



# WE GO GARDENING

Newsletter of the West Chicago Garden Club

[www.westchicagogardenclub.org](http://www.westchicagogardenclub.org)

Volume 14 Issue 5 May 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.

## SAVE THE DATE!

WCGC Field trip to visit the West Chicago Prairie on Saturday, July 30.

More information soon.

## PLANT SALE THIS SATURDAY, MAY 21<sup>ST</sup>!

Be sure to keep your commitment to work at the sale, and if you have some spare time, come on over even if you didn't sign up.

## GARDEN CONSERVANCY OPEN DAYS THIS SUNDAY, MAY 22<sup>ND</sup>!

Some of our own members will be opening their gardens to the public. Take a few minutes to visit their lovely properties between 10 and 4.

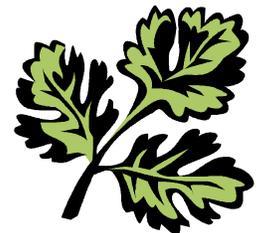
Lou Horton, Acorn Hollow, 1N735 Ingalton, West Chicago  
The Childress Garden - Glenelg, 29W385 Glen Road, West Chicago  
For more on all 5 gardens on the tour, see

<http://www.gardenconservancy.org/opendays/open-days-schedule/openday/367-chicagos-western-suburbs>.

## May 26th Meeting : "Herbs"

As part of the increasing interest in growing food, Master Gardener **Sandy Lentz** will be sharing information with us this month on herbs. She writes a column about herbs in the Master Gardener quarterly newsletter in addition to participating in help desks at area

garden centers and the Naperville Farmers' Market. She is also President of the Friends of Oak Park Conservatory. We look forward to hearing how these group of plants can enrich our gardens.



## BRING BACK YOUR PLANT SALE SIGNS!

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, June 23rd: "**Hydrangas**"

By a favorite speaker, Dave Wanniger of Beaver Creek Nursery



### Upcoming events (outside the club)

**Spring Bluff Nursery:** Mike Nowak (formerly of WGN radio) speaking on *I Am Not a Gardener, I Just Play One On the Radio!* Saturday, June 4, 1 p.m. Free, but please bring canned goods for local food pantries. Call 630-466-4278 to register in advance.

**Garden Walk at 19 Muirfield Circle, Wheaton:** Infant Welfare Society, Wheaton Chapter, June 24-25, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., \$15 in advance, \$20 at door Call 630-607-4469 after May 1st for tickets.

**Heinz Brothers Greenhouse:** Attract Hummingbirds to your Garden, June 11, 10 a.m., \$5.

**DuPage County Forest Preserve:** Native Plant Nursery Workday, June 11, 8-11 a.m., Blackwell. See more here including waiver form: <http://www.dupageforest.com/calendar.aspx?id=4294969287>

**Shady Hill Gardens:** Perennial Thursdays, all one-gallon perennials 20% off, all season long.

**Meyer Landscaping:** Through May 29, all crabapple and ornamental pear trees 25% off.

*Save the Date*

**Barnyard bonanza** • May 22<sup>nd</sup>

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**IT CAN'T RAIN FOREVER! WE'LL BE OUT IN THE YARD DOING THIS SOON! DON'T DESPAIR!**

### Club information

[www.westchicagogardenclub.org](http://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](mailto:jjhandeldds@yahoo.com)

Vice President:

Dick Darrah 630-584-1900, [info@bwdarrah.com](mailto:info@bwdarrah.com)

Treasurer:

Barb Darrah 630-584-1900, [info@bwdarrah.com](mailto:info@bwdarrah.com)

Secretary:

Dee Soustek 630-393-0652, [dsoustek@aol.com](mailto:dsoustek@aol.com)

Program Co-Chairs:

Pauline Briggs 630-545-2234, [pmbiggs@juno.com](mailto:pmbiggs@juno.com)  
 June Luther 630-876-1295, [june@markluther.com](mailto:june@markluther.com)

Information Director/Newsletter Editor:

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[emclluskey@sbcglobal.net](mailto:emclluskey@sbcglobal.net)

Plant Sale Chair:

Tom Fessler 630-231-0535, [fess2000@aol.com](mailto:fess2000@aol.com)

Publicity:

Melissa Birch, 630-621-0128, [melissabirch@gmail.com](mailto:melissabirch@gmail.com)



# Planned WCGC Events - 2011

| Date    | Speaker/Organizer                  | Topic/Event               | Date   | Speaker/Organizer                 | Topic/Event                      |
|---------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 26 May  | DuPage Master Gardeners            | Herbs                     | 25 Aug | Joannie Rocchi<br>Master Gardener | Unusual & Seldom Used Perennials |
| 23 Jun  | Dave Wanniger/Beaver Creek Nursery | TBD                       | 22 Sep | Tom Tyler/Bartlett Trees          | Trees                            |
| 28 July | All members                        | President's Barbeque      | 27 Oct | Mari Mackenbach                   | Holiday Decorating               |
| 30 July | Field Trip                         | West Chicago Prairie      | 17 Nov | All members                       | Dinner & Garden Dollar Auction   |
| 7 Aug   | Billie & Angie                     | Kruse "Open Garden" Party |        |                                   |                                  |

## OPEN WCGC BOARD POSITION

Please consider becoming part of the leadership of the club by becoming the West Chicago Library Garden Club Liaison. This is a Director at Large position and a voting member of the board. Responsibilities include annual coordination of donated magazine subscriptions to the library, selection of book titles for possible donation, and other collaborative work between the library and the garden club. If you are interested in this important but non-demanding position, please contact the club president, Jeff Handel.

### From the City of West Chicago website:

[http://www.westchicago.org/city\\_flower\\_form\\_2011.html](http://www.westchicago.org/city_flower_form_2011.html)

The City is launching a campaign to name an official flower. While the petunia has had some notoriety in our community, it has never been officially designated, and Dixon, Illinois has claimed the title of Petunia City.

Resident and business input is sought and a submission form has been created for nominations of an official flower. Let us know what flower would represent West Chicago, Illinois and why. The most convincing entries **will be chosen for a community-wide vote at this year's Blooming Fest.**



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

*Gardening is not some sort of game by which one proves his superiority over others, nor is it a marketplace for the display of elegant things that others cannot afford. It is, on the contrary, a growing work of creation, endless in its changing elements. It is not a monument or an achievement, but a sort of traveling, a kind of pilgrimage you might say, often a bit grubby and sweaty though true pilgrims do not mind that. A garden is not a picture, but a language, which is of course the major art of life.*

*Henry Mitchell*

This thought brings to mind the Kruse Museum garden, a sort of **‘growing work of creation,’** endless in its evolvement and tweaked by garden pilgrims over the years. Started in 1917 and maintained into the 1960’s by Celia Kruse and her family, the garden thrived. Then for almost thirty years it was grassed over and forgotten. In 1999 **Chris and Dennis Baxter and Nancy Assian**, docents at the Museum decided to excavate it and see if structures and remnants of the old garden remained. Ms. Assian realized the extent of the project and had a thought—resurrect the West Chicago Garden Club, dormant since the 1970’s, with the idea that the garden would be a club project. **Carole Bates was elected the first president** and the club and garden took off.

From the early plantings to the most recent additions, caretakers of the garden groomed and passed on their work to others. Members and nurseries added their donations. Over the years not all plants grew well, and some possible mistakes were made—why did Celia plant those lady bells? The garden is a kind of time travel.

When we work in the garden **we remember fellow gardeners** when we see their plants, even those gardeners almost lost in memory. The pilgrim today can look at the garden and possibly say, "Celia planted the hyacinths and her pear tree has great pears—too bad they’re so high. See Carole’s Miss Kim? It didn’t want to grow for her, but it’s doing well here. Pauline’s Iris rebloomed in September. That Summer Lilac is three years old. We got it from Lou. Barbara and Dick planted the lilacs when they were only a foot high. It’s variegated? It must be Billie’s. And where, oh, where is Marion’s Lespedeza? And so we garden and remember...



Dan Beebe, the garden pilgrim before us, and the members who gardened with him, can see the large white trellis to the east that was put in during their tenure and see plants nestled in at that time now much larger. And the Baxters and Ms. Assian can see the result of their excavation, a garden.

**We are now the pilgrims.** Here for a while, leaving some imprint and then we, as others before us, will pass the garden on to the next pilgrim. And the garden will continue to be a growing **“work of creation, endless in its changing elements...”**

A&B

**We Go Gardening**



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\* **WCGC in the News**

\* In the May/June edition of the City of West Chicago publication *Windows*, there is an article

\* about our very own West Chicago Garden Club! If you don't receive this publication, find it

\* on this webpage <http://www.westchicago.org/News/PDFs/westchicago-mayjune2011.pdf>

\* The club is also currently featured in the city's *Raising the Bar* blog, which features Interest-

\* ing Stories about Interesting People. The blog with great photos from the club can be found

\* at <http://www.westchicago.org/blogs/raisingthebar/index.html>.

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**PLANT SALE UPDATE**

As you read this, we're likely in the midst of plant sale preparations or maybe just putting our feet up after a long day of sales and cleaning up. We'll have more on the undoubted success of the sale in the June newsletter. For now, a quick THANKS VERY MUCH, IT TAKES EVERYONE'S HELP! And then it's back to work getting ready for the sale.



Also, please begin to save your pots as you work through your spring planting. Our supply is just about gone from all the potting we did this spring and we'll need them again for next year. Just tuck them in a corner of the garage and we'll tell you when and where to bring them soon.

We would like to thank and recognize all those businesses that were kind enough to contribute to the cost of our plant sale tent and tables which is a huge benefit for our sale. Please remember to thank these supporters:

- The Ball Seed Company**
- Fox Valley Volkswagen**
- The Jel-Sert Company**
- Northstar Credit Union**
- United Parcel Service**
- West Chicago Chiropractic**



|   |  |
|---|--|
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|---|--|



**Worth the Trip - Brussels' Flower Carpet** (thanks to Jon Passini for this great news tip!)

You may have heard of or even visited the Quilt Gardens in Elkhart County, Indiana. These gardens are laid out as quilt patterns across the county providing a beautiful display. (see more at <http://www.amishcountry.org/things-to-do/quilt-gardens>).



But if you're interested in more than a daytrip, maybe you want to consider visiting Brussels, Belgium, the weekend of 15 August 2012, for the biannual Flower Carpet extravaganza. This event is a year in the planning, assembled in just 4 hours, and is on display for only 3 days. The Flower Carpet is constructed using ~ 800,000 begonias packed so tightly no soil is required and is located at the Grand-Place in Brussels.

The first Floral Carpet as its present-day form was created in 1971 on the Grand-Place by the landscape architect E. Stautemans. Today when planning the carpets, considerations are given to special events, including ideas from local horticultural societies. In 2010, the carpet honored the Belgian presidency of the European Union, which rotates among the member countries. Other cultural events such as music performances and fireworks are also part of the fun during the weekend.

<http://www.flowercarpet.be/site/main.php?lg=en>



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Taking a trip and visiting a garden? Bring back photos and send them to [mccluskey@fnal.gov](mailto:mccluskey@fnal.gov) with some descriptions - we'll put them in the newsletter!



# Musings from Members

WCGC member can put help wanted ads or other kinds of appeals. Have something you want to advertise - contact the Information Director (see page 2).

No musings this month - check back again soon!



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**People Made Visible Community Garden**  
 in collaboration with St. Michael's United Church of Christ  
**LOOKING FOR HELP**

**Mission:** Create a locally grown food source and community building experience through gardening.

**Goal:** Provide an opportunity and example for growing your own food by allowing garden keepers to grow flowers and vegetables in a community garden.

**People Made Visible (PMV)** is currently working with a volunteer group to launch the community garden in a vacant lot located directly across Washington Street from the **St. Michael's United Church of Christ**.

PMV is seeking **monetary donations, goods-in-kind, and volunteer time to put the community garden together**. Currently PMV has secured 240 pounds of soil and organic fertilizer from Ball Seed Company of West Chicago.

Six raised beds will be constructed. Garden keepers can apply for either a full bed or 1/2 bed rental for a nominal fee. Garden keepers will briefly detail their plan to PMV about the use of their bed space. PMV will also maintain one full bed. The garden volunteers will help the garden keepers and PMV maintain the beds.

Contact: [info@peoplemadevisible.com](mailto:info@peoplemadevisible.com)



**Ageless Beauties: Plants that Stand the Test of Time** by *The Growing Place*



Peonies are some of the biggest, boldest and most beautifully fragrant of the herbaceous flowering plants for sun. They become grander each season and are extraordinarily long-lived. Tree peonies are showstoppers in sun to light shade with enormous crepe-paper flowers and woody stems. Somewhat new on the market are the Itoh hybrids, a cross of tree peonies and herbaceous peonies developed for large tissue-like flowers in unusual colors such as yellow. Of course, there are many types of old-fashioned herbaceous peonies in whites, pinks, corals, reds, and bi-colors with early, mid and late bloom times. The Coral Charm peony in the gardens at the Aurora location has been untouched for

about 20 years. There are even fernleaf varieties that offer delicate texture and early blossoms. One example, Laddie, has been growing at the Naperville location for nearly 50 years and we have propagated the ones for sale from the original plant.

Another large perennial for longevity is baptisia or false indigo. From our native *Baptisia australis* to the hot new cultivars, you can find one that suits your full sun site. In general, baptisia is a large, loosely vase shaped plant with blue green foliage and tall spikes of pea-like flowers followed by dark seedpods. The Chicago Botanic Garden has introduced many new varieties including ones that are a bit smaller in size. This prairie plant resents being moved and doesn't require division. At The Growing Place in Naperville, some of the baptisia in the Annuals Department is nearly 60 years old and still lovely.

Hosta is our classic perennial for shade. From large varieties such as Sum and Substance and Sagae to diminutive Blue Mouse Ears, there is a hosta for every shady site. These long-lived beauties thrive with division or left alone and offer big bold texture year after year. There are hundreds if not thousands of varieties of hosta to choose from in blues, greens, chartreuses, and many variegated types. You can easily add a splash of color with these hardy plants and some are fragrant in bloom. We enjoy including their lily-like flowers in late summer bouquets.

Some long-lived perennial varieties will be on sale at The Growing Place from June 3 to June 9. We hope you will join us on June 11 in Naperville for the daylong celebration 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Party: Diamonds and Delphiniums. Make a stepping-stone, enjoy sales, a celebration picnic bbq, a talk on old favorites, giveaways and more. Check [www.thegrowingplace.com](http://www.thegrowingplace.com) for details.



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