

# We Go Gardening

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

Volume 20 Issue 9 September 2016



**Meeting Date: September 22, 2016   Meeting Time:**  
**Meeting Location:** **6:45PM Refreshments**  
**Faith Community Church                                 7:00PM Business Meeting**  
**at 910 Main Street in West Chicago                         7:15PM Program**

## September 22, 2016: Myths and Benefits of Bats

Sharon and Dan Peterson will present on the benefits of these feared and misunderstood creatures. They have been promoting bat education through multi-media presentation since 1996. Bat Conservation International has trained Sharon in the conservation of bats and Dan is a bat naturalist. Education format includes images, video, and live animals.

This is a unique opportunity to see live bats up close. Bring a friend along. This program will be interesting for everyone!

*Recap: August program on Pollinators* by Billie Childress

Trish Beckjord was an excellent presenter! I held my breath for a few minutes when I realized she couldn't show her slides but relaxed quickly when it was clear she didn't need her notes. Wow! It was actually a pleasure to have eye contact with the speaker for a change. I loved the idea of creating a Backyard National Park ....a corridor for pollinators and all wildlife. It takes all of our "patches" to provide a food chain for insects, birds, and all kinds of animals. However, we must be aware that our native birds, butterflies and all our wildlife need the plants they evolved with in order to live. The alien ornamental plants and trees that have been brought in from Europe or Asia may not be able to provide leaves that the swallowtail or monarch butterfly caterpillar can eat. If there are no caterpillars what will the birds feed their babies? We must have the native species of trees, shrubs and plants for the food chain not to break down.

She referred to a Delaware entomologist, Doug Tallamay, who authored the book **Bringing Nature Home**. In his book he does a fabulous job of presenting the backyard gardener's role in restoring natives to suburbia. Tallamay acknowledges that it is hard to know where to start but we do need to answer the call to action! Trish suggested planting an Oak tree that is native to Illinois. Oaks are host to numerous native insects and all kinds of wildlife. There are many natives you can add to your garden. See the list Trish provided.

As gardeners, we can and we will help our ecosystem survive!

*Next Meeting: October 27 program, "Magic of Minor Bulbs" by Jill Selinger*

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We are also on Instagram: [@westchicagogardenclub](https://www.instagram.com/westchicagogardenclub)



**Fall Festivities**  
Weekends in September & October!  
Visit the [thegrowingplace.com](http://thegrowingplace.com) for full schedule



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**Club Information**

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West Chicago Garden Club  
P. O. Box 313, West Chicago, IL 60186  
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**Membership Information**

Dues for 2016: 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

**2016 WCGC BOARD:**

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<b>WCGC 2016 Calendar</b>					
Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event	Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event
<b>28 Jul</b>	President Dick Darrah	President's Picnic	<b>22 Sep</b>	Sharon and Dan Peterson	Bats
<b>25 Aug</b>	Trish Beckjord	Pollinators	<b>27 Oct</b>	Jill Selinger	Bulbs
<b>10 Sep</b>	Chicago Botanic Garden	FIELD TRIP!	<b>17 Nov</b>	All members	Dinner & Garden Dollar Auction

## Time to Start Thinking of Things for the Silent Auction

November will soon be here and, with it, our Potluck Dinner and Silent Auction. So please start thinking of gardening-related items that you no longer want but others may find desirable. More information on the Silent Action will be in next month's newsletter.

## Garden Dollars — remember 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.

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

Volunteer for workdays, plant sale or garden contest (1 to 4 hrs , >4hrs)	75 - 150	Donate plants for the sale	75, 200, 300
		<50, 50-149, ≥150	
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 2016</b>	<b>75</b>
Donate to Kruse House	50	<b>Pay dues before February 2nd</b>	50



## News from Kruse

As the seasons are changing and the days are getting shorter, there's a lot happening in the Kruse Garden. There's still an abundance of beauty and color.



**Sweet Peas:** A Victorian flower dictionary defines sweet peas (*Lathyrus odoratus*) as delicate pleasures. Both white and pink sweet peas are growing on the west side of the Kruse House. Some of the vines are going up the wooden trellis, but more of the vines creep out to the beds in the driveway. A mass of pure white sweet peas grows on the east side of the garden. Peas use tendrils to



climb; they can grasp anything that's a quarter-inch or less. The best support is string, twine, or netting with a grid that's at least 2" x 2", anything smaller will not work well. News - garden suppliers have both nearly-invisible and even biodegradable netting. How sweet.



Our plants are self-seeding and grow profusely. The pea pods dry, split and curl into little spirals. Pick up some of the seeds at the next garden club meeting.



**Black Walnuts:** Black walnut trees are native and grow from Canada to northern Florida and west to the Great Plains. Our black walnut tree, in the far northwest corner of the garden, is about 50 feet tall and has begun to drop its nuts that are good-tasting and good for you. The best time to collect walnuts is when the outer husk softens, but is still green in color. When cracking the nuts, you need to wear gloves and old clothing as the **juice in black**



**walnuts will stain!** The black walnut's roots exude a natural herbicide known as juglone that prevents many plants from growing within their reach. Tomatoes, apples, pears and some landscape plants may be killed or stunted if grown nearby. We noticed at Kruse that of three pagoda dogwoods, the one nearest the walnut tree is quite stunted. In autumn, the walnut tree leaves turn bright yellow, contrasting nicely with the tree's rugged, dark bark.

**West Chicago Historical Society (WCHS):** The society maintains the Kruse House Museum and opens the house for tours Saturday 11 AM – 3 PM May through September. In the WCHS Fall 2016 newsletter, the society gave the West Chicago Garden Club a big thank you for maintaining the garden and also noted "the grounds have been wonderful to enjoy again this year!" For museum exhibit information at the Kruse House, go to [krusehousemuseum.org](http://krusehousemuseum.org).

Visit the Kruse Garden any time and witness the glorious seasonal transition.

- **Kerry**



**We went on a field trip to the Chicago Botanical Gardens and spent the day enjoying them. It was a moist morning, but after lunch the sun came out and it was just glorious. Pictures courtesy of Dick Darrah.**





## September is for Color

## The Growing Place

Just about everywhere you look, mums are showing up all over the place. It signals a true change in the seasons. Every September we get excited for all the beautiful blooms that are still to come in the garden. It's also a really great time to plant so you can get a jump start on next spring. This month we've combed through our shelves to find some beautiful plants that you might not know about for your fall garden.

### Pinks

*Anemone* – Grape Leaf or Japanese Anemone – The large, coarse textured leaves make a tidy mound, and come September, are topped with tall airy stems full of pink or white blossoms. Elegant, single petal blooms boast golden yellow centers. Robustissima, Honorine Jobert, and September Charm are favorite cultivars.

*Chelone* – Turtlehead – The variety called 'Hot Lips' has deep rose pink hooded flowers (perhaps resembling a turtle's head) late summer into early fall with glossy green leaves. It loves moist soils, full sun to part shade and will grow about 3-4' high.

*Lespedeza* – Bush Clover – A semi-woody sub-shrub, bush clover is a crowd pleaser with delicate, graceful, arching stems covered in pea-like blooms in late summer to fall. The dwarf variety 'Yakushima' is a diminutive 12 to 18 inches tall and blooms a bit earlier. *Lespedeza thunbergii* is much larger at around five feet and may be white, pink, or magenta in flower.

*Sedum* – Stonecrop – Fleshy foliage is topped by large flat clusters of pink, magenta and also white blooms on this tough, drought tolerant plant. Sedum comes in a variety of sizes and foliage colors, but in fall, the tall cultivars really stand out. Consider allowing the blossoms to dry for winter interest.

### Blues

*Caryopteris* – Blue Beard, Blue Mist Shrub – This compact shrub-like perennial adds great blue color to the early fall garden. Butterflies and hummingbirds love their true blue flowers. They grow best in well-drained loamy soils and can reach 3-4' tall.

*Ceratostigma plumbaginoides* – Leadwort or Plumbago – An attractive politely colonizing groundcover, plumbago features a pure cornflower blue blossom. Although slow to emerge in the spring, it will also offer outstanding rich red to reddish purple fall color.

*Eupatorium coelestinum* – Hardy Ageratum – The compact clusters of fuzzy bluish purple flowers are stunning in combination with the gold and red flowers of other fall bloomers. This perennial emerges late in spring, readily forms colonies in moist soils.

### Yellows & Whites

*Helianthus* – Sunflower – The hardy sunflowers charm us with bright yellow daisy-like flowers. They are large plants, perfect for the back of the border, that bloom beginning in July or August and continuing into October. An excellent cut flower, they are also an important late season nectar source for butterflies and bees.

*Aster* – A tough, beautiful plant that is a must for the butterfly garden, asters come in a variety of sizes and colors including white as well as blue, lavender, and pink. Taller varieties can be pinched back in July to delay flowering and to maintain a more mounded habit.

*Eryngium yuccifolium* – Rattlesnake Master – This unusual native has spiky, yucca-like leaves and spiny globes covered by tiny cream flowers. It's unusual foliage and texture looks great combined with ornamental grasses. It can grow 3-4 ft tall and has a deep taproot, so it's a good idea to plant it where you won't need to move it.



### Color without blooms

*Amsonia hubrichtii* – Arkansas Amsonia – These dependable and long-lived plants are valuable for adding structure and interest to the garden with needle-like foliage that turns a gorgeous butterscotch color in the fall.

*Callicarpa* – Beautyberry – Tiny clusters of bright purple berries (pictured at left) form along the stem in the fall. It's a must for great fall color! It can grow up to 3-4' tall in average soils, full sun to part shade. An added benefit is its clusters of pink flowers in the spring.