



# WE GO GARDENING

**Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club**

**Volume 8 Issue 4 April 2005**

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## MARCH: VERTICAL GARDENING by Barbara Darrah

Kitty Finn from The Growing Place gave an informative talk on vines in the garden. She noted that they add vertical interest in our normally flat Midwest landscapes. There are four types of vines: 1. Clingers like ivy, which attach directly to surfaces such as stone or brick with adhesive discs. 2. Grabbers like grapes and clematis, which have stems or tendrils that wrap around whatever they touch. 3. Twiners like honeysuckle, which twine around their supports. 4. Sprawlers like roses which must be tied to their supports.

Using slides, she showed various ways to use climbers including putting them in containers (including hanging baskets and window boxes), on walls and trellises and up trees. Most perennial vines need three years to become well established, growing little in the first year, more in the second and really leaping upward in the third.

The last part of the program concentrated on

the three groups of clematis vines. The first two, which differ mainly in the flower structures, bloom early on old growth, while the third group grows blooms on new wood and needs more pruning. She recommended that clematis never be cut below 30".

When planting clematis (as well as dormant roses), she suggested that the roots not be spread out and that they be planted 4-6" deeper than they were in the pot. Since they like their roots shaded, she also suggested planting annuals at their feet.

Growing Place catalogues were handed out. If you haven't had one before, you will find it is a useful resource to check out plants you are considering. If you have never been to their nurseries, I think you will find them interesting. I particularly like the one in Aurora which seems more open and low key, but the one just south of Ogden in Naperville is closer.

### Next Meeting

**April 28**

Jan Calhoun on

"Annuals"

6:45—Sharing  
Time

7:15 Business  
Meeting

7:30 Program  
Starts

### PLANT SALE DATES and TIMES

**May 6-7**—Plant drop off at Pamela and Dan's— 479 Colford Ave. (call 231-4745 for directions.) Make sure the plants from your garden are labeled. If you need help unloading plan to come after 6:30 pm.

**May 12 (Thursday)** - Members pre-sale. You can pick up plants at any time, but no one will be there until 6:00 pm. If you come earlier, please

keep track of what you owe.

**May 13** - Friday evening, plants are moved from Pamela and Dan's to Fox Center. Volunteers, especially those with vans, are needed.

**May 14—PLANT SALE DAY!!** Set-up begins at 7:00 am. Sale runs from 9:00am to 2:00 pm. We need help from everyone some of the day. Call Jim Hilsenbeck (584-1900 day, 231-4745 evening) to pick a job!

## Upcoming events (outside the club)

**GARDEN ART AVAILABLE IN WARRENVILLE**—During April the Prairie Oak Artisans Gallery in Warrenville is featuring a variety of garden art by local artisans. Included are concrete birdbaths with plant images impressed in them, copper sculptures, rustic birdhouses, birdhouse bottles for large and small birds, toad houses, mosaic tile tables and cedar strips featuring garden poetry. Located southeast of the intersection of Batavia and Butterfield Roads at 28W530 Batavia Road, it is open from 11a.m. to 6p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. It sounds like an interesting alternative to the usual mass produced ornaments sold in most shops.

**Check our advertisers' web-sites for upcoming programs.** Heinz, Brothers, Platt Hill Nursery, and The Growing Place all have numerous offerings.

### KRUSE HOUSE

#### Volunteers

Try to spend some time in your section of the garden.

Don't have a section?

Call Dan Bebee at  
231-5745

## PLANT SALE—May 14—Logistics

**Jim Hilsenbeck is coordinating volunteers for the Sale.** If you want to be sure you get assigned a certain job or save Jim a call, you can contact him by e-mail at [michred89@sbcglobal.net](mailto:michred89@sbcglobal.net).

**May 6 and 7**— Plant drop off at Pamela and Dan's. Please bring ALL the plants from your gardens and any plants you have been "babysitting" from a potting party. Make sure the plants are labeled. Mystery plants do not sell well! If you need help unloading your plants, plan to come after 6:30 on Friday (May 6) or on Saturday. It is important to have plants there that weekend so the pricing can be completed.

**May 12**—Members pre-sale. Members are welcome to come any time and select plants. If you come before 6:00 pm, just keep track of what you are buying and pay for it at the Plant Sale.

**May 13**—Plants need to be moved from Pamela and Dan's

to the Fox Center. For this we need as many members and vehicles as possible. We will need loaders at Pamela and Dan's, unloaders at Fox Center and vehicles (vans, trucks, and SUVs in particular).

**May 14—Plant Sale.** Set up begins around 7:00 am. This involves moving plants out from the Fox Center, setting up tents, putting up signs, etc. The sale begins at 9:00. Carole Bates is in charge of the cash table and will need help. This is a great job for members who can't or don't want to spend a lot of time on their feet. We need members during the sale to walk around, answer questions and help folks as they select plants. The more members we have circulating, the better. This also allows folks to take breaks and get off their feet. Finally there is a need for folks to help with clean up and shut down the sale after it is over.

Many hands makes light work... so bring your hands and expect to work!

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

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## Club information

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

(630) 585-4005

www.bwdarrah.com/wcgarden

### Membership information

Dues for 2005:

Individual: \$15

Family: \$25

### 2005 board

President:

Linda Harlson (630) 293-1057  
ashengal@prodigy.net

Vice President:

Billie Childress (630) 231-1791  
billiec@covad.net

Treasurer:

John Warbiany (630) 293-5795  
Fax: (630) 293-5794

Secretary

Angie Sadauskas (630) 231-5851

Information Director

Edie Streams (630) 231-4821  
westreams@hotmail.com

Plant Sale Chair

Dick Darrah (630) 584-1900  
info@bwdarrah.com

## Calendar of events 2005

Date	Speaker	Topic
April 28	Jan Calhoun	Annuals
May 14		Plant Sale!
May 26		Plant Exchange, Sharing and Work Night at Kruse House
June 23	Diane Hunter	Japanese Gardens
June 25	FIELD TRIP	Anderson Japanese Gardens Klem Arboretum—Rockford
July 28		President's Potluck and making Japanese Lanterns (at Billie's)
August 25	Connie and Carole	Making Decorative Concrete Leaves (at Carole's)
September 22	Nancy Carroll	Fall Interest in the Garden
October 27	Sandy Klausman	Spring Bulbs
November 17		Potluck and Elections

### WANTED: Saw Horses and 2 x 4s

These will help us better organize the plants at Pamela and Dan's by getting some of the flats off the ground and allow other flats to be underneath. We will need these on **May 6th** for when members are dropping off their plants. If you have either saw horses or 2 x 4s you can loan the club for that week, please contact Dick Darrah at 231-4745.

**we go**  
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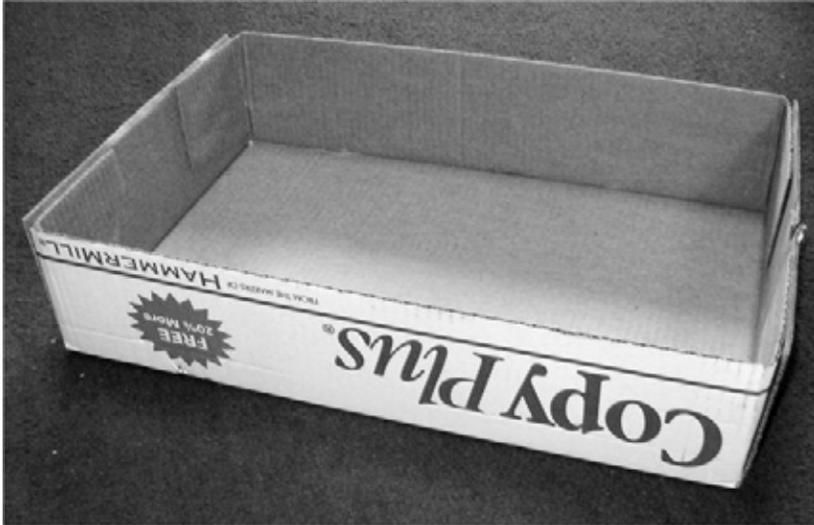
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# ASK Our Gardeners (will return next Month)



**More Garden Websites**  
 Suggested by Members

[www.gardensalive.com](http://www.gardensalive.com) a source for organic fertilizer.

[www.backyardgardener.com](http://www.backyardgardener.com) lots of tips and information on all aspects of gardening.

**Mini- Potting Partles**

Will occur  
 Depending on  
 the availability  
 of plants  
**Call Carole  
 Bates (293-  
 4953) if you  
 would like to  
 help**

**WANTED For Plant Sale**

**Box Tops, Box Tops, And More Box Tops**

Customers use these to collect their purchases and we go through lots of them during the day. Please collect box tops and **BRING THEM TO THE FOX CENTER** the day of the sale.



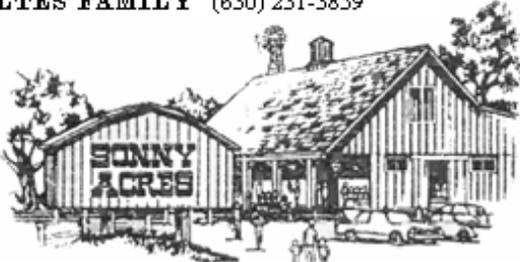
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## Soil Test Reports

By Lou Horton

At one time or another, we have all considered having a soil sample from our gardens tested but somehow, most of us (including me) have failed to follow through and actually do it. That may be because we are unsure of where to send it, what it costs, or maybe even what we could do with the information once we have it.

Having recently had a sample of the soil in one of my gardens tested, I would like to share the report with you and explain what conclusions I can draw from it that will help me to manage my gardens better. I must warn you, however, that this report is a snapshot of one area in my garden. That does not mean that the results reported would necessarily apply to every place in my yard. If you have reason to believe that you have areas in your yard (due to construction or other causes of soil disturbance) that are not typical of the rest of the yard, it may make sense to pop for separate soil tests. I have seen it recommended that one simply blend samples from several sites but I fear that doing so may mask a problem area and/or make the sample invalid for the rest of the property. For myself, I intend to take two other samples this spring from other major beds and by so doing; I will learn if my gardens are uniform in soil makeup.

### What does it cost and where do I send it?

The cost for my test was \$15. There are many labs one can use. Their prices may vary somewhat (as will how they report results) but my price was probably pretty typical. Any County Extension Office can provide a list of labs. I intend to continue to use A&L Great Lakes Laboratories because if they are good enough for the Morton Arboretum, they are good enough for me. It took several weeks for the results to get back to me.

### How can the information on the report help?

The report actually consisted of two sheets, the actual report and a fact sheet which explains how to interpret it. I especially liked the bar graph which let me put into context the analysis results. The first information relates to the amount of organic material present in the sample. Higher is better. In the Midwest, organic material is often in the 2-5% range. Organic material performs many useful functions in the soil- too many to go into here. It is not static however. Think of organic material in good garden soil like money in a bank account- you add it and soil organisms make withdrawals. It is recommended by the lab that a minimum of 3-5% organic material be strived for by the gardener. *One word of caution: be sure to scrape away the mulch and take your sample from a couple or three inches below the surface to get an accurate reading of the amount of organic material present.*

The next figures in the report all relate to macronutrients including Phosphorus, Potassium, etc. You might wonder why Nitrogen is not included. That is because it is the one nutrient used in large quantity in any garden and it has it's own section. The amounts are reported in parts per million (PPM). In our general area, the soil is typically well endowed with all of the major nutrients except Nitrogen. The "Cation Exchange Capacity" is a measure of how well your

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**SOIL TESTING** (contd).

soil is able to retain nutrients. Soils heavy in clay content typically have ratings from 1-25 while sandy soils may have Cation ratings in the area of 5.

**Soil PH**

Another major piece of information is the PH rating of the sample. The PH scale goes from 1-14. Higher numbers mean that the soil is alkaline (sweet) and low numbers mean that it is acidic (sour). My PH rating of 7.8 means that my soil is considered to be high in the normal range. Be aware that it is difficult to make long lasting major changes in the PH of soil. The main thing to understand is that when soil is either too low (say, below 6) or too high ( 8.5 and above) some nutrients are "locked up" and are unavailable to the plants. The report will make specific recommendations if your sample is found to be either to alkaline or too acidic for what you intend to grow.

**The recommendations**

The last information in the report relates to recommendations the lab makes after analyzing the results. It is almost universal that the addition of Nitrogen will be recommended. The amount will depend on your specific sample. The "Comments" section will give some specific information of when and how the fertilizer should be applied.

Report Number: F05045-0012  
Account Number: 61027

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SOIL TEST REPORT											
REPORTED TO			SAMPLE INFORMATION				CUSTOMER				
Jan Little The Morton Arboretum 4100 IL Route 53 Lisle, IL 60532-1293			Report Number	F05045-0012			LOU HORTON 1N735 INGALTON WEST CHICAGO IL 6018				
			Report Date	2/16/2005							
			Lab Number	73588							
			Sample ID	1							
			To Be Grown	Broadleaf Shrubs							
ANALYSIS RESULTS											
SOIL TESTS		AMOUNT FOUND		RATING							
				Very Low	Low	Medium	High	Very High			
Organic Matter, %		10.1		[Bar chart showing 10.1% Organic Matter]							
Phosphorus, ppm P		448		[Bar chart showing 448 ppm Phosphorus]							
Potassium, ppm K		207		[Bar chart showing 207 ppm Potassium]							
Magnesium, ppm Mg		620		[Bar chart showing 620 ppm Magnesium]							
Calcium, ppm Ca		3950		[Bar chart showing 3950 ppm Calcium]							
Cation Exchange Capacity, meq/100g		25.4		[Bar chart showing 25.4 meq/100g CEC]							
pH		7.8		[Bar chart showing pH 7.8]							
ANNUAL NUTRIENT REQUIREMENT											
POUNDS PER 100 SQUARE FEET						POUNDS PER 1,000 SQUARE FEET					
Lime	Nitrogen (N)	Phosphorus (P2O5)	Potassium (K2O)	Magnesium (Mg)	Sulfur (S)	Lime	Nitrogen (N)	Phosphorus (P2O5)	Potassium (K2O)	Magnesium (Mg)	Sulfur (S)
0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4	0	0	0	0
SUGGESTED FERTILIZER APPLICATION											
NPK FERTILIZER GRADE		DESCRIPTION		ANNUAL APPLICATION RATE							
Option 1	4-0-0	46-0-0 Urea		lbs per 100 sq. ft.	lbs per 1,000 sq. ft.						
OR				0.9	OR 9.0						
Option 2				0.0	OR 0.0						
COMMENTS											
Use the fertilizer listed above or another of similar NPK analysis. Apply the recommended amount in the late fall or early spring. Spread evenly and mix into the top 3 to 4 inches of soil around the base of the shrubs without disturbing the roots. Avoid fertilizer application after July 1st, since late growth is more susceptible to winter injury.											
<i>Sample taken from north border (South side) 2/05</i>											
SEE ENCLOSED INTERPRETIVE GUIDE FOR EXPLANATION OF SOIL TEST RESULTS											

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