Frogner



Carol Borders

Resident of: St. Charles for 31 years

WCGC Member: Earlier this year

How did you become a member: Recommended by Patty Brannon & Jean Miller

What is your profession: Retired school nurse from Geneva

What are you most proud of in your garden: Being able to stick almost anything in the ground and it grows. Actually my subdivision used to be a nursery so I am blessed with very rich soil.

A garden mistake you made: My husband would say too many birdhouses. But too bad, the birds love them.

What do you love most about gardening: Is the tranquility, the satisfaction and the pure joy of its beauty.

What tips or words of wisdom can you share: I talk to my plants and apologize when I forget to water them or neglect the weed removal.

What is your favorite houseplant: English ivy. I love that it grows fast and can dangle along a windowsill.

Favorite garden tool: My long weed remover. I love to remove the weeds and have a clean look.

Favorite flower and what do you love to grow: Daisy. I like that they attract bees and butterflies.

Favorite garden related place/garden you love to visit: Versailles in France or Villa d'Este in Italy



News from Kruse

Jean Ann Saarnio

Shorter days and cooler nights bring about changes in the Kruse garden in October.

As the spring and summer blooms begin to fade, the fall blooms command our attention.

As we stroll through the garden, we see the masses of the tiny daisy like flowers of the purple or pink asters, the bright golden yellow of the golden rods. The ageratums blooming in either purple or white, as well as the tall stalks of the great blue lobelia. The burgundy perilla showing off its color in many places, sometimes in uninvited corners of the garden.



On the north hill the white boneset is making itself known as the white blooms of the Annabelle hydrangea fade to a lovely green. The sedum has large rosy blooms that command your attention. A close examination of the beauty berry reveals the tiniest bead-like berries and the coralberry as well.

The Japanese anemone provides a pop of daisy-like pink flowers on the east side, along with the seven sons tree planted last fall. The panicle hydrangeas are turning to a faded pink, which will provide excellent fall and winter interest.

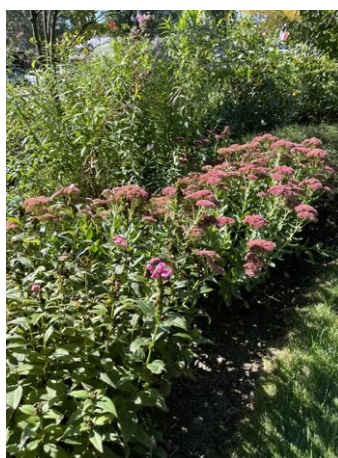


We will soon be giving attention to the spent blooms and seed heads of the zinnias, poppies,

marigolds, coneflowers, goldenrods, four o' clocks, hollyhocks, and more for dead heading and seed collecting. Seeds will be

used for winter sowing or spring planting. When dead heading we keep in mind the needs of birds and wild life and those that provide winter interest.

Our days for gardening are soon ending, weather permitting, we will



continue through the end of October, as there is always a new flower to plant or another weed to pull. There is something in the garden for everyone to enjoy, no matter what the season.

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!

Kruse House Museum: 527 Main St, West Chicago,

Nature Notes: Spider Webs

Kerry Perry



Did you know? Spider webs have existed for at least 100 million years.

Spiders produce silk from their spinneret glands located at the tip of their [abdomen](#). Each gland produces a thread for a

special purpose – for example a trailed safety line, sticky silk for trapping prey or fine silk for wrapping it.

Spider silk is about five times stronger than steel and its



flexibility allows it to stretch significantly without breaking. Humans have utilized spider webs for various purposes, particularly in wound care due to their unique properties that promote healing and absorb blood. Ancient practices included using spider silk to cover injuries, and modern science is exploring its potential in medical applications such as drug delivery and tissue engineering.



Join the Cookie Caravan

Kerry Perry

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, Cantigny Greenhouse/Garden, St Andrew Church Staff, and others.



What you can do:

- Bake 2–3 dozen cookies or bars
- Bring to St Andrew Church Wednesday **Nov 4th 4–7 pm**
- Stay and help package the treats into festive boxes

Boxes will be delivered early Thursday Nov 5th via our "Cookie Caravan".

Join the fun!

Sign Up at the Oct. 22nd meeting

Or contact: Billie at 630-862-1213 or Kerry at 847-721-0076



Pot Drop Off

Mary Schramer

It's time for our fall pot collection. If you have items you have been saving for the plant sale, **October 24, 2026 between 1 and 3 PM** is your chance to get them out of your garage before winter.

Bring them to the red barn at Kress Creek Farm (entrance at intersection of Wilson and Joliet).

If you have a little time to help us sort them, it will be appreciated, even if you can't stay the whole 2 hours. You can sign up at the link below.

We mainly need 1 gallon pots/trays and 4-inch pots/trays. Other sizes will be accepted including true gallon, 2, 3-gallon pots and trays. We will not be accepting any broken or damaged pots or any of the thinner multipack (4-pack, 6-pack, 8-pack)

pots as they are too flimsy and fragile to reuse for our sale. Decorative, terra cotta, and ceramic pots tend not to be as helpful for the plant sale unless they are suitable for houseplants.



DO NOT BRING ANY OF THE ABOVE ITEMS TO A MEETING. Instead, ask a fellow garden club member to bring your items for you. Alternatively, you can drop them at the barn earlier in the day as long as they are in a box or bag secured so the pots will not blow away. Do not leave any pots after 3 PM.

To sign up to help or to just let us know you will be bringing pots & trays, please use our [SignUp Genius page for this event](#).

Field Trip Photos

Janet Frogner & Pamela Darrah

There are photos here from both the local field trip to Trail's End Farm and the bus trip to the Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens in Rockford Illinois & Edward's Orchard. Most of the photos are on Page 10.

Thank You to Thom Skibbie at Trails End Farm!

WCGC was invited on Saturday September 5th to visit and take a tour of his garden at Trails End Farm. It was a perfect day to visit. We learned the history of the farm, refreshed our knowledge of permaculture, how he uses comfrey plants and herbs, his composting method, and his future plans of the garden. We also had a chance to purchase from the farm store. The bonus was hearing the donkey calling out to us! Thank you again for an enjoyable and knowledgeable day!

A gorgeous day for a road trip

Tuesday had perfect weather for our trip to the Conservatory in Rockford and for visiting Edward's Orchard. We broke into smaller groups to tour the conservatory, walked around the gardens on our own, had a delicious lunch and finished up shopping at the apple orchard. Thank you to Laura Barron who, once again, did a fantastic job arranging this event for us to enjoy. Also a thank you to her husband who came along and helped her keep us all organized.



Field Trip Photos: Continued



Growing Native—Don't Panic(um), it's time to Switch(grass)!

Ruth Gauss

Hello, gardening friends! I don't know about you, but one of the things that brings me joy in the fall and winter is seeing different grasses in flower and then touched with snow (or ice). It turns out grasses can play important roles in our gardens beyond how beautiful they are, but most do require thoughtful placement and there are also key tasks for keeping them looking their best.

Let's look at ecological benefits. First, like many native plants, they provide deep roots that will help to redirect rainwater down into the ground, as well as providing root competition for other native plants. Native grasses are hosts for insects and their seeds are also a source of winter food for birds and the previous year's growth might be used for nesting material in the spring. All plant parts can provide perches for many insects and birds and the ground around the base of the grass can be left as open ground that ground-nesting bees will appreciate.



Delaware skipper
photo by Jeff Chapman on iNat

Two important considerations are placement and maintenance. I have heard it recommended to add grasses in after other plants have established and to keep plantings dense so that the plants support each other and don't flop. It is best to avoid planting grasses right next to buildings, unless constructed of brick, concrete, or stone, because grasses provide a lot of fuel for fire (this is something we need to think more about with drought getting to be more of a regular issue in our area). Making sure you cut grasses back in the late winter/spring can help reduce some of the fuel and it will keep your plants healthy (cut back to the ground when you start to see the first green shoots emerging). As warm season grasses, the

species shared today "sleep in" a bit in the spring, so don't panic if these grasses aren't showing signs of life later than other plants because these grasses grow the most in the heat of summer.

Speaking of panicking, let's get started with [Prairie Switchgrass](#) ([Panicum virgatum](#)). This is a 3-6' tall grass that forms tight bunches about 2-3' wide,



photo from PrairieNursery.com

supports a wide range of animal life, produces airy panicles of flowers in the mid-summer prefers full sun, and tolerates a wide range of soil types and moisture levels. This is a great grass for adding to already established prairie plantings to provide support and pressure. It will readily spread if given room.

Popping up next is [Prairie Dropseed](#) ([Sporobolus heterolepis](#)). This fine-textured mounding grass grows to 2-3' tall and wide, supports insects including a couple of rare leaf-hoppers as an obligate host, has airy panicles of flowers in August, tolerates some shade, but will thrive in full sun, and prefers



photo by John Hagstrom

Growing Native—Page 2

Ruth Gauss

moist to dry, loamy, rocky, or gravelly soils. The flowers have a lovely fragrance, like popcorn, although some people have described it being like Cilantro as well.

Next up is [Little Bluestem](#) (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), another smaller grass growing to 2-4' tall and 2-2 1/2' wide. This is a medium-textured, clump-forming grass with reddish stems, red-orange fall foliage color, and fabulous fluffy white to silver flowers starting in July-September, for 1-2 weeks. A number of animals use this grass for food from foliage to seed. It grows well in full sun and moderate to dry conditions in a wide variety of soil types.

Our last small prairie grass that adapts well to garden life and brings a lot of style is [Side Oats Gramma](#)

(*Bouteloua curtipedula*). Growing to 1-2' tall and wide, it's the smallest of the grasses I'm sharing about today, but it packs a lot of punch with its interesting bright purple to orange flowers beginning in July/August and tan/orange fall color. It's a great food source for a number of animals. It prefers full sun, dry conditions, and grows well in most soils.



Little Bluestem in back on left
Side Oats Gramma in middle
Photo by member Linda Valdez
Karl of a prairie bed in her yard

I thought I'd also share another grass that I find really interesting, [River Oats/Northern Sea-Oats](#) (*Chasmanthium latifolium*). It

doesn't occur naturally in as much of the state, but it is used quite often as a decorative grass. A suggestion I have seen for this grass is to plant it in containers or in a confined area so that it won't get out of hand spreading by seed. This grass grows to 2-4' tall and 1-2 1/2' wide, it will prefer some shade and moist soil and starts putting out flowers in August. It is valuable to a wide variety of wildlife in many ways, much like most of the other native grasses.

I hope this was helpful and inspiring. I'm probably going to share some woodland grasses in spring.

I think sometimes it's easy to get caught up in the bright colors of flowers and how busy they are with pollinators, but every plant that is native in our area can be beautiful as well as useful to wildlife.

Happy (native) gardening!



photo by Sharon Yiesla

Local Events for gardeners

Patti Pirrie

Lawn to Garden: Techniques for Starting Garden Beds. The Morton Arboretum. Lisle, IL.
Saturday, October 17. 10:00 a.m. to noon. Cost: \$32 members; \$39 non-members. Registration required.

[LEARN MORE – Lawn to Garden](#)

Get practical techniques and expert advice on converting traditional spaces into beautiful, eco-friendly, and sustainable gardens in this engaging workshop. Whether you're a seasoned gardener or a new homeowner, this program will teach you the skills you need to transform your lawn into vibrant garden beds.



Designing the Four Seasons Garden. Chicago Botanic Garden. Online webinar.
Wednesday, October 21. 6 – 8 p.m. Cost: \$39 members/\$49 non-members. Registration required.

[LEARN MORE – Four Seasons Garden](#)

Think beyond seasonal blooming to create four seasons of beauty and interest in your garden. Learn how to choose plants for their form, texture, and strong winter presence, in addition to their flowering sequence. The result will be a landscape that remains visually engaging year-round, using a diverse selection of plants and garden features.



Soil Health Walk: The Living Landscape Below. The Morton Arboretum. Lisle, IL.
Wednesday, October 28, 2026, 9:30 a.m. to noon. Cost: \$25 members; \$32 non-members. Registration required.

[LEARN MORE – Soil Health Walk](#)

Join Michelle Catania, soil expert and green industry outreach coordinator for The Morton Arboretum, for a tour of the Arboretum's underground. Learn how

tree and plant health starts in the soil, and discuss the different facets of assessing soil health. We'll start in the Thornhill Education Center with a short classroom introduction before heading out to explore the varied soil conditions on the Arboretum's grounds.



Winter Fruit Tree Pruning. Carol Stream Public Library (along with the DuPage Organic Garden Club). **Thursday, November 5. 7-8:30pm. Registration is required for this event.**

[LEARN MORE – Winter Fruit Tree Pruning](#)

Learn how and when to properly prune fruit trees in this informative presentation led by U of I Extension Local Food Systems and Small Farms Educator Alexis R.



Barnes. Alexis will cover winter pruning techniques, common pruning and training mistakes, proper tool selection and essential care tips specific to Northern Illinois' climate and growing conditions.

Greenhouse Tour. Cantigny Park. Wheaton, IL.
Sunday, November 8. 3:00-4:00 PM. Cost: \$25. Registration required.

[LEARN MORE – Greenhouse Tour](#)

Capture some pre-holiday magic at this preview of our 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.



Local Events for Gardeners: Continued

Maximizing Texture in the Garden. Chicago Botanic Gardens. Online Zoom class.
Tuesday, Nov. 17. 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Cost: \$55 members; \$69 non-members. Registration required.
[LEARN MORE – Maximizing Texture](#)

While a progression of interesting flowers and colorful foliage is appreciated in the garden, the visual texture of your compositions is equally important. You will explore textural examples of plants and combinations that take full advantage of your garden for a bold presence.



Upcoming Programs & Events for 2026

These are the currently scheduled programs. If there are any changes we will update this in future newsletters. The last column will show who has signed up to bring treats.
[Click Here](#) to download a poster with our 2026 Schedule.

Date	Speaker	Topic	Volunteers
October 22		Bulb Bingo	Barb B, Barb M, Patti P
November 19		Member Appreciation Dinner	

Garden Bucks

West Chicago Garden Club distributes Garden Bucks (real fake money) to our members. You earn Garden Bucks by participating in club activities, volunteering at events, and donating items!

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 before the November meeting.

There will be copies available at our meetings or you can download by [Clicking Here](#).

At the November meeting you will be able to use your Bucks to enter raffles for donated items and gift cards.

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

TRACK THE GARDEN BUCKS YOU EARN TO PURCHASE DRAWING TICKETS AT OUR NOVEMBER POTLUCK!

YEAR: 2026

NAME: _____

Each volunteer hour (potluck party, kruse 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 Kruse 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	_____	=	_____

TOTAL: _____

Gift Certificate Drawing: _____ \$500 (only allowed 1 ticket)

Regular Drawing: _____ \$150 each TOTAL: _____

Thank you for volunteering and for participating!

Our excellent programs and field trips are possible when everyone pitches in!