

We Go Gardening

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club



September 24th Meeting

St. Andrew Lutheran Church

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

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Blanding's Turtle

Ruth Kyme

This month's speaker comes to us from the DuPage County Forest Preserve. The title of the presentation is Blanding's Turtle: What We are Doing to Protect an Illinois Endangered Species.



Discover the DuPage County Forest Preserve District's work to help the state-endangered Blanding's turtle. Hear about how the restoration of habitat supports this species, and learn about their partnership with other agencies to help this turtle recover in the greater Chicago area. Then, find out about how you can help the Blanding's turtle, too!



October Field Trip - Don't forget to sign up!

Travel by bus to Nicholas Conservatory and Gardens in Rockford Illinois & Edward's Orchard



Tuesday, October 6
8:30am - 4:00pm

[Visit the Registration page](#) or see the [August Newsletter](#) for all the details!

Cost: To thank our hard working members who did such a great job with our Plant Sale in May, the member price for this field trip will be only \$15.

Note that to pre-order a box lunch, you need to register & have your lunch order to us by the 28th.

Sensory Garden Event

Pamela Darrah

Last year, the West Chicago Garden Club donated toward the Sensory Garden project that the Parks Foundation is creating. We directed our donation to purchase the kaleidoscope that stands at the center of the garden.

Although not all of the plants that are planned for the garden are in, the majority of the project is complete and the Ribbon Cutting will be held this Saturday

Saturday, September 19th at 11:30am

The garden is located near the playground on the North edge of the park. It is just to the North-West of the Shell.

The President of the Parks Foundation sent us the following invitation:

We would like invite all members of the WC Garden Club to the Ribbon Cutting Ceremony for Sensory Garden in Reed-Keppler Park. Your generous donation of the 4 station kaleidoscope sculpture is the center piece of the garden. We will acknowledge your gifting during the event.

Hope to see everyone! Thank you!

Best, Acie Boyd



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

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WestChicagoGardenClub.org

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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.

WCGC has been invited to visit and tour Sustain DuPage's gardens in Wheaton.

We will hear about their mission as a communal garden, view their various ongoing projects and experiments in their gardens, and learn about everything they do in their space.

Sustain DuPage is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization of 50+ volunteers dedicated to growing a community around sustainability in DuPage County and life. A grassroots community united by a vision of sustainability—where people and planet thrive together, fostering a lifestyle that regenerates our ecosystem while advancing equity for all generations. They are a very small organization operating under \$15,000 that uses their “scrappiness” to create a functioning garden, organization, and community! Their focus areas are: garden & food, rewilding, policy reform, creativity, and knowledge share.

To read more about Sustain DuPage visit their website at www.sustaindupage.org

The Sustain Dupage Garden is located at [The Theosophical Society, 1926 N Main Street, Wheaton](#)



**PLATT HILL
NURSERY**

222 W. Lake St. • Bloomingdale
2400 Randall Rd. • Carpentersville

We have the right plant for the right place!
We enjoy sharing our love of plants and knowledge with our customers year round. Stop in and browse.

For the Love of Gardening...



November's Potluck & Drawing Information

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 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 2027.

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

Looking forward to another successful fun event!!

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: Linda & Bob

Janet Frogner

Linda Valdez Karl & Bob
Dynek

Resident of: We have lived in Geneva 5 years and before that 20 years in Batavia

WCGC Member: May 2026

How did you become a member: I know Ruth Gauss through the IL Extension Master Naturalist program as I am also a Master Naturalist. She suggested I check out WCGC. - I also gave a talk to the WCGC in the early 2000's on the National Habitat Program when I gave talks to local clubs.



What is your profession: I am a garden designer and garden coach since 1998 when I started Loba Landscapes: Gardens With a Touch of the Wild - www.loba-landscapes.com - I was using native plants in the home landscape long before it became a thing. I also taught Yoga globally for 21 years.

What are you most proud of in your garden: The way we converted our half acre lot from basically nothing



to a thriving ecosystem that is a pollinator palooza and bird sanctuary. The first thing we did in Spring 2022 was plant 30+ native shrubs and small trees along the back property line between us and Riverbank Labs to create a native thicket. We have also planted 3 Oaks.

A garden mistake you made: Planting too many Rudbeckia in our 800sf savanna prairie! I am in the process of thinning out, so if any members want Showy Black Eyed Susans let us know.



What do you love most about gardening: When I'm in our gardens, I don't think about what is happening beyond our half acre. I'm at peace.

What tips or words of wisdom can you share: 1. Plant native plants! I recommend planting plugs or pints instead of gallons because they "take" faster. 2. You can ALWAYS mix natives with your non-natives. 3. Don't forget shrubs. There is much talk now about planting "pollinator gardens" or "planting prairie", but I believe advice on planting a native understory is sorely lacking in gardening conversations. 4. Don't

Continued on next page

Getting to Know: Continued

plant invasive plants like barberry, purple leaf wintercreeper, vinca, burning bush, etc. If you have them, get rid of them! I have removed ALL of those on the Schulenberg Prairie.

What is your favorite houseplant: The ones that I don't kill!

Favorite garden tool: My Root Slayer Shovel by Radius (and I don't get a commission!)

Favorite flower and what do you love to grow: I love the Silphiums, like Rosin Weed, Prairie Dock, Compass and Cup Plant. I'm a prairie gal, so right now I am loving how *Carex brevior* (Plains Oval Sedge) and *Bouteloua gracilis* (Blue Grama Grass) are looking in our savanna prairie bed.

Favorite garden related place/garden you love to visit: I am a prairie steward on the Schulenberg Prairie at the Morton Arboretum, so the Arb, of course!

What would you like to learn and participate in as a member: Would love to learn more about growing vegetables, and I plan to participate in the plant sale.



News from Kruse

Judy Knaak

I first volunteered at the Kruse House Garden last summer. I noticed as I was head down, digging in the dirt, the sound of a passing train. The tracks that run through town are just across the road from the Kruse House behind the stores along Main Street. The familiar train whistle and clickety clack brought to mind that Celia Kruse must have heard the same sounds as she gardened. I would like to take a moment to reflect on the first gardeners at the Kruse House and perhaps notice similarities to our present day garden club workers.

Celia Kruse was 21 years old when her parents Fred and Bertha built their « modern » house in 1917 at 527 Main Street. Celia's maternal grandparents lived in a house just to the west. Their five daughters included Bertha and her family in today's Kruse House on one side, and Amelia and her family in the house on the other side of the



grandparents. It was very common in 1917 for extended family members to live so close to each other.



Three daughters remained unmarried and also lived in those homes. The backyards of the three houses created one expansive area which the women of the family took on as a gardening project. Over the years Celia and her grandmother, her mother and her four aunts worked diligently to transform a huge plot into spectacular gardens. It is said that they grew hundreds of tulips and particularly loved dahlias. The Kruse House had the largest back yard of the three homes and in the beginning extended all the way up the hill to Colford Avenue.

Rock gardening was popular at the turn of the 20th century and Celia and her mother decided to take on that challenge. -- Continued on next page.

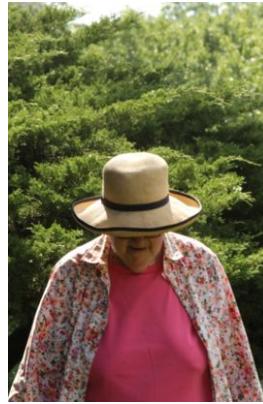
News from Kruse: Continued



You can still see the rocks that line the border of the gardens along the back of the yard. If you venture into the garden to pull weeds, you discover yet more rocks. Celia's family would take trips to visit family in Wisconsin and brought back rocks and woodland plants to add to their gardening endeavors.

Celia chose a career as a stenographer after high school and took the train into Chicago to her job at an office. When her father died of a heart attack in 1933, Celia became the sole bread winner for the family. She never married and continued her employment and financial support for her home. Yet her love of gardening was always at the center of her personal life. It is said that after work she would change her clothes, grab her tools and spend time in the gardens before the daylight faded. Does that sound like the routine of some of our club members? Celia's garden clothes consisted of a long black dress covered by a white or denim apron and often a floppy sun hat on her head.

These photos show some of the garden club volunteers carrying on the work of the first gardeners, some with their own floppy hats. No long dresses though! The similarities of our volunteer gardeners with the ones who began turning the soil into floral majesty over 100 years ago goes beyond the sound of train whistles. Celia and her family would ponder over the tasks of tending, planting and pruning, creating a special bond between them. Our volunteers do the same. As all gardeners know, as you work the land, dig the dirt and strive to make it better, you develop a love for that particular plot of earth. The Kruse women knew



it. We do as well.

To learn more about the history of the Kruse family and their home, please take a tour of the house offered on select Saturdays from noon to three. The gardens are available at any time for respectful



admiration. Standing behind the house, you may picture the grounds as Celia once did. There was a path along the eastern edge of the yard that ran from Colford Avenue down to Main Street. The neighborhood kids could follow that path, past Celia's little barking dog, to buy a loaf of bread at White's Grocery Store next door to the Kruse House. In your mind's eye, imagine all of the commercial development on Main Street was once a neighborhood of houses, probably workers for the railroad as most of the town's men were employed. Take away the traffic, the stores and the hustle and bustle of today to see a peaceful residential community. The Kruse House is the last remaining reminder of that era. Our organization strives to preserve the beauty and tranquility that the first gardeners created . . . with the sounds of the trains a perpetual backdrop.



"Sweet Autumn" is the name of this fragrant clematis clinging to the wall of the garden shed at the Kruse House. These flowers are fading, but there are many colorful flowers still going strong among the gardens. Take a stroll there in this season of "sweet autumn."

Nature Notes: What Does “Wort” Mean?

Kerry Perry

Have you ever wondered why plants such as lungwort, spiderwort, and St. John’s wort share the word “wort”?

The term comes from the Old English word *wyrt*, meaning plant, root, or herb. Before Carl Linnaeus introduced modern plant classification in the 1700s, people often named plants according to their appearance or supposed uses.



St John’s Wort



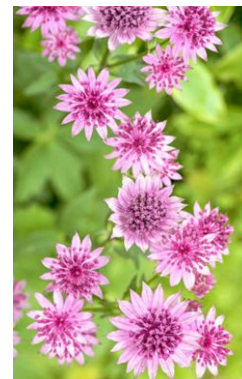
Spiderwort

Spiderwort may have been named for its spider-like shape or thread-like sap. St. John’s wort blooms

Lungwort, liverwort, and bladderwort were named because their leaves seemed to resemble body parts. Feverwort and bruisewort were associated with ailments people believed they could treat.

around St. John’s Day in late June and has long been used as a medicinal herb.

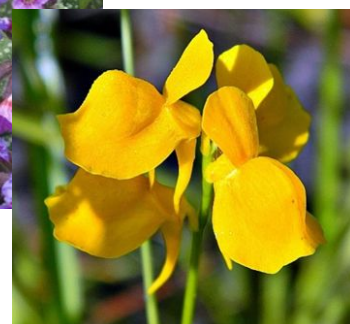
Despite sharing the name, these plants do not belong to a single “wort family.” The word simply reflects how earlier gardeners named and understood the plants around them.



Masterwort



Lungwort



Bladderwort

Adopt-A-Highway

Dan Beebe

It is time for our Fall Adopt A Highway roadside pickup. We will be meeting on Saturday, September 26th at 8:45am in the parking lot of the Park District garage at [830 W Hawthorne Lane \(Click here for Google Map\)](#).

We will start our cleanup at 9:00am. Expect to spend about 1 to 2 hours walking on relatively flat sidewalk & grass. Once a year, all volunteers will need to sign a liability waiver stating that you won’t blame the city if you get hurt during the roadside pickup. Copies of the waiver will be available at Saturday’s event. In addition, all participants should watch the State of Illinois’ Adopt a Highway video that can be viewed by clicking on [this link:AAH Video](#).

Orange safety vests, grabbers and garbage bags will be provided. Some roadside trash can be soggy, so please bring your own gloves to protect your hands. As the weather can be a bit unpredictable, please check the weather forecast and dress accordingly.



[Sign up to help at Sign Up Genius \(Click here\)](#)

Overwintering Canna Rhizomes

Chris Gicela



Years ago, a friend gave me a few canna rhizomes from his Uncle Paul's garden and I've been overwintering them ever since. Each spring I take them out and share them with friends and neighbors.

Here's what I do to overwinter them.

Removal - In mid to late October when the stalks are brown, I gently dig them out using a spading fork. I start digging about 5 - 6 inches from the stalk to avoid damaging the rhizome.

Drying - As I lift the rhizomes, I remove the large clumps of dirt and leave the stalks attached so they can continue to brown and dry. I put them on my front porch for a few days, or they can be placed in a

garden cart in the garage. The goal is to keep them dry.

Packing - After about 4-5 days of drying, I cut the stalks off, remove any loose dirt and place them in a brown paper bag or cardboard box. Do not use plastic bags or totes as this will cause the rhizomes to rot. At this stage, I do not try to cut or split the rhizomes, I just leave them as they are.

Storing - I place newspaper between the rhizomes if I can fit several in a bag/box to layer them. I do not close the bag or box, I just put newspaper over the top layer. Then, I store them in our basement, which remains at a constant cool temperature.

In May, I bring them outside and assess each rhizome for mold, and then break/cut them apart to a manageable size. Now my 'Uncle Paul' cannas are ready to plant and share!

Kruse Workday Recap

Christina Covarrubias

The saying goes "Many hands make light work" which was very true of our Friday evening at the Kruse garden.

We were able to edge all the garden beds and mow the lawn. Our Kruse Crew also eliminated ankle twisting chances by collecting walnuts for another garden's resident squirrels and composting fallen pears. Other gardeners followed the adage "if its brown cut it down" to deadhead spent phlox, rudbeckia, hosta and joe pye weed. Note, in general, we leave plenty of seed heads as a lovely technique to gain new plants naturally and support wildlife.

It was a lovely evening gardening with fellow club members. If you weren't there you missed breaktime with freshly baked pumpkin and chocolate chip



cookies. Congrats to Carmen who won the \$25 gift card.

Thank you to all who came- Barb K, Carmen G, Chris C, Chris G, Dan B, Dee S, Janette G, Julie P, Kathleen H, Karen K, Kerry P, Mary A, Mary S, and Paula L. Please note there will not be any additional Second Saturday gardening days for the remainder of the 2026 season, we will continue to meet every Wednesday from 9-11:30am, weather permitting, through October.



Growing Native—Planting for US (and us)!

Ruth Gauss

Hi, gardening friends! For the past three months I've shared about plants in colors like our flag and you're probably wondering why I seem to still be focused on the US this month. It all has to do with an article that came out in early July in the New York Times Magazine that really got under my skin. Perhaps you read it. I felt very strongly that it was unfairly critical of the native plant movement and didn't give voice to what I find to be the purpose of planting for our ecosystem. I didn't know how to address this at the time, and I needed to finish my series on flag colors, but recently I came upon a really good way to re-frame things. I was listening to the [Growing Greener Podcast](#) and the creator, Tom Christopher, shared that after touring gardens around the world he came home feeling like the best reason to plant native plants was that they are special to us! They're so special that most of our plants don't grow naturally anywhere else in the world and even within



Photo © Mary Kay Rubey

North America many plants don't naturally occur past the Rocky Mountains. Then we consider the ecoregion, which is [Central Corn Belt Plains](#), these are special plants and the animals in our ecosystem need them. If we don't care for them now, they might not survive. It's a whole cycle with the plants, animals, and people all needing each other.

That said, I do not pass judgment on what you choose to plant in your yard or allow to remain. It is your choice and you have your own needs and interests. I have plenty of plants that wouldn't be growing here without me allowing them and some that are now considered invasive, but weren't when I planted them decades ago. They are on the top of my to-do list. I just ask that you consider the ecosystem and make

additions or subtractions from your garden with the needs of the unique and wonderful creatures that also call our gardens their home. We all know that Monarch butterfly larvae (caterpillars) only eat milkweed plants, so we make sure to include a milkweed plant (or perhaps 5) in our yard. We might see a beautiful butterfly while visiting the [Schulenberg](#) Prairie at The Morton Arboretum, take a picture and discover that it's a [Pipevine Swallowtail](#). We look up what the larvae eat and we find that because this is a poisonous butterfly (both as a larvae and as an adult) that it needs a specific poisonous plant to feed on so we decide to grow [Dutchman's Pipe](#) to support these beauties, even if Dutchman's Pipe is not commonly found in our area according to the [BONAP](#) records. That's our choice to make. We're not planting an invasive plant, we're not planting something strictly native to our region either, but we will be supporting an animal that lives in our ecosystem. It's important to be intentional

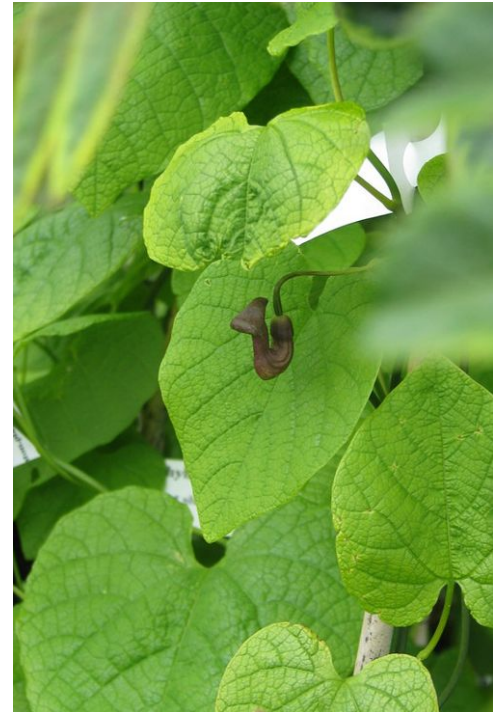


Photo by Steve Law

and embrace the beauty of our native species, especially those with specific plant requirements.

Thank you so much for letting me get that off of my chest. I believe we should be good stewards and I appreciate whatever you might be doing to support that!

Happy (native) gardening! Go us!

Local Events for gardeners

Patti Pirrie

Annual Bulb Sale. The Morton Arboretum Store. Friday, Sept 18 thru Oct or while supplies last. 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM. Cost included with Arboretum admission.

[LEARN MORE – Annual Bulb Sale](#)

Choose from a wide array of tulips, daffodils, iris, alliums, crocus, fritillaria, and more, as well as pre-mixed bulb sets, to create the perfect combination of color, size, and shape for your garden display this spring. New this year: native wildflower mixes from Pollinator Paradise offer another option for adding color and supporting pollinators.



Central States Dahlia Society Show. Chicago Botanic Garden.

Saturday-Sunday, Sept 19-20. 10am-4 pm. Cost included with Botanical Garden admission.

[LEARN MORE – Fall Dahlia Show](#)

This judged exhibit will feature 16 total displays using nearly 1,000 dahlia blooms ranging in size from a silver dollar to a dinner plate. Society members will be on hand to provide written information and to answer questions. Blooms will be available for purchase at the end of show on Sunday.



Wellness Garden Design. Chicago Botanical Garden. Online class.

Saturday, September 26. 11 AM – 1 PM. Cost: \$52 members / \$65 non-members.

[LEARN MORE – Wellness Garden](#)

Healing or wellness gardens are developed in evidence-informed ways. Intentional design addresses accessibility to make a space that is functional, safe, and available for a myriad of users.

You will examine a wide range of plantings, features, and case studies of successful wellness gardens and explore some of the research that guides the design decisions.



Fall Festival. Cantigny Park. Wheaton, IL. Saturday & Sunday, Sept 26 & 27, 10am – 4pm. Parking: \$21 per car.

[LEARN MORE – Fall Fest](#)

This family-friendly weekend features a vibrant market, live music, food and more. Cantigny's Horticulture team is offering guided 45-minute tours on Saturday and Sunday. Tours will depart from the Fountain Lawn east of the Visitors Center at 10:30, 11, 11:30, 12:30, 1, 1:30, 2, 2:30, and 3. Plant Sales: Find the perfect greenery or fall plan to brighten your home or garden.



Grass Isn't Greener - Nurturing Nature At Home. Oak Park Conservatory. Oak Park, IL. Thursday, October 8. 7-8 PM. Online Zoom class. Cost is free.

[LEARN MORE: Grass Isn't Greener](#)

What if your backyard could help save the planet? With a few thoughtful changes, your yard can become a vibrant refuge for pollinators, birds, and bugs — and a surprisingly powerful force for conservation. In this inspiring and practical talk, conservation educator and author/photographer Danae Wolfe shares how reimagining your outdoor space can support biodiversity and build climate resilience.



Local Events for Gardeners: Continued

Plan Next Year's Vegetable Garden. Online Zoom class. Chicago Botanic Garden.
Wednesday, October 28. 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Cost: \$39 members / \$49 nonmembers.
LEARN MORE: Next Year's Vegetable Garden

Fall is a great time to start planning next year's vegetable and herb gardens. Learn about soil preparation and tests, vegetable garden layouts, heirloom and modern cultivars, and when and how to plant for a continued, flavorful harvest.



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
September 24	DuPage County Forest Preserve	Civic Outreach: Blanding's Turtle	Candy T, Susan J, Patti P
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 (setting 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	_____	=	_____
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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!