



WE GO GARDENING

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

Volume 9 Issue 11 November 2006

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The boughs of a mighty oak are roaring inside every acorn shell.

From the *Hosta Journal*

Sam was "sharp as a tack"!

by Sandy Saad

At our last meeting, we enjoyed Sam the Tool Man's Show. And, he is a showman! He was accompanied by his wife and assistant, Lenore. She let it slip that they would celebrate their 60th wedding anniversary the very next day, which drew lots of applause and cheers

Our tool man started out as a master gardener and has volunteered at the school of the Chicago Botanic Garden for 11 years now. He enjoys talking with visitors to the vegetable garden there and showing them how to take care of their garden tools. Soon, he was getting calls to take his tool info show on the road for clubs such as ours, and, a star was born.

Sam is a spunky fellow, full of wit and wisdom. He has raised garden beds due to the extreme clay on his property. Tip: Vary the depth every time you rototill. Sam is a hard act to follow as he tells us that he cleans and sharpens his tools every time he uses them. Wow, was I impressed! More Tips: Got rust-use CLR or naval jelly. Clean blades with a spray of WD-40 or fish oil, allow to sit and then scour with a brass brush or 3M pad. Preserve wood handles

on shovels, loppers, etc.: clean, dry, sand lightly, apply a coat of boiled linseed oil and wipe off.

Moving on, SHARPENING is what Sam is a master of. Displaying his long, hand file and a set of diamond files, he demonstrated how to hold the files at the right angle to sharpen shovel and trowel blades. Some of our members even got their pruning shears sharpened right then and there. Sam brought 15-20 of his favorite tools and they are all must-haves. There was a special comment on each one, especially how to sharpen and care for it. The dibble, which he made himself 'cause he's an old tool and die guy, is great for planting alliums and onion sets. Do you have a garden weasel? It's definitely a must-have and it's now on my Xmas wish list. I hope someone helped them up the stairs with their tools.

Lenore passed out Sam's rules for sharpening. They also had Felco pruners for purchase (the very best, says Sam). He will sharpen your knives and tools for a fee. Sam and Lenore Darin (847) 679-8392.

Next Meeting: Thursday, November 16

POTLUCK AND ELECTIONS

Come for Supper and stay for sharing and brainstorming

PLEASE BRING A DISH TO PASS — to feed 4-6 people.

Try to be there by 6:30, if you can, and we'll begin eating at 6:45.

The club will provide Fried Chicken (hot and juicy), plates, silverware and beverages.

Join us at the First Congregational Church at the corner of Neltnor (Rt. 59) and Grove Sts.

6:45 - Time to Eat

7:30 - Elections, Sharing and Brainstorming



Upcoming events (outside the club)

Blumen Gardens in Sycamore (815) 895-3737 — Brochure with more info at the potluck or call them.

Blumen Gardens Holiday Shop opens on Friday, November 17 (opening day hours are 9am to 8pm)

Workshop—Thanksgiving into Winter Centerpiece, Saturday, November 18 at 10 am, fee \$38.00.

Workshop—Artistic Holiday Wreaths, Sunday, November 26, at 2pm, fee \$40.00..

Workshop—Holiday Arrangements (inside or outside), Saturday, December 9 at 10am, fee \$50.00.

Ladies Night Out (wine, nibbles and a gift to take home) Friday, December 1, 5-8pm

The Growing Place (advertiser) 355-4000 Call for further information or to register.

The Holiday Shop is open in Naperville now until December 23rd., Monday-Saturday 9am-4pm.

Workshop—Make a Wreath, Swag &/or Container on December 2 and 4 at 9:30am

Heinz Bros. Greenhouse (advertiser) (630) 377-6288

Winter Containers to last till March, Fee is \$15 plus the 10", 12" 14" container on 11/30 at 6-7pm, 12/2 from 10-11am and 12/9 from 10-11am.

Wreath Decorating (24" wreath) Program fee is \$10 and \$50 for wreath and accessories, 12/5 from 6-7pm, 12/14 from 6-7pm.

Evergreen Door (Swag) Decoration, Program fee is \$10 plus \$25 for materials, 12/7 from 6-7pm.

Table Centerpiece , Program fee \$10 plus fee for materials, 12/12 from 6-7, 12/16 from 10-11am.

HOLIDAY AMARYLIS—Bulbs will bloom 4 to 6 weeks after planting. Select a heavy, squat pot, plant bulb in a soilless mix with the upper half of bulb above the soil surface. Water well, put in warm room with indirect light. When growth begins, move to a sunny spot. Rotate pot to prevent flower stalks from leaning toward the light. Use decorative branches to stake top-heavy plants. To keep the bulb viable for next year, fertilize with a balanced (10-10-10) formula after flowering. Keep bulb and its foliage in bright indirect light and well-watered during summer. In fall, bring bulb indoors, let it go dormant for 6 wks. by gradually withholding water and light. Start the flowering process again in late fall.



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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 2006:

Individual: \$15

Family: \$25

2006 board

President:

Linda Harlson (630) 377-5750
ashengal@prodigy.net

Vice President:

Billie Childress (630) 231-1791
billiedc@sbcglobal.net

Treasurer:

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

Secretary

Angie Sadauskas (630) 231-5851

Information Director

Sandy Saad (630) 653-1350
mwsaad@comcast.net

Plant Sale Chair

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)

Regular meeting location

First Congregational Church
525 N. Neltnor (Rt. 59)
West Chicago

Calendar of events - 2006

Date	Speaker	Topic
November 16	Elections & Potluck	Member Sharing and brainstorming

Reminders

Babysitting—The Club provides babysitting during its regular monthly meetings when held at First Congregational Church. There is no fee to us 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 **Linda Harlson** at 377-5750 by the Wednesday before the meeting.

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Notes and Announcements

Come and Vote for our New 2007 Officers: This will be such a pleasant contrast in voting compared to what we did on November 7. Come and pat our new officers on the back and give them your support. The slate of officers for 2007 are: President—Mark Luther, Vice-president—Linda Harlson, Secretary—Aimee Townsend, and Treasurer—John Warbiany.

Speaking of Officers—Heads Up: Linda Harlson is putting out a plea for someone to take on the position of vice-president of our club. She recently realized that she has been an officer for 6 years and at this time in her life, she feels overwhelmed. Is there someone out there who would step up and help her out. Of course, you know Linda, she would hold your hand till you were on your own two feet. A great deal of her list keeping and membership records have been taken over by another generous person.

No more Kruse Work Days: Our last Kruse House Day was on October 28. When I stopped by at 10am to leave a plant for the garden, Dan Beebe, Angie Sadauskas and Chuck Schramer were slaving away. Honestly, bum knee or not, I felt embarrassed to be leaving them without lifting a finger to help. I vow that next year I will be a worker bee!!!!

Electronic newsletters: Sign up to receive this newsletter electronically. See the story on page 3.

Save Your Stamps: I've been remiss in asking you to save any commemorative, large denomination and foreign stamps you might come across. Leave a good border around the stamp and bring them to a meeting.

Our New Club Historian: Billie Childress would greatly appreciate any newspaper articles, or anything club related that you might be holding onto. She will archive all these items in such a way that it we'll have a record of our efforts throughout the years.

The West Chicago Historical Society's Annual Meeting on Nov. 9: There was a good representation from our garden club to receive a hearty "Thank You and We Love What You Are Doing In The Garden!" That garden has come a long way Baby!!!!



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A leaf falls in Oak Park and lands in Kendall County

By Jason George
 Tribune staff reporter
 November 7, 2006

In the spring, the leaves budding on Bob Stefanski's maple trees promised new life. In the summer, they cooled and shaded his Oak Park back yard. In the fall, they shimmered as they swirled toward the ground. And then, they were trash. But even as their journey from branch to curb came to an unceremonious end, Stefanski's leaves were only beginning their odyssey--a dizzying middle-of-the-night relay involving 10 trucks and bulldozers that would take them nearly 60 miles from an Oak Park address to a sprawling Kendall County farm that soon will be awash in enough leaves to blanket the entire Loop.

They were welcomed at their new rural home by Don Hamman, a man who finds green in the 60 semitruckloads of brown and golden leaves that arrive at his farm each day. At first glance Hamman and Stefanski seem worlds apart. Stefanski is a suburban bank employee with a tidy lawn. Hamman drives a muddy pickup truck, comes from a prosperous farming family and calls his 2,200-acre spread "a bit of land." But in the leaf world the men are interconnected.

Ever since municipalities began banning leaf burning in the 1970s, and concerns have grown about landfill space, what to do with fallen leaves has become an increasingly vexing question. Since 1994, Oak Park, which boasts more than 20,000 trees on its parkways alone, has provided one of the area's largest leaf collection programs. For eight weeks every year the village encourages residents to sweep their leaves into the streets, where workers push and sweep them into piles that Waste Management employees later collect and truck away. Jose Hernandez is one such "pusher," directing a pickup truck outfitted with a large dustpan-like device that corrals the leaves into piles, which can grow taller than street signs. Working at night, and aided by empty streets and classic rock on the radio, Hernandez started a pile in front of Stefanski's house one day last week, around midnight. From there he guided the truck and began building an impressive hill that any self-respecting kid would have dreams of jumping into.

Piling up so many leaves can be dusty work, which is why Hernandez sometimes wears a painter's mask when cruising down the boulevards. Dry leaves, however, beat the alternative. We don't like wet leaves," said Karen Rozmus, waste reduction manager for the village's public works, who explained that soggy, limp leaves are heavier and more difficult to collect. She said a good pile of dry Oak Park leaves is a tough thing to beat. The farmers love Oak Park leaves because they're so clean," she said. That's a bit of civic cheerleading, but the declaration is actually based in fact. Oak Park is among seven towns of approximately 100 northern Illinois municipalities for which Waste Management has a yard waste contract, where the leaves are picked up directly off the street and taken to farms to be composted, said Tim Kuerschner, Waste Management's metro district manager. Outside of Oak Park, where leaves go depends largely on the municipality. Illinois towns may send leaves to landfills, have private companies compost them or compost them themselves. In Chicago, leaves collected by street sweepers are too dirty to be composted and are instead taken to landfills, said Matt Smith, spokesman for the city's Department of Streets and Sanitation. Yard waste and leaves placed in recycling bags are taken to Allied Waste facilities and later composted.

Continued on page 6

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Oak Park Leaves—Continued from page 5

As daylight came on Oak Park last week, Waste Management workers loaded the piles Hernandez made into a garbage truck, which transported the load to a transfer station in Stickney. There, as sea gulls pecked at mountains of garbage in the background, leaves were dumped off the truck and then re-loaded along with others into a semitruck trailer. On any given fall day, leaves from 10 other west and southwest suburbs could be mixed in with those from the Oak Park lot, and the average load of leaves on the semis is about 18 tons. At that point the 55-mile journey begins to Hamman's farm, near Yorkville. About 95 percent of the leaves that arrive at the Stickney transfer site make the trip to Hamman's farm. Hamman said he is paid to receive about 200,000 cubic yards annually of leaves and yard waste at the "farm," which was created to accept the urban refuse. It has not been without its critics since opening about 15 years ago, and the biggest complaint has been that the yard waste sometimes smells. The loads come from companies such as Waste Management and directly from cities such as Aurora. A big grinder named Hogzilla shreds the leaves like tobacco, and then another bulldozer--the fourth and final in the journey from Oak Park--moves the steaming compost to a manure truck that then spreads the ground-up leaves over fields of winter wheat. The leaves, in a matter of 12 hours, have come a long way from getting stuck in Stefanski's rake. The Oak Park resident marveled at the process. The news, unfortunately, did little to lessen his load.

"I've probably got about three more hours of work to do out there," Stefanski huffed. "I call it an act of sore muscles."

Triple-Layer Bulbs

Sean Conway—a garden and outdoor product designer for Target and the host of public television's *Cultivating Life*—recommends layering bulbs in containers each fall. "That's how I get more blooms in less space for a longer time in the spring."

TIPS FROM A PRO

- Select a 14-inch or larger pot with a drainage hole. Fill pot halfway with packaged potting soil.
- Add bulbs and soil in layers, following the illustration, left.
- Water thoroughly. Keep outside in temperatures above 25°F, or in an unheated garage until spring.
- Add water as needed to maintain constantly moist soil.
- When spring initiates growth, move to a sunny spot outdoors to enjoy the blooms.

ILLUSTRATION: STEPHEN GARDNER; GARDEN TOOLS: ANDY LYONS

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