

We Go Gardening

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

Volume 25 Issue 2 February 2021



The purpose of the West Chicago Garden Club shall be to increase interest in gardening through sharing our ideas and knowledge, promoting and participating in community beautification and protecting and promoting a clean environment in which we live.

Meeting Date: February 25

Meeting Location:

ZOOM Online Meeting

Meeting Time:

**6:30PM Zoom Meeting Available
7:00PM Program**

Native Plants: The Basics



You've thought about using native plants but aren't sure where to start. This presentation can help you understand some basic concepts about using native plants in your garden. You'll be

introduced to native plants that are relatively low-maintenance. These plants were selected because they have few disease and insect problems and they are adapted to a range of growing conditions. A variety of native plants will be featured.

The link to the Zoom meeting that members will need to go into the meeting will be emailed to you the morning of the program. You just need to click on the link that follows the heading "Join Zoom Meeting".

The speaker will have the meeting open at 6:30 for people to come in and get settled. The presentation will be between 7 and 8 pm on Feb 25.

Our speaker is Sharon Yiesla who has been a horticulturist since 1983.

Sharon runs her own business, "Sharon Yiesla, Horticultural Services", through which she delivers gardening presentations. She

earned a BS in horticulture from Purdue University and an MS in horticulture from University of Illinois. Her past accomplishments include teaching at Illinois State University, working as a Horticulture Specialist for University Extension in Missouri, working as a Horticulture Educator with University of Illinois Extension in Lake County and teaching classes at the Chicago Botanic Garden.

Look for the Garden Club email on the morning of February 25th which will have the link to the Zoom meeting.



MARCH 25TH MEETING

**Zoom Meeting: Founding Fathers,
Sustainability, and Recycling**

Speaker: Kay McKeen from SCARCE

Notes from the President

Dan Beebe

Welcome to Gardener's Catalog Season! If you are like me, you started receiving a plethora of gardening related catalogs all the way back at Thanksgiving and they just keep coming. Catalogs full of landscape structures for your yard, outdoor furniture, every imaginable size, shape, color of pots and planters, seeds, plants, seed starting supplies, organic fertilizers, more seeds... the list goes on and on and on. Based on last year's sales and the demand for gardening supplies already seen this year, it is going to be another great year for garden supply companies but don't expect to find what you really want (or need) for your gardens in late Spring. I have already placed and received several online orders and am waiting patiently for some plants that looked especially intriguing in the catalogs. If you have your eye on something, be sure to order early!

As usual, I will be starting indoor seeds soon, some slow growers will get started this weekend and tomatoes and peppers will be started next weekend. I expect to have a few extras and I will probably host a small Member Plant Sale at my house in mid-May. If you are starting seeds or have a few plants that you would like to share with other members, let me know and we can discuss how we might be able to pull together a small, socially distanced member sale similar to what we did last year. It would be a great opportunity to see all of your (masked) faces again after a long, snowy Winter.

That being said, I've also really enjoyed our recent Zoom practice meetings. Although they are different from the in person meetings we all prefer, it has been good to have the opportunity to see everyone and discuss gardening plans for 2021. If you have not been able to try out Zoom yet, there is one more practice session on Thursday, February 18th at 7:00pm. You can use your phone, laptop, desktop computer with microphone and camera (optional) or tablet to join. We will try to help you through any sound or video issues you may have. Hope to see you later on Zoom!

Keep watching your email, our Facebook page and the Newsletter for more club news as we head towards warmer weather and sunnier days.

As always - Stay well, stay safe,
Dan

Out and About

Kerry Perry

Cross country skiers were out on Valentine's Day at Herrick Lake Forest Preserve in Wheaton. It was a "balmy" five degrees. I couldn't find an open table for a picnic lunch.



Bees Take Flight

Billie Childress

There are a total of 12 bee forms spoken for. Making twelve artistic “Bees Take Flight” will be a fantastic accomplishment! I’m absolutely thrilled! Thank you to all who are participating.

This photo is of bee wings and bodies in various states of priming. Each piece is getting 2 coats of primer. Perfectly prepared for the volunteer artist who will creatively enhance each bee to Take Flight in the Kruse Garden. What a fun project! Can’t wait to see the unique handiwork of garden club members.



Zoom Meeting Information

The final Zoom practice meeting is tonight (Thursday, February 18th) and you should have received an email this morning with the link. If you are at all unsure about using Zoom for next week’s Zoom Program, please stop by the practice meeting to try it out and get help if you need it.



The [January Newsletter](#) had extra information to help you get started with Zoom on the last page. If you haven’t used Zoom before, that information will hopefully get you started. We are planning to use Zoom for the next few months while we wait for vaccinations and/or warmer weather for outdoor meetings.



Getting to Know ...

Barb Bizzarri

Joan Wells



Resident of : Aurora Township

West Chicago Garden Club Member: For past 6 years

Hobbies: Sewing, cooking, gardening, home decorating, bird watching

Favorite Flower/bush/plant: Rose of Sharon, clematis, peach and plum trees, forsythia

Biggest Gardening Mistake: Deciding where to plant ...sun vs shade

What gardening chore do you dislike the most? Weeding

What do you plan on planting in your Spring garden: I had an above ground swimming pool removed and I'm still deciding what to plant in this new space...it's a blank canvas

Past Career: 30 years with AT&T

If you could travel now, where would you like to go: To visit my daughter in Omaha, Nebraska

How Have You Kept Busy This Past Months: Redecorating and updating my home and especially my kitchen.

Have You Read Any Good Books Lately? A 3 book series by Nora Roberts

Garden Notes

Barb Bizzarri



Although the temperature is 8 degrees, look who visited my birdbath... the first robin. Spring is just around the corner. Of course, he's sitting on top of the birdbath heater!

No Winter lasts forever;
no spring skips its turn"

~~Hal Borland



News from Kruse

Heavy blankets of snow cover the Kruse Garden.

The mason bee house has empty holes, ready for the spring arrival of bees to lay their eggs. Bees are by far the most prolific pollinators on our planet.

Birds will feast of the red berries of European Viburnum. The bushes also provide cover for the birds.

During blizzards and snowstorms birds hide in dense bushes and trees protected from the wind.

Spring will be here soon.

Kerry Perry



Winter Sowing with Christina

Barb Bizzarri

Last Fall I was privileged to be invited to view WCGC Member, Christina Covarrubias' garden. Suffice to say, it was gorgeous. Some of the plants almost looked fake, they were so perfect!

I asked Christina to share her secret and below are her directions for Winter Sowing along with pictures of her garden bounty.

Winter Sowing by Christina Covarrubias

1. Use translucent 1 gallon containers (e.g. water or milk gallons, not solid white ones).
2. Cut the container nearly in half starting where the bottom of the handle meets the side. Cut around the circumference stopping just before the handle on the other side. Basically leave a hinge, it will make things easy in a couple steps.
3. Poke drainage holes in the bottom of each container. I used a hammer and a long nail. A cordless drill or a sharp knife (carefully!) will also work. 5 holes are adequate.
4. Fill with potting soil or if you prefer seed starting mix. Water the soil until it is all thoroughly moistened equivalent to a well dampened but not dripping sponge.
5. Plant seeds according to the seed packet instructions. For vining plants sow a max of 2-3 seeds per container. Things like alyssum or herbs a generous sprinkle will allow you to slice up the plants like cake later to plant in clumps.
6. Tape the lid back on to the base. I found painter's tape worked well for me but electric, duct or masking tape will also do. Clear packing tape quickly became brittle and lost its adhesive-ness.
7. Set your containers OUTSIDE in a protected place that will prevent them from blowing away. Make sure they will receive plenty of full sun. Do NOT put the caps back on.
8. 2-7 days before planting these seedlings in the ground untape and prop open the top. Be careful the top doesn't become a guillotine- it may be necessary to cut the top off completely in some cases to save the plants!!



Side notes: This method is supposed to produce stronger/hardier plants because they have already acclimated to the weather from the beginning. It will definitely take longer for the seeds to germinate. Compared to their indoor sown counterparts the plants catch up quickly and perform fairly equally. (I'm biased but thought I had better results.) They do not need to be watered after the initial watering when setting them up. This is why you don't put the lids back on them. I NEVER watered these containers. If it rained, they got water. If it snowed (which it did twice), they got a little



Winter Sowing with Christina (Continued)

Barb Bizzarri

water later! I did cover them once for snow but never for frosts. I loved this carefree (set it and forget it!) method compared to my crazy grow light/heat lamp/tables in front of windows situation that I have had going every year since 1997.

Finally, I normally start my tomato plants the conventional way INDOORS the first week of March.

I started nasturtiums, alyssum, zinnias, sweet peas, cabbage, kale, onions, basil and pumpkins with this winter sowing method (milk/water gallon jugs), the second week of April. You definitely can start earlier than that. In hindsight, I would not have started pumpkins this way because they quickly grew too large.

Other helpful resources: GardenAnswer YouTube channel https://youtu.be/WgNTAJgW_w4 and the Facebook group "[Winter Sowing \(vegetable gardening with Sheryl Mann\)](#)"

Happy gardening!!

—Christina

Than you, Christina, for sharing your garden tips and special thanks for your time and service as a 'First Responder RN" at Delnor Hospital assisting Covid patients during this most challenging time.



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Club Information

Website: www.westchicagogardenclub.org

West Chicago Garden Club

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Membership Information

Dues for 2020: Individual: \$15 Family: \$25 (2 people)

Board Meetings

2nd Thursday each month at 7 p.m.

Regular Meeting Location

St Andrew Lutheran Church—155 N Prince Crossing Rd

2021 WCGC BOARD:

President: Dan Beebe

Vice President: Barb Bizzarri

Treasurer: Kerry Perry

Secretary: Cherie Kraft

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WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com

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