



WE GO GARDENING

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

www.westchicagogardenclub.org

Volume 17 Issue 4 April 2013

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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 and no reservations are necessary.

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

April 25th Meeting: "New and Unusual" with Meagan Provencher of Wasco Nursery



Meagan is the Senior Landscape Designer for Wasco Nursery and Garden Center in St.

Charles. She has a BS in Horticulture/Ag Business and has been a designer for 20 years. She's an Illinois Certified Nursery Professional with designations in Woody and Perennial Identification—one of only a handful in the state of Illinois with both designations. She has extensive knowledge of plant material and prides herself on her creative and unique landscape designs. Meagan lives in Geneva with her husband, Ben, a Biology teacher at St. Charles East High School, and her two boys, Sam and Henry.

Faith Community Church at 910 Main Street in West Chicago

6:45 - refreshments and gathering

7:00 - brief business meeting

7:15 - speaker

Next Meeting: Thursday, May 23rd:

"Low Maintenance" with Dave Wanninger



LOOK FOR NEW MEMBER Kerry Perry AT THE APRIL MEETING!



Upcoming events (outside the club)

Cantigny: Greenhouse Open House. Sunday, May 5, 10:00 AM—3:00 PM. Free event, parking fee waived.

Growing Place: Right Plant + Right Place = Low Maintenance. April 27, 10:00 AM. Aurora. Herbal Potting Party. May 4, 1PM—3PM. Both Locations. Cost of materials. Bountiful Blooms. May 11, 1PM—3PM. Both Locations. To register, call 630-355-4000.

Heinz Brothers Greenhouse: Plant Up Your Own Water Garden Bowl! Saturday, May 25, 10:00 AM—10:30 AM, St. Charles, \$45 (includes water bowl, one floating water plant, and three potted water plants, soil, and fertilizer).

Chicago Botanic Garden: Spring Garden Walks. Saturdays, May 4, 11, and 18. 1:00 PM. Butterflies & Blooms, a butterfly exhibition where visitors can immerse themselves in a habitat filled with hundreds of live butterflies, opens May 25.



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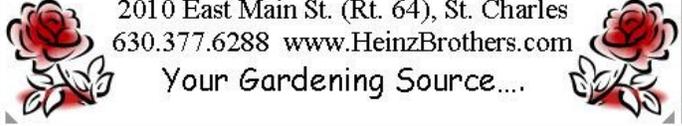
You're invited to come explore, get inspired, learn and add some beauty to your garden at



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Club information

www.westchicagogardenclub.org
 West Chicago Garden Club
 P. O. Box 313, West Chicago, IL 60186
westchicagogardenclub@gmail.com

Membership information

Dues for 2013: Individual: \$15 Family: \$25

Board Meetings

2nd Thursday each month at 7 p.m.

Regular meeting location

Faith Community Church
 910 Main Street, West Chicago

2013 WCGC BOARD:

- President:
Keith Letsche 630-293-0192
- Vice President:
Dick Darrah 630-584-1900, info@bwdarrah.com
- Treasurer:
Barb Darrah 630-584-1900, info@bwdarrah.com
- Secretary:
open
- Program Co-Chairs:
Pauline Briggs 630-545-2234, pmbriggs@juno.com
June Luther 630-876-1295, june@markluther.com
- Information Director & Publicity:
Melissa Birch, 630-621-0128, melissabirch@gmail.com



Planned WCGC Events - 2013

Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event	Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event
24 Jan	Nancy Schumm-Burgess	Pioneer Gardens	27 Jun	Bill Scheffler	Yogurt, Vinegar & Lawn Care
28 Feb	The Growing Place	Vegetables	25 Jul	All members	President's Picnic
28 Mar	James Rowan	Don't Squash That Bug	22 Aug	TBA	Monarch Magic
25 Apr	Wasco Nursery	New & Unusual	26 Sep	June & Pauline	Bulb Bingo
18 May	ALL MEMBERS!	PLANT SALE!	24 Oct	Bill Karges	Fall Garden Prep
23 May	Dave Wanninger	Low Maintenance	21 Nov	All members	Dinner & Garden Dollar Auction

PLANT SALE NEEDS

Potting Parties—Saturday, April 20th and 27th 9am—noon and Sunday, May 5th, 1—4pm

Meet at Kress Creek Farms (formerly Manville Oaks) Barn 30W150 Wilson Rd, West Chicago
Call or e-mail Billie if you can help [630-231-1791](tel:630-231-1791) or billiedc@sbcglobal.net

Sale Set-Up and Sale Day Tasks—Sign up at the April meeting!

Set-Up: load plants, transport plants, set up plants

Sale Day: cashiers, assist customers with questions, supervise plant holding area

...and more! **PLEASE SIGN UP AT THE APRIL MEETING!**



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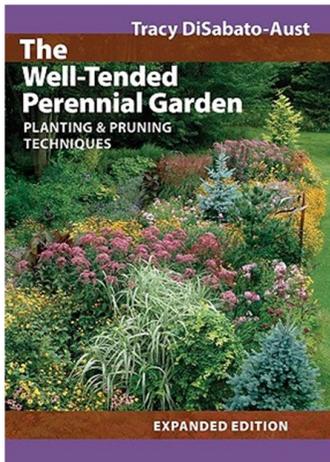
Aurora...630.820.8088
 2000 Montgomery Rd, 2 blks north of Ogden Ave
thegrowingplace.com



News from Kruse

by Billie Childress & Angie Sadauskas

Spring was slow to arrive to the Kruse garden. So rather than talk of what may be sprouting in the garden let's look forward and ask some questions. In August are the sedums flopping in your garden? Are the groundcovers messy and weed infested? Are the summer perennials falling and leaning into each other? Are you so discouraged that you hope for an early frost? If so we want to share some experimentation we have done at the Kruse garden in pruning, shearing, cutting back for height, longer bloom, and flop prevention. It is a garden that has to look reasonably nice with a minimum of care.



We can start with a book. The "Well-Tended Perennial Garden" by Tracy DiSabato-Aust, 1998, is very useful. It provides a guide as in "should we or shouldn't we" shear, prune, or cut. Her motto is "Shear Without Fear." It gives impetus.

*Note: this image is of the cover of the EXPANDED EDITION of the **Well-Tended Perennial Garden** by Tracy DiSabato-Aust published in 2006.*

To start, a lawn mower or string trimmer is wonderful for cutting spent flowers of Ajuga, trimming periwinkle, ivy, winter creeper groundcovers. It could be done any time in the growing season when the groundcovers are too tall or too weedy.

Perennials that grow from bulbs, corms and rhizomes should only be dead-headed. Other perennials that bloom early can be cut back for looks right after flowering. It is best to prune to the very center to the new growth on plants such as Nepeta, Pulmonaria, Lady's Mantle, Euphorbia. The new growth will be very fresh looking and the Nepeta will not reseed as much. Some as Dianthus, Iberis, moss phlox should be sheared by 1/2 after flowering to keep a neat appearance.

Summer flowering perennials can be cut to different heights. Low growing geraniums, as War-graves, can be cut to the ground. Taller geraniums such as Johnson's Blue, Claridge Druse should be trimmed back severally to keep them from looking shabby and leggy. Geraniums such as Roseanne and others that bloom all summer could be cut back prudently, even severely, if they become leggy. Summer blooming perennials can be cut for height control, to stagger or extend the bloom season, to keep plants from flopping. For example, Summer Phlox, Heliopsis, Rudbeckia, esp. Herbstone, Coneflower, Monarda, Aster, Chrysanthemum, and many others can be cut in June when the plant is 1-1/2 feet tall. If the plant is cut down by 1/2-1/3 of its height, the plant will grow 1/2-1/3 of its height shorter. This will only delay the bloom time by 1-2 weeks but the plant will be bushier and may not need staking. If only a section of the plant is cut back, this would extend the bloom time, since the cut section would bloom a bit later. This might be nice where lower growth is desirable, as in front of the border. Tall sedum such as Autumn Joy can also be cut or just a ring around the center can be cut by 1/2 the height. This would extend the bloom time and keep the sedum from flopping, since the cut shorter ring would hold the taller center stalks upright.

In the book, many plants are enumerated, and included is when and how much to prune, and how much the plant will be shorter. We find that just a short time spent shearing in June and trimming throughout the season keeps the plants looking neater, shorter and more floriferous. But remember, prune early so you do not remove flower buds and diminish the floral display.

A & B



PLANT SALE 2013 by Dick Darrah

We got the Plant Sale season off to a rousing start this weekend. On Saturday we had a convoy of 10 cars driving in the SNOW (on April 13th) out to select, load, and deliver plants for the Plant Sale. We don't have a hard count yet, but I wouldn't be surprised if we have near 1000 plants consisting of ground-covers, bushes, and even some trees.

We delivered half of the plants to Pamela & Dan's and the other half to Barbara & Dick's homes where they will be cared for, labeled, and priced for the Plant Sale. This will cause the member's sale to be in multiple locations this year, but we found that trying to cope with everything down at the potting barn was just too much of a chore.

Then on Sunday, a balmy Spring day, we had our first potting party and it was wonderful to have such a big and enthusiastic turnout. We potted up between 250 and 260 plants (most were supplied by Billie and Angie) which are now sitting out catching the fleeting rays of sun and the few drops of rain. We made a real effort to create quality pots that are full of plants that we hope will entice our customers on the day of the sale.

Although it was hard work for a few hours over the weekend it was very fulfilling and I think everyone enjoyed working together. If you haven't signed up for a potting party yet...do so – They're FUN!



Blending together the potting mix and top soil to make a good mix for the plants.



Everything comes together and the plants are placed into their pots and labeled.



Splitting the plants into nice sized chunks for each pot.

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Top Ten Gardening Questions for Spring by Heather Prince of The Growing Place

April showers have brought May flowers and with them, a flood of gardening questions. Here are ten of the most popular ones received at The Growing Place.

When can I plant?

As long as the soil isn't too wet, you can plant. An easy way to tell if your soil is wet is to squeeze a handful. If it sticks together in a clump, it's too wet. If it crumbles easily, dig away!

What can I prune?

Prune early blooming shrubs like forsythia, fothergilla, witchhazel and fragrant viburnum after they finish flowering. They will set new flower buds for next year in the next few weeks, so do it now. Evergreens can be trimmed now, too. Wait to prune elms and oaks until October as insects carrying fungal diseases will be attracted to pruning wounds if branches are cut now.

What about rabbits?

Rabbits are hungry in spring and soon baby bunnies are out and about. The Growing Place carries liquid and granular rabbit repellants. They are all effective, but change your product every two or three years as they will get used to it and start to ignore it. A circle of chicken wire around your plants will keep hungry rabbits at bay.

How can I attract butterflies to my yard?

Adult butterflies prefer drifts of summer-blooming nectar-heavy flowers in sunny spots. Each type of butterfly caterpillar only feeds on a particular plant. Monarch caterpillars, for example, only feed on milkweed plants. Swallowtail caterpillars prefer parsley, fennel and dill.

When can I plant annual flowers?

Now! Most annual flowers are now available for containers and garden beds. They are tropical plants, so are sensitive to cold temperatures. After May 15, there is less likelihood of frost although it is still possible until around Memorial Day. Be ready to listen to the weather and plan to cover warm weather annuals with a sheet or plastic if needed.

When can I plant vegetables?

Cold tolerant vegetables like peas, lettuce and cabbage can be planted now. However, warm weather crops like tomatoes, peppers and eggplant need to wait until the soil is 60 degrees, about mid to late May, or their growth will be stunted.

Are we still in a drought?

No! According to the U.S. Drought Monitor, we are no longer in a drought. However, monitor your plants, especially trees, shrubs and evergreens for possible damage from the dry conditions of 2012. Root systems of these plants may still reflect damage and it may persist for a couple of years. Hold off on fertilizing them as it may stress plants even further.

How do I give my lawn a good start?

Many people are seeing dead patches or thin spots in their lawns after last year's drought. Spring is a great time to overseed, slit seed, fix dead patches, apply broadleaf weed killer and fertilize turf.

Should I treat for insects and fungal diseases?

Less is best. Never treat a pest or disease without knowing what it is and how to solve the problem. Ask your garden center, The Morton Arboretum, Chicago Botanic Garden, or University of Illinois Extension office. Bring samples in a sealed bag with your name and phone number or bring in printed pictures.

I'm replacing an ash tree, what do you recommend? There are many options for shade trees that thrive in our area. Assess your site before you choose a tree. How much sun does the area receive? Is it wet, dry, or in between? There are oaks, maples, elms and more that make wonderful shade trees and grow fairly quickly.



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