



WE GO GARDENING

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

www.westchicagogardenclub.org

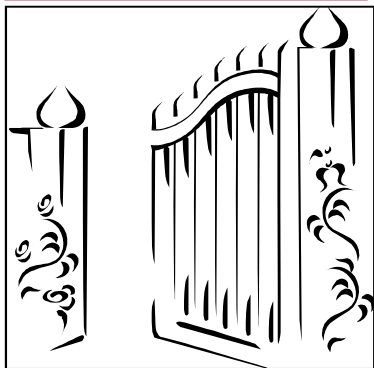
Volume 14 Issue 1 January 2011

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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, but if you plan to use it, please **call Linda Harlson** at 377-5750, so we can plan for the right number of children.

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



January 27th Meeting : "Vegetable Gardening"

Master Gardener **Paul Stoffels** will join us to share information on the hot topic of vegetable gardening. Paul judges flower and vegetable shows, is co-leader of his neighborhood children's garden club, and is Team Leader on Plant a Row for the Hungry garden in Glen Ellyn.



Be sure to sign in for the special door prize - see page 4 for more information!

Faith Community Church at 910 Main Street in West Chicago

7:00 - refreshments and gathering

7:15 - brief business meeting

7:30 - speaker



Next Meeting: Thursday, February 24th:

"ROSES" with Doug Hampton from Planter's Palette

Did you have fun at the auction in November? Be sure to start collecting **NEW Garden Dollars for 2011** when you participate in club activities. One way to earn an easy 50 GD is to renew your membership prior to February 2nd - see the last page of this newsletter for the form, and bring it to the January meeting!



Upcoming events (outside the club)

DeKalb Area Garden Club/Kishwaukee College: The Gardener's Pathway workshops, Saturday, Feb 26, all day. See page 5 of this newsletter for more information.

Morton Arboretum: Lunch and Learn: Landscape Styles in a Nutshell, Wednesday, Feb 2, 11:30 a.m., \$20 members/\$26 non, call 630-719-2468 to register.

Heinz Brothers Greenhouse: Orchids for Beginners, Saturday, Feb 12, 2 p.m. \$5, please RSVP by calling 630-377-6288 to register.

Chicago Botanic Garden: Guerrilla Gardening. Tuesday, Feb 8, 7 - 9 p.m., \$10/\$12, register online at <https://register.chicagobotanic.org/tickets/show.asp>.

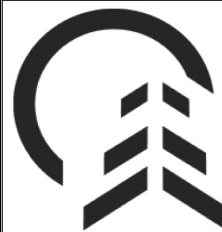
WANT TO GET INVOLVED, BUT DON'T HAVE MUCH TIME?

Can you help organize a field trip or day tour? Please see Jeff Handel (contact information below).

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
(630) 585-4005

Membership information

Dues for 2011: 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

2011 WCGC BOARD:

President:

Jeff Handel 630-231-6765, jjhandeldds@yahoo.com

Vice President:

Dick Darrah 630-584-1900, info@bwdarrah.com

Treasurer:

Barb Darrah 630-584-1900, info@bwdarrah.com

Secretary:

Dee Soustek 630-393-0652, dsoustek@aol.com

Program Co-Chairs:

Pauline Briggs 630-545-2234, pmbiggs@juno.com
June Luther 630-876-1295, june@markluther.com

Information Director:

Elaine McCluskey 630-293-4773,
emcccluskey@sbcglobal.net

Plant Sale Chair:

Tom Fessler 630-231-0535, fess2000@aol.com

Publicity:

Melissa Birch, 630-621-0128, melissabirch@gmail.com



Planned WCGC Events - 2011

Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event	Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event
27 Jan	Paul Stoffels/Master Gardeners	Vegetables	21 May	All members	Plant Sale!
24 Feb	Doug Hampton/Planters Palette	Roses	26 May	TBD/Growing Place	Herbs
24 Mar	TBD/Growing Place	Right Plant - Right Place	23 Jun	Dave Wanniger/Beaver Creek Nursery	TBD
3 Apr	All members - need crew of 16!	Plant Sale Potting Party- 1 - 4 p.m.	28 Jul	All members	President's Picnic
10 Apr	All members - need crew of 16!	Plant Sale Potting Party- 1 - 4 p.m.	25 Aug	TBD/Growing Place	Unusual & Seldom Used Perennials
16 Apr	All members - need crew of 16!	Plant Sale Potting Party- 9 am. - 12 noon	22 Sep	TBD/Morton Arboretum	Trees
23 Apr	All members - need crew of 16!	Plant Sale Potting Party- 9 am. - 12 noon	27 Oct	Nancy Clifton/Chicago Botanic Garden	Holiday Decorating
28 Apr	Susan Schmitz/Ball Seed	What's Hot - What's Not	17 Nov	All members	Dinner & Garden Dollar Auction

We all love the refreshments that make our club meetings even more fun. Our thanks to our Hospitality Coordinators, **Linda Harlson, Shirley Schramer, Jean Ann Saarnio, and Tom Fessler** who do the hard work with fruits we all enjoy so much!

THANK YOU

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at The Growing Place in Aurora at 10am

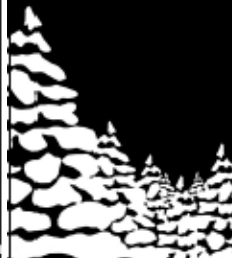
Make a Trough... 1/27 or 1/29

Landscape Sampler... 2/10 or 2/12

Make a Fairy or Gnome House... 2/19

No Fuss Veggie Gardening... 2/26

Grand opening for our 75th year... 4/2/2011



The Growing Place

Aurora... Montgomery Rd. 630-820-8088
www.thegrowingplace.com



News from Kruse by Angie & Billie, Kruse House Garden Coordinators

"We haven't designed this garden....we've made it a place we like, almost by accident"

from a Welsh gardener ...garden featured in a recent issue of Gardens Illustrated,
<http://www.gardensillustrated.com/>

How many of us have created our gardens by accident? I expect a lot of hands are in the air! And that is why we have January and February. What an opportunity to read, talk, and plan! While trial and error is tons of fun, considered choices may be more productive. Not to sound like a wet blanket.....



So... we are looking through magazines, books, photos of the garden, catalogues, and such.....savoring ideas of what to do this year. Dear garden club members, we could use your help! Got any brain storms for us? The best results often come from a group effort. **Your input would be most welcome.** Have you thought that so and so plant/shrub would be perfect for the garden, or wouldn't a path or bed be just the ticket ...right there.... Well, talk with us.

Ideas provoke more ideas and we could be off and running on another fabulous year in the garden. Also, please think of us if you have plants ready for division. Our best plants in the garden are pass-alongs from friends. Last year, Merle Burleigh donated a generous amount of Plumbago/Leadwort from her garden. The perky blue flowers were striking against purple-red foliage last fall. Even in its first year, it was lovely! Thanks Merle!

Speaking of garden photographs, there will be a one of a kind, lovely 2011 calendar offered as a **door prize at the January meeting**. There are 13 outstanding photographs of the Kruse Garden featured in this calendar! Some fortunate garden club member or guest will win this unique prize! It could be you!

Speaking of photographs.....again.....we have decided to have a few photos of the garden available for viewing at the reception desk each monthly meeting. It will give all of you a chance to see the garden even if you can't get over there as often as you'd like. Who knows, it may get us talking about some opportunities for improvement. Let us know what you think of this idea.



We are confident it will be another good year in the garden. We thank all of you for your support and for all the positive feedback you provide.

See you at the meeting.....A&B



PLANT SALE NEWS



The planning has begun for this year's plant sale, our big fundraiser. Please mark your calendars for **Saturday, May 21st**. This is a bit later than the "Saturday after Mother's Day" we're used to - let your friends know!

First, we are trying to get a count of those **blue and white plant sale signs**, the ones that say "PLANT SALE NEXT SATURDAY". Do you have one in your garage? Please let Linda know at the welcome table, or call Billie or Tom. You don't have to bring it back unless you don't plan to put it in your yard this year.

Second, think about what dates you can help at the **Potting Parties in April** where we'll need 16 people each time. See the Planned Club Events on page 3 for dates and times - **we need you!**

Third, remember it's the WCGC **member's plants** that really make this sale successful. Please bring to think about what you can divide or spare from your own garden for this - the Digging Squad will be back in action in April.

Fourth, we will be working to gain donations from businesses for the tent and table rentals this year - do you know someone who might have a contact we could use? If so, please contact Billie at 630-231-1791.

Fifth, would you be willing to start some vegetable or herb seeds so we can have these types of plants to sell? These were in great demand last year, and we didn't have much to offer. If you need some tips, please contact Tom, Billie, or Jeff.

Finally, you can watch a slideshow of Blooming Fest 2010 on the West Chicago city website here: <http://www.westchicago.org/Slideshows/projectBloomingFest2010/index.html>. Look for WCGC around the middle of the show.

***** * **The Gardener's Pathway Workshops for Planning, Planting & Enjoying!** * * **Saturday, February 26, 7:30 a.m. to 3:15 p.m.** *

University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners of DeKalb County and Kishwaukee College present a one-day collection of workshops for gardeners of all levels of experience. Advanced registration is required. **February 21 is the registration deadline.** You can mail the form (found on the website here: http://www.kishwaukeecollege.edu/gardeners_pathway/regform_gardeners.pdf) or you may call in your registration, using Visa, MasterCard, or Discover at 815-825-2086, ext 2040.

Kishwaukee College, Malta, Illinois

Cost: \$50

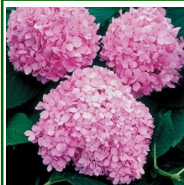
Attendees receive:

- Choice of 18 different workshops (select 3 to attend during 3 different sessions that begin at 9:30 a.m.)
- Exhibit Hall with Gardening Information and Unique Items for Purchase
- Master Gardener Q&A Desk
- Continental Breakfast and Garden Lunch
- Numerous Door Prizes
- Tote Bag Courtesy of Ball Seed Co.

Keynote address: "Biodiversity: A Worldwide Phenomenon."

Michael Jeffords is the retired Education/Outreach Coordinator for the Illinois Natural History Survey and a freelance writer and photographer. What is world biodiversity and why is it important? Michael Jeffords will enlighten you about this phenomenon and its relationship to Illinois and surrounding environments.

More information at http://www.kishwaukeecollege.edu/gardeners_pathway/



STATE-OF-THE-ART HYDRANGEAS by Lou Horton

Most shade gardeners yearn for more color. It has been that way forever. The fact is, however, that many shade gardeners who have not been keeping a close eye on the scene among the woody plants may have missed the quiet revolution that has taken place in Hydrangea Alley. That is especially true for those who were disappointed by the 'Niko Blue' hype that took place 10-15 years ago.

'Niko Blue' misled Midwestern gardeners on two levels: it is hardy here but its flower buds are not. What you get in all but the most mild winters is a healthy green plant but nothing more. Furthermore, in the Midwest, it will only be blue at the garden center. Our soil is too alkaline to permit much more than a pale blue tint to the blooms even if one acidifies the soil. That is, of course, if one can get it to bloom at all here. T

Today, the development of **new forms of H. Macropylla** that bloom on new as well as old wood have brought some measure of satisfaction to those gardeners who want to grow the Bigleaf Hydrangeas in Zone 5. The most well-known of the new cultivars is 'Endless Summer'. There is no doubt that 'Endless Summer' and other similar cultivars represent a step up from 'Niko Blue' but some gardeners have expressed some disappointment over the number of flower heads that 'Endless Summer' produces. I have found that to get the most out of it, one needs to give 'Endless Summer' a couple of hours more sun than many other Hydrangeas require and it performs best once it gets established after 2-3 years in its new home.

The fact is, there have always been other Hydrangeas that were good choices for us Zone 5 folks but like most plants, there were usually some drawbacks that made them unsuitable in some situations. The **Oakleaf Hydrangea** (*H. quercifolia*), for example, is a wonderful plant. It blooms midseason (late June through July) and the flower heads last a long time. A bonus is excellent fall color and the dried flower heads are attractive well into winter. The problem is that Oakleaves are large plants (perhaps 8 ft. high and 6-8 ft. wide) and may be out of scale in small gardens. An explosion of new cultivars in recent years in many species of Hydrangea has included some wonderful dwarf Oakleaf alternatives, however. 'Sykes Dwarf' and 'Pee Wee' are two good examples that grow 3-4 ft. high and perhaps as much across and retain all of the Oakleaf's good qualities. A gold leaved form of the 'Pee Wee' is 'Little Honey'- very attractive but a lot slower growing than the 'Pee Wee' in my experience.

H. arborescens is a native Hydrangea that is a real workhorse in the garden. Often better known by the name 'Annabelle' which is actually a name given to a selection known for its exceptionally large flower heads, *arborescens* is hardy even in Zone 4, blooms on new wood, and graces us with its beautiful white flower heads in midsummer. The one common complaint about 'Annabelle' is that its flower heads are often so large that they overload its slender flower stems which tend to droop from the weight. A new introduction which was the result of a breeding program intended to correct that flaw is 'Incrediball'. I found 'Incrediball' to possess all the **vigor and large flower heads of 'Annabelle' combined with much sturdier stems** that do a much better job of holding the flower heads upright. One can allow the dried flower heads to remain on the plant to provide winter interest and then prune it to a few inches from the ground in early spring. The plant will grow in width yearly and can be easily propagated by fastening outer stems to the soil with a garden staple for a few months until they root.

New cultivars are being introduced yearly in several species and include some with variegated flower petals. Beware, however, of those *H. Macropylla* introductions may still be iffy in Zone 5 in terms of flower bud hardiness. I will leave you with a **Hydrangea fact**: plantsman Michael Dirr says that some species of Hydrangea are exceptionally long lived with some plants in Athens Georgia **still going strong at well over 100 years of age**.



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Plant Friendly Ice Melters are Effective

by Heather Prince of The Growing Place

Winter in the Chicago area means lots of ice and snow. Keeping paths, steps, and porches free of ice is an important safety measure, but not all ice melting products are plant friendly! Rock salt, or sodium chloride is our most common product, but it's extremely harmful to plant material and can impact your soil health. Look for products made with calcium or magnesium chloride that are still effective, but much more plant friendly. In each case, less is more, so only use deicing chemicals in small areas. You can add extra traction and extend the product by mixing it with sand. Try to avoid piling salt-laden snow around trees or shrubs. If it can't be avoided, make sure to thoroughly water the area in the spring to wash the product out of the soil and the root



WCGC and the West Chicago Public Library

Did you know that our club pays for magazine subscriptions for gardening magazines at the library? This many-year tradition puts our plant sale fundraising to good use for the public while at the same time making available such titles as *Chicagoland Gardening* and *Garden Gate*. Browse the selection next time you're on the 2nd floor.

We would like to **suggest new gardening books** for the library to purchase, using WCGC funds, to make sure we all have the best and most up-to-date information for our favorite hobby. If you have titles to suggest, please write them down and leave the title and/or author at the welcome table at our next meeting.



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West Chicago Garden Club Membership Application - 2011

Our club year runs from January 1st through December 31st. Membership dues for 2011 are due by the February meeting and will be considered over-due as of February 28th. The board would appreciate receiving dues as soon as possible

With your paid membership you receive a copy of the monthly newsletter and membership in the Garden Clubs of Illinois, which includes the quarterly publication Garden Glories.

Individual Membership:

\$15 per year

Family Membership:

\$25 per year

(For multiple members at a single address)

Our meetings in 2011 will be held on the 4th Thursday evening of each month from January through October and the 3rd Thursday of November (no meeting in December).

Please make checks payable to the West Chicago Garden Club. You can bring this form and your check to a club meeting or mail both to:

West Chicago Garden Club
c/o Mike Saad
27W206 Manchester Rd.
Winfield, IL 60190-1440

Application

type: ☐ New or ☐ Renewal

class: ☐ Individual or ☐ Family

Name(s): _____
(Print) _____

Address: _____

City/ZIP: _____

Phone Numbers: (include area code)

Home: _____

Work: _____

Cell/other: _____

E-Mail Address(es):

Note: e-mail addresses may be shared with garden club members.

Send newsletters via: ☐ E-mail or ☐ Mail

☐ Please **do not** add my phone number to the Calling Post. (Note: if you check this box, you will not get phone reminders of any garden club events.)

mf - 2011.v1