

We Go Gardening

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

Volume 24 Issue 6 June 2020



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: Canceled

Garden Club Photo Contest—Results!

The votes are in and the winner of our Photo Contest is Dick Darrah with his Jack-In-The-Pulpit picture. We also had a 3-way tie for Second place! The Woodland scene from Jean Ann Saarnio, the Magnolia blossom from Janet Frogner and the Duck with ducklings from Pauline Briggs.

Thank you to everyone who sent in a photo and to those who voted.



JULY 23RD MEETING

President's Picnic?

Notes from the President

Dan Beebe

I hope that all of you are doing well, spending time outdoors and spending time in your gardens. This past week I was browsing online gardening supply websites and every one of them has sold out of many items and local retail nurseries are pretty picked over. It appears that many people who have not been gardening a lot in the past have joined us in their yards. If you happen to notice that one of your neighbor's yards is looking really good this year, make sure that you let them know. Put in a shameless plug for the Garden Club and invite them to a future meeting.

As I mentioned last month, we are still waiting on the State to move to Stage 4 of the Illinois Reopening Plan before being able to make firm plans on the fate and location of club meetings for the rest of the year. The earliest that the State can enter Stage 4 is June 26th. As the State appears to be on track to meet/exceed its Stage 4 goals by the 26th, the Garden Club Board is meeting on June 25th to discuss the options available to us. As soon as the club Board and I know more about the direction we are heading, we will be sure to let you know. All announcements will be published to our web site and Facebook page, as well as, distributed to our e-mail and calling post lists.

In the meantime, stay safe and get out to enjoy the great outdoors and out beautiful weather.-Dan

Garden Notes

Barb Melville



Approximately 4-5 years ago I purchased a small wisteria plant from Menards and planted it along the fence line in full sun. This year my wisteria bloomed around the middle/late part of April and was a beautiful sight with many fragrant clusters of gorgeous lavender flowers. Not only is this plant a beautiful visual addition to any yard but the scent is equally as lovely.

Here is some info from the Morton Arboretum website:

American wisteria (*Wisteria frutescens*; syn. *Wistaria frutescens*) is a woody vine that produces beautiful hanging clusters of purple flowers. This species is native to North America. It is a good alternate to the Japanese and Chinese

wisterias that have become invasive in some areas.

Size and Method of Climbing: American wisteria can grow 20 to 30 feet long. It is a twining vine. Twining vines climb by twisting their stems or leaf stalks around a support. This type of vine grows well on trellises, arbors, wires or chain-link fences.

Plant Care: Full sun is preferable, but this vine will also tolerate partial shade. A moist, well-drained, slightly acidic soil is best. Avoid compaction. Wisteria often do not produce flowers for the first 5 to 10 years. To encourage flowering use nitrogen fertilizer sparingly and use a fertilizer that provides phosphorus (follow label directions). Proper pruning will also encourage flowering. Wisteria vines are heavy and require sturdy supports.



Getting to Know ...

Barb Bizzarri

Becky Hall



Resident of West Chicago: Since 1998

West Chicago Garden Club Member: Becky along with Carol Bates, Chris Baxter (now a resident of Galena) Barbara and Dick Darrah, and others restarted the WCGC in 1998 after a hiatus of 20 years (Note from Barb: Thanks to all these hardworking and persistent individuals who resurrected the West Chicago Garden Club.)

Hobbies: Quilting, Volunteer as Board Member of the City of West Chicago Museum Friends, also involved with the West Chicago Sister City, Taufkirchen (Vils) Bavaria (which is close to Munich), and travel, keeping track of all the different counties, so far we have visited 2/3's of all counties in the USA!

Favorite Flower: Now a days, I concentrate on my herb garden. I currently have 10 different herbs. In past Summers, I had 30 different herbs.

Biggest Gardening Mistake: When we first moved into our home, we ripped out the entire garden. We should have waited to see which flowers came in that first Spring and Summer.

Career: Self-employed technical writer for the past 25 years.

If you could have one flower in your garden what would it be?: Siberian Iris

What do you look forward to in your Summer garden?: Tomatoes! Raising one of my favorites, a small yellow pear tomatoes.

Did you start the year off with any gardening resolutions? No resolutions!

Cantigny Park Reopened on June 15th

Park access will continue to be grounds only, 9 am to 6 pm, seven days a week, with daily visitation capped at appropriate levels. Cantigny's regular weekday parking fee of \$5 per car will apply, including weekends.



This second stage of Cantigny's "phased" reopening is based on current guidance from the State of Illinois and public health authorities and is subject to change. The health and safety of visitors and staff remains the park's top priority. Heightened cleaning and disinfecting procedures are in place, and guests are expected to practice social distancing. Face coverings are not required outside, but all visitors must wear a mask when using park restrooms.

Only Cantigny's gardens and grounds will be accessible. The Visitors Center (except for restrooms), McCormick House and the First Division Museum remain closed. The playground and Army tanks also are temporarily off limits. Full-service outdoor dining will be available daily on the Bertie's Bistro patios from 11 am to 2 pm.

News from Kruse

Well, it's been an interesting spring, hasn't it? No potting parties, no plant sale and no garden club meetings. With almost everything closed, we've spent a lot of time at home. Thank goodness we are gardeners. As spring arrived, we were able to get out into our yards, dig into the dirt and get our hands dirty in an entirely safe way. We recently had friends out from the city and they seemed to bask in the chance to sit out in the garden and enjoy the hot sun.

Here at Kruse we have been extra lucky because we have been able to meet with friends while we worked together (at a safe distance) to open the grounds again to spring. We watched the tulips and iris open and fade and this week saw the water lilies open up and the heritage rose bushes teem with blossoms. It is truly a pleasure to maintain such a lovely place for others to visit freely.

Last year at this time our family was together on vacation in Paris. Ironically, they were having Saturday protests that were turning violent, so we decided to leave town and take the train to Giverny to visit Monet's garden. It was as lush and beautiful as we expected and I am reminded that no matter how the world has changed in the more than 100 years that it has existed (including two world wars), nature still has the power to outlast all our follies and weaknesses.



Photos from the
Kruse Garden by
Kerry Perry



Until we can meet again at our next meeting; Happy Gardening from the Kruse crew.

If you want to join the Kruse House crew this year, regular work days are Wednesdays from 9:00 a.m. to noon, though adjustable to fit your schedule. Contact Billie Childress or Kerry Perry or email the club and the message will be forwarded to both of them.



Photos from Monet's Garden at
Giverny by Pamela Darrah &
Darrah Beebe

Member Notes: Raised Bed Garden

Dan Beebe

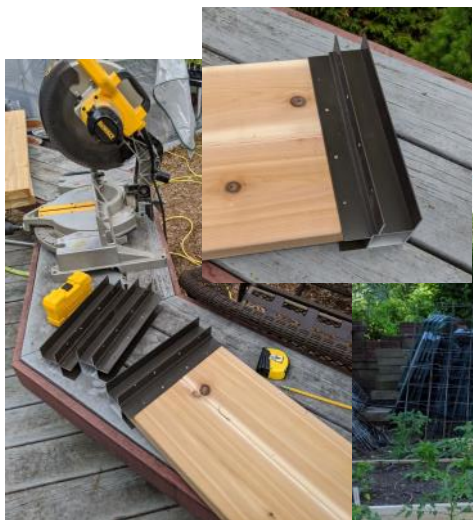
For the last several years, it became clear that the 4' x 8' raised bed vegetable gardens that I built about 20 years ago were rotting out and would need to be rebuilt. So this year, as I was spending a lot more time at home than I normally would, I decided that I should tackle this project.

When I built the beds last time I used cedar 4x4 posts to hold the corners together, but after 20 years the 4x4 posts have almost completely rotted away so I decided to try something different and the first thing I did was to purchase aluminum raised bed corners from Gardener's Supply.

Once the corners arrived, a quick trip to Menards for 36 2x6x8 Cedar boards (I still don't want the chemicals from pressure treated boards anywhere near my vegetables) and a box of stainless steel screws and I was ready to go. The beds were very easy to assemble with a cordless drill with a screwdriver bit; removing the old rotten boards took a little more time.

Once the new beds were in place, the dirt moved back in and organic soil amendments added, they were ready to be planted. Each bed has a " low pressure water line running to it and I re-installed drippers at each plant to help reduce the amount of water used to maintain the plants. I still need to re-mulch the paths between the beds but this project is getting pretty close to being done.

If you have any questions about this project or the materials I used, let me know.



Upcoming Programs for 2020

These are the tentatively scheduled programs for the year. If there are any changes we will update this information in future newsletters.

| | | |
|----------------|----------------|---|
| July 23rd | Dan Beebe | President's Picnic |
| August 27th | | Native Plants |
| September 24th | | Butterflies & Other Interesting Creatures |
| October 22nd | | TBD |
| November 19th | Silent Auction | Pot Luck Dinner |

From our Facebook

Billie Childress



Wisteria on the grocery store fence bordering east side of Kruse Museum. Long ago I bought this Wisteria at Planters Pallet. I tried for at least five years but it just didn't work for me. I brought roots over to Kruse, planted and essentially forgot about it. It's taken a few years but it's established quite a presence! BTW. I still have some at home that I'd like to get rid of if anyone wants it. Call me.

Nature Notes

Kerry Perry

The hummingbirds really like the nectar I put out and the orioles love the oranges and grape jelly. But, in the morning I find empty feeders on the ground. You guessed it, mama raccoon is the culprit. She obviously has a sweet tooth.

According to National Geographic, raccoons are about as big as small dogs. They grow to about 23 to 37 inches and weigh 4 to 23 lbs. Raccoons are omnivores and eat vegetation and meat. The vegetation in their diet consists of cherries, apples, acorns, citrus fruits, and wild grapes. Some of their favorite animal treats are frogs, fish, insects and bird eggs. When food is scarce, raccoons scavenge human trash. Yuck.

I've put my resident raccoon on a diet, no more hummingbird nectar. I bring the feeders in at night. So there you little bandit!



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Club Information

Website: www.westchicagogardenclub.org

West Chicago Garden Club

P. O. Box 313, West Chicago, IL 60186

E-mail: westchicagogardenclub@gmail.com

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

2020 WCGC BOARD:

President: Dan Beebe

Vice President: Barb Bizzarri

Treasurer: Kerry Perry

Secretary: Cherie Kraft

Program Director: Barb Melville

Plant Sale Chair: Dan Beebe

Information Director: Pamela Darrah

Kruse House Chair: Billie Childress

Hospitality Chair: Jan Grismore

Director at Large Mary Schramer

To Contact any Board Member, please send email to
WestChicagoGardenClub@gmail.com

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