



We Go Gardening

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

www.westchicagogardenclub.org

Volume 20 Issue 3 March 2016

MARCH IS...

"We're meeting on the 5th Thursday" MONTH!

Meeting Date: March 31, 2016

Program Topic: Organic Vegetable Gardening

Presenter: Member Ed Max, an avid organic gardener and heirloom tomato nut, will tell us about the best heirloom varieties and teach us how to collect, save and grow the seeds of heirloom tomatoes. Ed is a landscape designer, certified naturalist and arborist. His firm, Max's Greener Places, does landscape renovations and new design. Ed always helps out with our annual plant sale by donating heirloom tomato plants and he can answer just about any question a customer can come up with. He's also great at identifying mystery plants!

Faith Community Church at 910 Main Street in West Chicago

6:45 - refreshments and gathering

7:00 - brief business meeting

7:15 - speaker

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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 630-231-1791 the Wednesday before the meeting.

Next Meeting: Thursday, April 28:

"Best New Plants for 2016" with Kim Hartmann

Kim will highlight the best new annuals, perennials, roses, vegetables, shrubs and trees for 2016—come see what's new!



Help us prep for the 2016 Plant Sale: Potting Parties on April 3, 9, 16, and 24

Sign-up sheets will be available
at the March meeting!

Club Information

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

Membership Information

Dues for 2016: 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

2016 WCGC BOARD:

President:

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

Vice President:

Keith Letsche, 630-293-0192, keithletsche@aol.com

Treasurer:

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

Secretary:

Annette Wulfe, 630-462-0208, annetwulfe@yahoo.com

Program Director:

Billie Childress, 630-231-1791, billiedc@sbcglobal.net

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WCGC 2016 Calendar

Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event	Date	Speaker/Organizer	Topic/Event
28 Jan	Richard Hentschel	Trees	23 Jun	TBA	AT Kruse Garden
25 Feb	Peggy Doty	People and Nature	28 Jul	TBA	President's Picnic
31 Mar	Ed Max	Edible Gardens	25 Aug	TBA	Butterflies
28 Apr	TBA	What's New for 2016	22 Sep	TBA	Birds
21 May	ALL MEMBERS!	PLANT SALE!	27 Oct	TBA	TBA
26 May	TBA	AT Cantigny	17 Nov	All members	Dinner & Garden Dollar Auction

Tree Inventory (Please pick up a form to complete from the greeter's table)

Who: GC Members

What: Identify and document all the trees in your yard.

When: Start early Spring and finish by end of June.

Why: Because we will all learn more about trees.

Yes, of course participation in this project is *optional* but it would be fabulous if all members completed a tree inventory for their yard! I'm excited about doing it because I will now have to actually put a name to some trees that I've never bothered to identify before. I'm also looking forward to the big picture of finding out what trees other members have. When we combine our information, what will be our most common tree, the most unusual? Most of us won't plant many trees in our lifetime but when we do the choice should be well informed. Be good to our planet. Learn more about trees.

Sources to assist in identifying trees include

Other garden club members.

U of I Extension Services. Send pictures of tree and close up of branch/leaf

Tree identification books. Spring is a great time because flowers are great clues.

Remember this is meant to be enjoyable so don't sweat it. It's not a test! Do your best and that's good enough!

Have fun with this! Please direct questions or concerns to Billie.



From the Program Coordinator's Desk, March 2016

February Recap

U of I Extension speaker Peggy Doty used quotes from Aldo Leopold's book, *A Sand County Almanac*, to describe how we can garden responsibly. She pointed out that we control what happens on our land. We can provide the plants that are essential to the food chain, or not. Peggy used many personal examples dappled with humor to convey her message. I dare say we all took home a truth or two that will affect how we garden.

"Whoever owns land has thus assumed, whether he knows it or not, the divine functions of creating and destroying plants." Aldo Leopold (January 11, 1887 – April 21, 1948) was an American author, scientist, ecologist, forester, conservationist, and environmentalist.

Thank you for completing **program evaluation results**. 23 surveys were returned
17 "very satisfied" with numerous positive comments
6 "somewhat satisfied"

March program

- Note date of program is **Thursday, March 31st**. That's the 5th Thursday instead of our usual 4th Thursday.
- GC member Ed Max will present a program on **organic vegetable gardening**
- Ed is an avid organic gardener and heirloom tomato nut. He will tell us about the best heirloom varieties and teach us how to collect, save and grow the seeds of heirloom tomatoes.
- Ed is a landscape designer, certified naturalist and arborist. His firm, Max's Greener Places, does landscape renovations and new design.
- Ed always helps out with our annual plant sale by donating heirloom tomato plants and he can answer just about any question a customer can come up with. He's also great at identifying mystery plants!

Ed's friendly, informal presentation style will invite your participation and capture your interest in this fun program on growing organic vegetables! Come and learn about growing your own food.

Did you know...

Of the 75 million households that garden, 44% will grow things they can eat! This trend has spawned the popular phrases "garden to table" or "locally grown." Growing food at home is becoming part of an everyday lifestyle.

Program coordinator, Billie Childress, billiedc@sbcglobal.net, cell 630-862-1213 or text.

Questions? Concerns? See me! -Billie



News from Kruse: March Madness!

It's March, right? it's that time of year to think about basketball playoffs. Oh, contraire! It's time to think of snow melting and flowers emerging. If you're like me, enough of winter. I'm anxious to be outside in the garden getting my hands dirty.



Things are very quiet at the Kruse Garden. But soon, some hardy, little perennials will be showing their faces. Head over to the garden and look for snow drops. Most flower in late winter before the vernal equinox, but certain species flower in early spring and late autumn. The first day of spring arrives at 11:30 pm on Saturday, March 19th.

An interesting website (www.flowermeaning.com) provided the etymological meaning of the Snowdrop Flower.

Snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*) earned their name from the combination of two Greek and Latin words. *Galanthus*, from the ancient Greek means milk white flower, while the Latin word *nivalis* means resembling snow.



Tool Tips

Our work in the Kruse Garden is more effective if we maintain our garden tools. Not only do tools need to be sharp, they also need to be clean and sterile, so they don't accidentally spread disease or viruses across garden beds. And of course, stored in a dry location, not just left in the grass for tomorrow's chores! Here are some tips from Bob Vila:

Cleaning: Wash dirt off your tools with a garden hose while scrubbing with a wire brush. Dip the tools in a diluted solution of any household bleach. Turpentine removes sap; vinegar can be used to soak items coated in rust. Rub wooden handles lightly with linseed oil. Not only does a thorough cleaning mean sterile tools, it also ensures your tools will last longer.

Sharpening: Hoes, shears, scissors, knives, loppers, pruners, and shovels all need an occasional sharpening. Wipe blades with WD-40 or another lubricant. Most blades can be filed with a 10" flat mill file. File at a 20 to 45 degree angle for most tools or follow the original bevel. For items that need a finer edge (pruners or shears), use a whetstone to finish the edge.

Storing Tools: A great way to store small spades and trowels is by keeping them in a pot filled with sand that's been soaked with motor oil. This helps keep the metal well-conditioned. Your larger tools will do best hanging in a dry, ventilated shed.

Happy Spring!
-Kerry



West Chicago High School Horticulture Club is growing plants for Blooming Fest plant sale!

Billie Childress had an opportunity to visit with Hort Club members at West Chicago Community High School recently. They were pleased to show off their fine greenhouses and growing plants.



After Work Gardens

by The Growing Place

We can't hardly wait until it's planting time! Thankfully it's March and we are almost there. Enjoying your garden can be possible any time of day, but if you are like us, sometimes you don't make it home until the evening. Once a favorite of Victorians, evening gardens are filled with plants that offer fragrance or color after dark. White or moonlit gardens dazzle during the day, but offer a special magic under the stars. Add a touch of white with trees, shrubs, perennials, vines, herbs, and annuals to create a garden that blooms even at dusk. Some plants, such as oenothera, nicotiana, and four o'clocks, flower only after the sun sets. Yellows, blues and silvers also stand out nicely in an evening garden. Foliage plants, such as dusty miller, lavender, stachys, blue spruce, and artemisia, feature silvery foliage that shines in the evening. You can even add some white painted garden accents, strategically placed solar lights or even just plain old candles in mason jars to brighten a corner.

Fragrance is an essential note in any garden, but especially after dark. Nicotiana or flowering tobacco is one of our heirloom favorites. The blooms will only open and release their scent after dark. Fragrant plants sited near patios and walks can fill the air as you walk past or rub their leaves. Herbs such as thyme, oregano, savory, and sage, can be easily accessible for cooking, but don't forget to rub their leaves to release their fragrance any time. You can also add low growing thyme to bed edges or in between patio stones for a fragrant groundcover that can handle light foot traffic.

Annuals

Nicotiana, Cleome, Petunia, Moonflower Vine, Impatiens, Alyssum, Heliotrope, Zinnia, Four o'clocks, Cosmos, Gladiolus, Stock, Dusty Miller

Herbs

Sage, Lavender

Perennials

Artemisia, Hakonechloa Grass, Sedum, Lamium, Hosta, Oenothera, Phlox, Stachys, Peony, Rose, Dianthus, Miscanthus, Ghost Fern, Lily, Shasta Daisy, Aruncus

Shrubs

Clethra, Hydrangea, Mockorange, Lilac, Sweetspire, Yucca

Trees


Pekin or Japanese Lilac, Crabapple, Hawthorn

Vines

Sweet Autumn Clematis, Climbing Hydrangea, Moonflower Vine





Image: *Oenothera biennis*



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