



# WE GO GARDENING

**Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club**

**Volume 11 Issue 5 May 2008**

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### The Bug Man Cameth!

By Sandy Saad

Again, may I say, WE SURE HAVE GREAT SPEAKERS AT OUR MEETINGS. Dan Costa came to us with the knowledge and confidence of a man on a mission. Feeling so strongly about his ability to help gardeners with their never-ending pest problems, he started his own business. To me, that takes a lot of courage and belief in oneself....Wouldn't you agree?!!!!

Before I go any further, the truth of the matter is that I was not at this particular meeting (Doing that grandparent thing—Babysitting). However, my trustworthy reporters, club secretary, Aimee Townsend and my husband, Mike, passed on some great notes. Dan Costa had a handout which I did not get, but I'm sure it was a "keeper".

The big thing I want to tell you is that with just these notes to go on, I

like this guy and I learned a few truly valuable truths that will help me in my garden immensely.

- - - Isn't it amazing how the simplest and purest way to fix ANY problem is the BEST for our World and its Inhabitants. Being thoughtful of each other and the precious nature that surrounds us will in return feed our hearts and souls and give us PEACE.

Back to Dan Costa's message: **USE PESTICIDES AS A LAST RESORT!!** Margosan O is a good botanical insecticide, says Dan. A good blast from our garden hose might do the trick for those nasty aphids. Plant some Nicotiana flowers with their sticky leaves to catch some bugs. My favorite one is that I will again be able to plant squash—I will just wait till 4th of July when the ground will be warm and the borer beetle has already laid her eggs.

**Next Meeting: Thursday, May 22**

**"Herbaceous and Tree Peonies"**

**Speaker: Dave Wanniger** Dave is manager of the wholesale arm of Song Sparrow Nursery which is called Beaver Creek. He has spoken before Master Gardener Conferences, & various plant societies and is very knowledgeable about ornamental plants of all kinds. He is especially well informed about his talk topic, Peonies.

**Join us** at the Faith Community Church at 910 Main Street in West Chicago.  
 6:45pm - sharing time, conversation and refreshments  
 7:15 - brief business meeting  
 7:30 - speaker



## Try These Evergreens for Your Home Landscape

By Lou Horton

As I drive down residential streets in the West Chicago area, one thing strikes me- the vast majority of specimen evergreens in yard after yard are one of two species. Most are either Austrian Pines or Colorado Spruce. Aside from being so common, there are other reasons to avoid these two species.

When they were first planted in large numbers by landscapers 15-20 years ago, Austrian Pines were thought to be ideal for the home landscape because they were relatively tolerant of soil type and PH. It was only after they had become very popular that arborists realized that these pines were susceptible to various fungal diseases, most notably Diplodia tip blight. Because the trees were so numerous, the blight easily spread from one area to the next. The Colorado Spruce is an especially handsome conifer and the blue colored varieties are especially striking. Unfortunately, when planted in our area, this Spruce must contend with soil and climate conditions that are foreign to it. That makes it more vulnerable to insect attack and disease than it would be in its home range.

I would like to suggest some alternatives that not only will fulfill the same basic functions in the landscape as the two mentioned above (large specimen trees) but are not likely to be found in every yard in the neighborhood. All handle the urban landscape well and are not particularly sensitive to soil PH variations. Except as noted, all require full sun.

The first is the Concolor Fir (*Abies concolor*). It is an attractive tree similar in color to the Blue Spruce but the needles are softer to the touch. Even though it is native to the western U.S. it probably handles the Midwest climate better than any other Fir. It will attain a size of 50 feet and a spread of 25 feet but it is considered a slow grower.

The second suggestion I offer is the Limber Pine (*Pinus flexilis*). It has a somewhat more narrow profile than the Concolor Fir and features a dark green color that is very attractive. It gets its common name from the flexibility of its branches which makes it more tolerant of wind than most evergreens. It will attain a mature height of 50 feet but is considered a slow grower.

For Spruce lovers, consider the Serbian Spruce (*Picea omorika*). This Spruce will handle more shade than any other Spruce (it still needs a few hours of sun per day) and can handle some drought once it is established. It matures in the 60 ft. range and is considered a slow to medium grower.

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If one desires an evergreen tree that is a fast grower and is useful as a screen or as a specimen, consider the Norway Spruce. Do not plant this tree close to the house as it attains a mature height of 100 feet. Also, plant these at least 30 feet apart as a screen as they get very wide at the base with age. These trees can grow at a rate of 1-2 feet a year once they are established.



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**Club information**

West Chicago Garden Club  
 P. O. Box 313  
 West Chicago, IL 60186  
 (630) 585-4005

www.westchicagogardenclub.org

**Membership information**

Dues for 2008:  
 Individual: \$15  
 Family: \$25

**2008 board**

President:  
 Mark Luther (630) 876-1296  
 mark@markluther.com

Vice President:  
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Plant Sale Chair:  
 Dick Darrah (630) 584-1900  
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**Regular meeting location**

Faith Community Church  
 910 Main Street  
 West Chicago

**Calendar of events - 2008**

Date	Speaker	Topic
May 22	Dave Wanniger	Herbaceous and tree peonies
June 26	Lou Horton	Underused ornamental trees
July 24	None	President's dinner
August 3		Secret Garden at Kruse House
August 28	Mary Russell	New and underused perennials
September 25	Katrina Lewin	Woodies 101
October 23	Karen Caldwell	Making gourds into birdhouses
November 20	Elections & Potluck	Member Sharing and brainstorming

**Reminders**

**Babysitting**—The Club provides babysitting during its regular monthly meetings when held at Faith Community Church. There is no fee to you for the service, but if you plan to use it, please **call Linda Harlson** at 377-5750, 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.

**Rides**— Need a ride to the meeting? Call **Billie Childress** at 231-1791 by the Wednesday before the meeting.

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## News and Announcements

**Plant Sale:** The sale is over and we all look forward to some comments from Dick Darrah and Dan Beebe on how we did.

**Editors Comments on the Plant Sale:** It was so noticeable that our members were truly, truly helpful to our customers with questions. I found myself listening in and hopefully learning. You know, I felt so proud to be part of this group.

**New Members:** Michael and Sharon Mason joined our club in April. And, at our plant sale, three people joined our club—Jessica Cerepa, Marilyn Santos McNabb, and Mary Passini. Please stop by to introduce yourself and make all our new members feel welcome.

**Hypertufa:** Gee Whiz!! What a fun project this was. The folks at Planters Palette were amazingly helpful teachers (3 or 4 of them for 12 students). Dee Soustek and myself left the class with our HYPERTUFA container still "curing" in the mold. Thanks Lou for setting up this opportunity. We're both glad we went.

**Door Prize:** Aimee Townsend's name was picked and she took home an outstanding book on container planting. A great coffee table book! Thanks to Billie Childress for donating it.

**The Best Treats in Town:** June Luther and Barb Darrah brought treats for the April meeting. Of course, there was nothing left at the end of the night.

**Manure:** During the plant sale, Debbie Moore offered a continuous supply of horse manure to our members for composting or just soil enrichment. She said she has some well rotted piles that can be added direct to the soil and she always has the fresher stuff that is great to add to compost piles. Members can call her to arrange a pick-up if they like. Her cell phone is 630 460 6958 and she lives on Waynewood in West Chicago. Thanks to Dick Darrah for passing on this tip. Now all we need is a truck to haul this brown gold!!

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News from Kruse

Glorious spring weather brought the dazzling grape hyacinths and daffodils to the Kruse House garden. It was exciting and gorgeous to behold but it wasn't sad to see them fade since the colorful tulips, white, purple and lavender lilacs, and plum colored dwarf bearded iris were right behind them. Most of the tulips in the garden are old ones rescued from the lawn. When tulip leaves were spotted in the grass a careful excavation took place. Usually the old tulip bulbs were deeply buried and were small but when placed in a garden bed and given a few years to recover the unique heirloom bulbs have flourished bringing more blooms each year. There are still tulip leaves to be seen in the grass, and if anyone is interested in rescuing these precious bulbs it would be an honorable thing to do.


As we prepare this report, the garden parade keeps marching on and the columbines and spirea are in front of the judge's stand now. I'd give them a blue ribbon!

Even while all these wonderful plants are busy performing, there is a low rumble heard from the ever-obnoxious weeds we try to keep under control. We got a huge boost to accomplish that from the gigantic load of premium special double ground mulch that Kramer Tree Service donated. Thank you Kramer Tree Service! Also thanks to Mark, Dick, Pamela, Dee and Barbara who helped distribute all that mulch.

The other big ongoing event in the garden is the shrub and tree installation. Meyer Landscaping came and planted the beautiful Dawn Redwood tree they donated in the back yard. It's just the ticket! Many thanks to Meyer Landscaping for their generosity! It's a fast grower and is good size already! Vibunum, mockorange, kerria and boxwood shrubs have also been planted and we still have more to put in!

More good news.....we have a Director of Waste Management! Sandy Saad volunteered to pick up the trash that frequently finds its way into the garden. Already there is a noticeable difference in the appearance of the garden. Plants never look too good with a plastic bag draped over them or paper hiding them. Thanks ever so much Sandy!


Submitted by our Kruse House Garden Coordinators: Billie and Angie



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**MORE NOTES**

**Window to West Chicago:** YES, you get this in your mailbox if you live in West Chicago. Did you notice **THE SECRET GARDEN AT THE KRUSE HOUSE** — an Open House and Garden Party on Sunday August 3rd! This a first time effort and it will be colossal I'm sure. When I joined the club 5 years ago, that Kruse House Garden "was nothing to write home about". Since then an irrigation system has been added, weeds too many to count have been yanked, perennials, shrubs and trees have been added and the pond has been given some badly needed TLC. Lots of Love, Sweat and Planning by a small handful of our club members who have committed themselves to this project made it happen. Just wait till you see that Secret Garden unveiled on August 3rd.

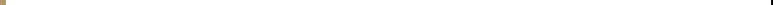
**By the Way:** If a call goes out for help in getting the Secret Garden "spruced up". Go over and help and you'll see what I'm talking about. Get an early preview and we'll put your name on the list of SWEATEES!

**RAILROAD DAYS:** July 10-13 in West Chicago is a big deal. We had a booth last year that "went over like a lead balloon". So, what do you think of our participating in the parade this year?? Well, your friendly volunteer chairman (me, with my big mouth) thinks we should get some more club tee shirts and get together with our wheelbarrows and garden carts full of soil, mulch and plants....add some banners and WA-LA we'll look like the proud, standup club we are in full-color and full-bloom. More to come.....

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