



WE GO GARDENING

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

Volume 9 Issue 2 February 2006

Inside this issue

Events Outside the Club	2
Calendar of Events 2006	3
ASK Websites from Michael Horsley	4
Wallo' Water	5
Lou Horton's review of Hydrangea Talk	6

Next Meeting

Thursday, February 23

Speaker: Greg Bartoshuk

"Perfect Perennials for Perpetual Color for Real Lazy Gardeners"

6:45 Sharing Time

7:15 Business Meeting

7:30 Speaker

Come at 6:45 for refreshments

sharing table and conversation.

Capturing the beauty that is right out your back door

by Judy Knaak

Photography and gardening, two pastimes that I love almost as much as breathing and sleeping, were combined in an informative presentation at the January meeting. Guest speaker Eila Grahn, former photographer for Ball Seed, gave a well planned Power Point presentation, organized but with ample flexibility to respond to impromptu questions. Here is what I learned and affirmed.

Equipment: Grahn recommends Fuji film (in general) for garden photos because it develops well the color green. She said Kodak is better for blues. Her favorite film speed is 100 ASA for greater color saturation. A monopod, like a tripod, is designed to reduce camera jiggle and improve focus clarity, but the monopod is more practical in various landscape conditions. Positioning a reflector at the correct angle can bounce extra light into darker areas of your scene. White posterboard or foamboard will work for this purpose. A diffuser is a type of "umbrella" that keeps direct sunlight from your subject, evening out the lighting. Eila uses and recommends both traditional and digital cameras. The only thing that matters, she said, is what style and features are most important to you. "Be comfortable with your camera."

Timing: With outdoor photography of any kind, it is important to observe the lighting conditions that evolve through the day in your various garden "scenes." Keep a garden journal, noting what time of day is best for what areas of your yard. In general, morning and evening bring softer, slanting light and are favorable to good photography. The time right before or right after a storm can be especially beautiful. Most of all, keep your

camera in a handy place for those unexpected opportunities.

Lighting: Clouds can naturally diffuse direct sunlight on a bright, partly cloudy day if you are patient (timing again). If you are shooting into the sun to get the effect of backlighting, remember to watch out for solar flares in your viewfinder. If possible, try to position your hand to cast a shadow on the camera lens – and at the same time stay out of the picture! (Experiment!)

Composition: Take a good hard look at the scene you are trying to capture and remove anything that doesn't "go" with it: litter, tools, etc., (grooming). An element in your garden can be used to frame the rest of the photo around (the focal point). Garden scenes that include a pathway or a fence line or anything that gives a sense of direction will draw the viewer's eye into the photo. Look for an interesting effect by taking the picture from up high or by getting down at eye level with your subject. Color balance in photography is using your own judgment in what you think looks good - just like in gardening.

Eila closed her presentation with the reminder that beauty can be found in our gardens during every season of the year. Thanks to her presentation, we gardeners will be better prepared to preserve and share that beauty.

(Note: Eila Grahn is the daughter of a landscape architect, a free-lance photographer and a polished speaker on a wide range of topics. For more information, call: 630.272.4447.)



Upcoming events (outside the club)

The Growing Place — Thursday, 3/30 — "Garden Travelogue" 9:30-11:30 am Free Aurora Location. Saturday and Sunday, 4/8 & 4/9 Spring Festival at Aurora location. Visit www.thegrowingplace.com for details.

Platt Hill Nursery— Saturday, 3/4 "Design a Perennial Garden" 10 am Free; Saturday, 3/11 "Shade Gardening" 10 am Free; Saturday, March 18 "Create a Moss Hanging Basket" \$49.95 10 am.

Heinz Brothers Greenhouse Garden Center — Saturday 3/4 "Cactus Gardening" 10-11:00 am Fee \$10. Saturday, 3/25 "Improving Your Home Landscaping" 10-11:00 am Fee \$10. Saturday, 3/25 "Start Your Garden from Seeds!" 1-2:00 pm Fee \$10. Register by calling 377-6288 or emailing Heinz at: info@heinzbrothers.com

Chicago Garden and Flower Show — Saturday, March 11 to Sunday, March 19, Navy Pier. Admission: Adults \$12 weekdays, \$14 weekends.

RIDES!!!

Need a ride to the meeting?

Call

Linda Harlson

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By the Wednesday before the meeting.

DUES are DUE

Garden Club dues are payable by the February meeting. If you haven't paid yet (think members presale for the Plant Sale) bring your dues to the meeting or mail them today.

Potting Party

Saturday , April 8 2006

Bernice McFarland has agreed to host our potting parties again this year. We have scheduled our first and **most important** one for **Saturday, April 8th**. We're giving you lots of warning so you can put the date on your calendars to be certain you are free and available that day. We need to get our plants potted up as early as possible so they are well established by the Plant Sale.

Remember, we can also pot members plants that have been dug and divided at these parties so plan to bring your contributions if you don't feel up to doing the potting yourself.

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.bwdarra.com/wcgarden

Membership information

Dues for 2005:

Individual: \$15

Family: \$25

2005 board

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

Vice President:

Billie Childress (630) 231-1791
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Dick Darrah (630) 584-1900
info@bwdarra.com

Garden Walk Chairs

Lou Horton (630) 293-7735
Sam Childress (630) 231-1791

Madeleine Bartsch (porch chair)

Calendar of events 2006

Date	Speaker	Topic
February 23	Greg Bartoshuk	Perfect Perennials for Perpetual Color for Real Lazy Gardeners
March 23	Ed Max	Landscaping for Fall Foliage
April 8	POTTING PARTY	
April 27	Lou Horton	Companion Shade Plants for Hostas
May 20	PLANT SALE!	
Many 25	Jan Calhoun—Ball Seed	New Annuals
June 3	FIELD TRIP	Songsparrow Farm
June 22	Joel Barezak	Blumen Gardens (meeting there)
June 25	GARDEN WALK	
July 27	President's Potluck & Woody Imberman	Food and Company Lilies
August 24		Water Container Gardens
September 28	Susan Grupp	Integrated Pest Management
October 26	Sam the Tool Man	Caring for your Tools
November 16	Elections & Potluck	Member Sharing

Reminders

Babysitting—The Club provides babysitting during its regular monthly meetings when held at First Congregational Church. There is no fee to us the service, but if you plan to use it, please call **Linda Harlson** at 293-1057, so we can plan for the right number of children .

Guests and Visitors are always welcome. Members are encouraged to bring a friend or neighbor.



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ASK Our Gardeners

Master Gardener and Garden Club Member Michael Horsley offers two suggestions for websites that you might want to look at.

Www.gardeninginstitute.com which is part of the extension outreach of Michigan State University. Michael noted a free "Seed Starting" course was being offered via internet. The course quickly

filled, but he recommends as "worth being among your favorites." It regularly offers online gardening classes.

Www.kew.org.site. Is the second site he recommends. This is the website for Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in England.

Shirley Remes to speak at the Chicago Flower & Garden Show at 2 p.m. on March 17

Shirley is a member of our club. Her topic is "No More Pink Flamingos: How to Decorate Your Garden with Style". The lecture is FREE with admittance to the Flower & Garden Show. Shirley encourages all members to come to the show that day... and attend her lecture.

Remember to Save STAMPS

The West Chicago Garden Club decided to take part in the Illinois Audubon Society's stamp project.

Save your commemorative stamps, large denomination stamps and bring them to our meetings. The stamps are more valuable if you leave include the full postmark in what you cut out or at least a 1/4 inch border on all sides. The money generated from the stamps goes toward the purchase of land to protect Illinois wildlife.



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Wallo'Water By Dick Darrah

I have been using the Wallo'Water plant protectors in my garden for a few years now and I'm really pleased with the results.

Wallo'Water plant protectors allow you to get tender plants in the ground early in the year so you get a jump on our growing season. I have used them primarily for vegetables (tomatoes and hot peppers), but they can also be used for flowering plants. **By using Wallo'Water I put my tomatoes in the ground by April 1st and have fruit to eat in June.**

Wallo'Water works by first heating the soil so you can plant and then keeps the plant environment warm, even with below freezing temperatures, snow, sleet and our normal mid-west weather.

Interested? Good! West Chicago Garden Club is an authorized dealer in Illinois for Wallo'Water and we will be buying some for re-sale at the Plant Sale and maybe even the Garden Walk. If members are interested in buying some to try we'll be able to give you a really good price – we can discuss this more at our February meeting or you can call me at my office during the week 630 584-1900.

Lou Horton's Review Contd.

Pruning recommendations

Climbing- After flowering, seldom is heavy pruning needed.

Annabelle types- Cut to ground in the spring for best flowering.

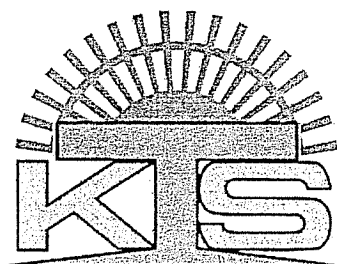
Panicle types- Remove old flowers in spring before leaf emergence.

Oakleaves- Prune after flowers fade.

Glenn Herold's presentation, was, in short, all the gardener ever needed to know about Hydrangeas but didn't know who to ask. A great job by a knowledgeable speaker.

Glenn Herold is a Professor of Ag & Industrial Technology at Illinois Central College

Editor's Note: This lecture was presented at the Annual Winter Meeting of the Midwest Hosta Society.



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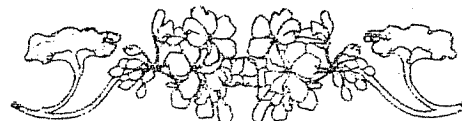
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Glenn Herold 's Winter Scientific Meeting Presentation Hydrangeas for the Garden

Reviewed by Lou Horton

Because he is a horticultural instructor, one might expect Glenn Herold's presentation on the family of woody shrubs known as Hydrangeas to be slanted toward the technical. Instead, we were treated to Glenn's wit and to his common sense insights about Hydrangeas with an emphasis on the practical information useful to the gardener, not the scientist.

He began by getting right to the one factor in any specie or variety of Hydrangea that should matter to anyone growing them in Zones 4 or 5- *do flower buds form on new wood?* If only old wood (that formed during the previous growing season) will produce the flower buds, (which are frequently killed during our winters) the frequent result is that there are no flowers the following summer. As Glenn went through the various species, he consistently pointed out which could be depended upon to flower because they flowered on new wood. He also shared his personal observations of their performance in either his home garden or the garden he supervises at Ill Central College.

What follows are assessments of the garden value of the species of Hydrangeas:

Hydrangea anomala petiolaris - The Climbing Hydrangea Flowers originate from old wood but are reliably hardy (will flower) in Zone 4-5. They are slow to establish but are very impressive in flower once they are established. They will climb thirty feet or more into trees or onto other structures using aerial rootlets called holdfasts. Flowers are white and are composed of flat groups of small florets surrounded by larger sterile bracts. Be aware that mature plants can become very heavy. There is a new variegated form called 'Miranda'. Early reports on 'Miranda' are good.

Hydrangea arborescens- Smooth Hydrangea This type flowers on new wood and is in fact native to much of our area. There are two subspecies. The cultivar 'Annabelle' is by far the most popular and garden worthy of the *arborescens* family, featuring very large snow white mophead type flower heads. Subspecies *radiata* differs in that the backsides of its leaves are white. Cultivar 'White Dome' features lacecap flower clusters.

Hydrangea macrophylla- the Bigleaf Hydrangea Commonly seen but not reliably hardy in Zone 5. 'Nikko Blue' was the most popular variety until the introduction of 'Endless Summer' which has been proven to flower on new wood even when the plant had been cut to the ground. The mophead florets can be pink or blue in color, depending upon the amount of aluminum contained in the surrounding soil.

Hydrangea paniculata- Panicle Hydrangea These feature large flat or cone shaped flower clusters white in color produced in late summer. The most popular types include 'Pee Gee' (stands for *paniculata grandiflora*) and 'Limelight' There is also 'Pee Wee' which is much shorter (6-8 ft.) than 'PeeGee' which matures at 10 feet or more. In Glenn's opinion, the best of all is 'Unique', which features large clusters of pure white florets. The florets of 'Pink Diamond' start out white and turn a rich pink in the fall. 'Tardiva' is the latest to flower. All of these types are reliably hardy in zone 4 as well as 5.

Hydrangea quercifolia- Oakleaf Hydrangea This specie is perhaps best suited for the shady garden and has the best fall color of any Hydrangea. It can get quite tall (10 feet) and produces its white type flowers which are cone shaped in June.

'Snow Queen' is the best of the large Oakleaves while 'Snow Flake' is a good double flowered version. 'Harmony' is a good choice in a mophead type and 'Syke's Dwarf' is a good recently introduced dwarf version. There is also 'Pee Wee', only 2-3 feet tall but it's blooms tend to flop. Last but not least, there is yellow leafed dwarf type 'Little Honey' which is a sport of 'Pee Wee'.

There are other species of Hydrangea including *serrata* and *heteromalla* but those make relatively poor garden plants in zones 4-5 when compared to those covered.

Contd. Page 5