

Council of Rockford Gardeners, Inc.

Organized 3/21/1980

E-Issue V3 Issue 5
Editor: Shirley Wiklund

CRG Clubs:

No. IL Daffodil Society
Plantaholics
Potpourri
Seedlings
Wildflowers

Council Motto:

"Enjoy nature's bounty and
beauty through work and
creativity."

Council Website:

[http://councilofrockfordgardener
s.org/](http://councilofrockfordgardener
s.org/)

Upcoming Meetings:

Plantaholics

11/6/18

Harvest Potluck & Raffle
EJ Rebman's

Potpourri

11/13/18

Planning Meeting
Tavern on Clark

Seedlings

11/19/18

Annual Christmas
Dinner/Fundraiser

Wildflowers

11/15/18

Planning Meeting
Ambrose Christmas Store



October 2018



From the President's Pen

Co-Presidents: Ann Somers & Sarah Britton

Look out the window and what do you see? Green, lots and lots of green! What a treat in October!

We'll be presenting two \$1500 scholarships at our Holiday Luncheon & Scholarship Fundraiser on December 5. The recipients are Andre Vallejo and Ulysses Vallejo. If those names sound familiar, it's because they were also our scholarship recipients in 2017. Both are horticulture students at Kishwaukee College. Their dedication and pursuits to enhance horticulture in our community make them excellent choices for our scholarships.

Proceeds from our luncheons go to fund these scholarships. Please help us keep this great program going by attending the luncheons.

Keep playing in the dirt,

Sarah & Ann



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CRG Council Report

SUBMIT questions or
comments to:
CRGnews4u@gmail.com

REMEMBER to keep your
e-mail address current
with your individual club
and the Council.



Be sure to mark
your calendar
For the
CRG Holiday
Luncheon
&
Scholarship
Fundraiser



Date: December 5, 2018

Location: Mauh-Nah-Tee-See Country Club

More information will be provided
through individual garden clubs
as well as next month's e-news.

Council of Rockford Gardeners Dues

Clubs are responsible for collecting dues from their members.

Amounts are set by the clubs.

Each club then pays from the dues they've collected, \$11 per member to Council.

Council keeps \$5 and pays \$6 to Garden Clubs of Illinois.

GCI then pays \$.50 per member to National Council of State Garden Clubs.

This makes each payee a member of their garden club, the Council of Rockford Gardeners, Garden Clubs of Illinois and the National Council of State Garden Clubs!

Regardless of the number of CRG clubs to which you belong, dues to Council and therefore GCI and NCSGC are only paid once.

Habitat for Humanity

Habitat for Humanity is a nonprofit organization that helps people in our community and around the world build or improve a place they can call home.

Council of Rockford Gardeners is proud to help support decent and affordable housing by donating planters for 3 home dedications.

A sincere thank you to Mary Pinter for donating and delivering the planter from Wildflowers, and to Susan Schmidt of Potpourri for the planter she donated and delivered. There will be a third planter, with details to come.

Fall In The Rockford Area

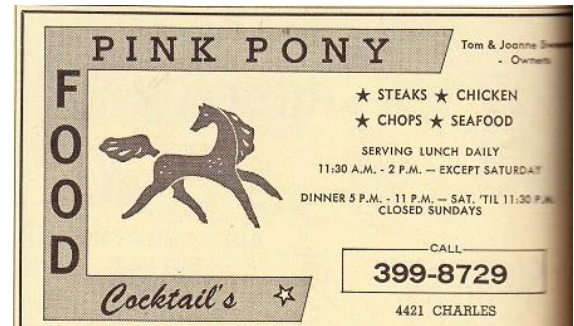
Looking for places to visit & enjoy the Autumn weather?

The Rockford area has many places to visit and events going on...check out Fall colors at the many Rockford area parks and riverfront.

Check out events including:
Lockwood's Pumpkin Fest
Autumn @ The Arbortum (Klehm)
Midway Village All Hallows Eve
Macktown Living History Educ. Ctr.

Area orchards include:
Currans, Edwards & Valley Orchards

Rockford Relics



Pink Pony
Rockford, IL

Rockford Relics

Remember when..?
How often do you drive past a location
and think to yourself
"I remember when that was...."?
Send photos/memories to
crgnews4u@gmail.com

The Pink Pony re-enters the restaurant race

David Spencer looked for two years, in a 70 to 80 mile radius of Rockford, for the perfect location to open a restaurant. He found it four blocks from his childhood home in the Pink Pony restaurant.

"It was right here in my backyard," Spencer said, "and I didn't realize it." Under Spencer's tutelage, the Pink Pony is open again after closing its doors more than two years ago. The Charles Street landmark has a long and illustrious history, with Spencer its fifth owner. *Star Tribune*, 12-17-11

Geri and Whitey Larson opened the restaurant in 1950, and named it the Pink Pony after a bar they had seen in Las Vegas. The Larson's ran the business until 1962, when it was sold to the Mau family, who in turn ran it until 1970, and sold it to Alex Armato. Armato ran the business for eight years before selling to Jack Neiswander, who kept it going until 1994.

Spencer grew up four blocks from the restaurant, a neighborhood fixture renowned for its excellent food and service.

"Everyone knew the Pink Pony," Spencer said.

In its heyday, the Pink Pony was

always full of regular customers, and Spencer hopes to welcome them back now that the restaurant has reopened. He's brought in two familiar faces to greet the regulars.

Ann Pearson and Ida (Block) Calkins

both worked at the Pony in the old days, and they've come back to resume their hostessing duties.

Pearson worked for original owners the Larsons, before leaving the Pink Pony in 1961. Calkins greeted cus-

tomers under Armato, from 1970 to 1978. The two grew up together, attending the same grade school, middle school and high school. And they're happy to be working together for Spencer at the restaurant they have always loved.

"I love the people here," Pearson said. "My kids say to me 'Mom, you started off there, and now you're back again. You've come full circle.'"

Both women remember a time when the same customers were in the restaurant day in and day out.

"They were like clockwork," Calkins said. "You knew what day it was by who was in the restaurant."

Pearson is happy to report that many of the regular customers are returning, as are many new ones.

"We really stress reservations for dinner," she said. "There've been times we've had to turn away walk ins, and we hate to do that."

After years of seeing what he calls "cookie cutter restaurants" springing up in Rockford, Spencer is happy to provide his customers with a fine meal they know they can trust. Above all, he has no plans to change the restaurant.

"The Pink Pony will stay the same for as long as I own it," Spencer said.

Horticulture Happenings

Gina Ross, University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener, Winnebago County
We Fall for Fall Colors!

It's the time of year when many of us jump into the car or take a walk to watch trees put on a colorful show. In summer trees get a good supply of sunlight and water. Photosynthesis is the process by which plants make their own food. This process takes place in green leaves during the day.

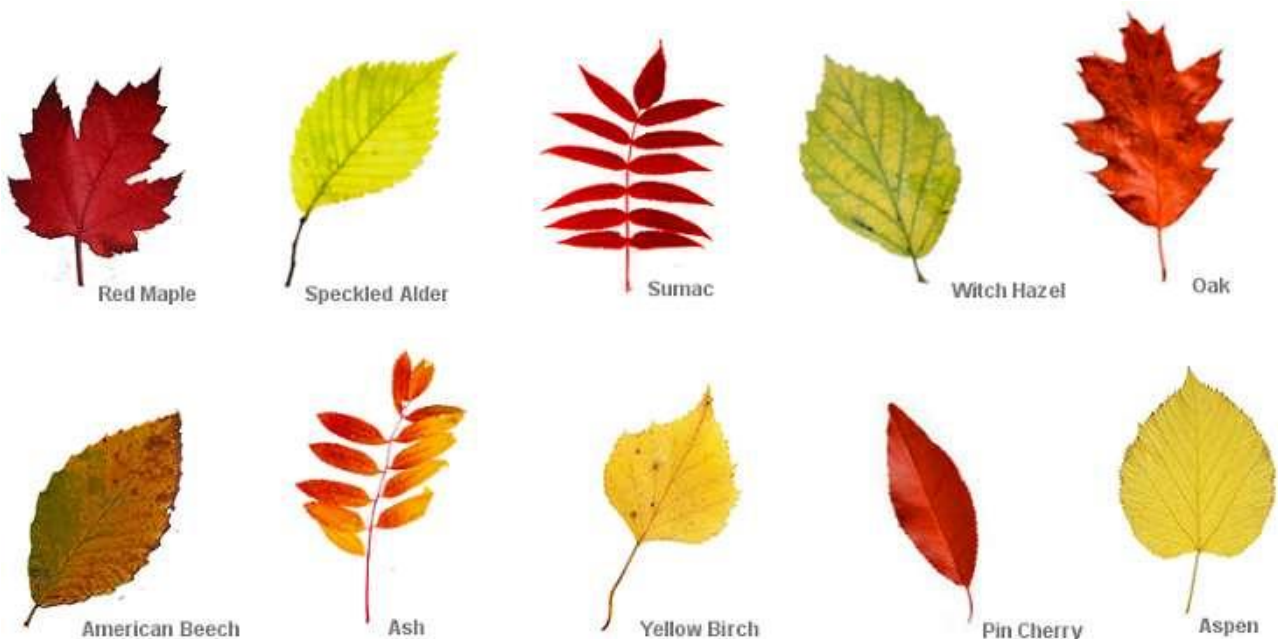
As summer ends and the days get shorter, trees begin to get ready for winter. During winter, there isn't enough daylight or water for photosynthesis. Trees rest and live off the food they have stored during the summer. Deciduous trees, like maples, oaks and elms, shed all their leaves in the fall in preparation for winter. But before they do that, they give us a brilliant show of color. The brightest colors are seen when late summer is dry, and autumn has bright sunny days and cool (low 40's Fahrenheit) nights. An early frost will quickly end the beautiful fall foliage color display.

So, what makes us fall for fall colors? Chlorophyll breaks down, the green color disappears and the yellow to orange colors become visible and give the leaves part of their fall glory. At the same time other chemical changes occur, which form additional colors through the development of red anthocyanin pigments.

The chemical pigment behind leaves turning yellow and orange is carotene. The yellow and orange pigment isn't visible until the production of chlorophyll slows in autumn.

What makes leaves change to red? Red leaves are the color they are because of molecules called "anthocyanins". Bright reds and purples we see in leaves are made mostly in the fall. In some trees, like maples, glucose is trapped in the leaves after photosynthesis stops. Sunlight and the cool nights of autumn cause the leaves to turn this glucose into a red color. The brown color of leaves as in oaks comes from tannin, a bitter waste product left in the leaves.

Unlike deciduous trees, evergreens keep most of their leaves during the winter. They have special leaves, resistant to cold and moisture loss. Some, like pine and fir trees, have long thin needles. Others, like holly, have broad leaves with tough, waxy surfaces. On very cold, dry days, these leaves sometimes curl up to reduce their exposed surface. Evergreens may continue to photosynthesize during the winter if they get enough water, but the reactions occur more slowly at colder temperatures.



The Stately Oak

By Yvette DeWispelaere

University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener, Winnebago County

"By any standard, oak merits the distinction of being named the people's choice for America's National Tree. Matt Harris, Chief Executive, Arbor Day Foundation.

In 1973, schoolchildren all over Illinois voted to make the White Oak our State Tree. *Quercus alba* grows to 100 feet tall and can live to 400 years and is found in every county of the Land of Lincoln. The leaves have seven to nine rounded lobes and are bright green at the top and dark green at the bottom, turning red, brown, yellow, gold or purple in the fall. Named "White Oak" because of the lightness of the bark, it makes an excellent shade tree. White Oak is also the State tree of Connecticut and Maryland. District of Columbia, Georgia, Iowa and New Jersey have other Oaks as their state trees as well.

They say the best time to plant an Oak tree is twenty years ago... the second best time to plant an Oak tree is today. Trees reduce pollution, clean our rivers and fight global warming. They reduce our heating and cooling costs, beautify neighborhoods and support countless species of songbirds. There are several varieties of Oaks that grow well in Northern Illinois for purchase at reputable nurseries. Be sure to water your tree well the first year of planting. Or, take a walk and pick up a few acorns. It's fairly easy to grow a free tree.

'Acorn' the typically ovoid fruit or nut of an oak, enclosed at the base by a cupule, originates from the Middle English acorne before 1000. Collect acorns as soon as they fall. Check viability of your acorn by placing it in water. If the acorn sinks, it's good to plant. Discard acorns that float or have holes in them. White Oak and Swamp Oak acorns should be planted in the fall and will germinate almost immediately. Bur Oak, Red Oak and Pin Oak acorns need to be stratified before planting. Stratification of the Bur Oak is 30-60 days and Red and Pin Oak is 30-45 days. To Stratify: place the acorns in a container in the refrigerator. If you want to just plant them out, cover them with chicken wire to protect them from animals that may dig them up for food. Acorns should be planted one half to one inch deep in a protected area where seedlings can receive proper care for one to two years. (I bury a pot in the ground for transplant later.)

Acorn crops vary from year to year. While White Oak (*Quercus alba*) produces acorns every four to six years, most other Oaks produce every two years. Acorns of the White Oak, Swamp White Oak (*Quercus bicolor*) and Bur Oak (*Quercus macrocarpa*) mature in one year. Pin Oak (*Quercus palustris*) and Red Oak (*Quercus rubra*) mature in two years.

Early Settlers used the wood from this mighty tree to build their homes and furniture. They found solace in its shade and fed the fruit (acorns) to their livestock. Oak Trees support deer, turkey, squirrels and other wildlife feeding on the acorns and living in and around the trees. Migrating and breeding birds find essential food for themselves and their young in the 534 species of *Lepidoptera* (moth and butterfly larvae) supported by the genus *Quercus*. The Chicago Botanic garden is host to 108 species of Oak trees and has documented 90 species of Butterflies and approximately 250 species of birds.

A few facts: Oaks are wind-pollinated. Many Oaks have persistent leaves which means they do not drop until new spring growth appears. The U.S.S. Constitution, also known as "Old Ironsides," was built from White Oak. Cannonballs bounced off the hard oak, hence the nickname.



The Happy Gardener's Guide

"LEAVES + GRASS = GOLD"

Each autumn, the leaves fall and the grass must be mowed one more time. It's a chore to rake, stow and tote those lawn and leaf bags to the curb or dump. Here's some good news: mix the chopped leaves and clipped grass and place the mixture in a simple four-foot wire bin. By next spring, it will turn into "gold" – that is, "black gold," commonly known as compost. This nutrient rich by-product of microorganisms improves soil structure and helps retain moisture. Thankfully, bacteria and fungi do all this work for free!

Having "free" compost is in itself a boon, but the part I also value about having a compost bin is the role it plays in the winter: it's an excellent excuse to go outdoors and do something related to gardening. Aerating the organic matter aids in the decomposition. This is accomplished by turning/stirring the compost, which is mild work on a cold day that warms the body and reminds the gardener that when spring comes, the "black gold" will be ready for awakening perennials and for annuals that are yet to be.

I remember the first time I stuck my hand into a compost pile that was "cooking," and felt the warmth as the steam escaped. What a wonder that small organisms that I can't even see were breaking down grass and leaves that are no longer beautiful. The transformation was the stuff my plants dream about-dark rich, crumbly earth that is easy on roots.

I should probably warn prospective "rot-managers," that once you try it, you may always be a composter. In fact, your composting habit may influence others in your circle. For example, my husband now supports my habit with donations from his annual chore of cleaning out the rain gutters on the house. While this is not his favorite task, he now does so with a little more gusto, knowing that I appreciate his contribution to my pile. Once, a stalk of corn grew in the rain gutter-that speaks of its nutrient level!

Last, but not least, when my grandchildren come for a visit, they like to check out my compost bin to see if anything is "cooking." A science lesson soon follows.

To compost, or not to compost? I urge the former! Don't let this opportunity to make gold for the garden slip away!

Charlotte A. Swanson
Consultant, Gardening Schools
swanson@daltontel.net

Taken from *The National Gardener*, Fall 2018

REPORTS FROM 10/01/18 COUNCIL MEETING

TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance as of August 31, 2018.....	\$3,135.24
Receipts.....	<u>0.00</u>
Balance.....	3,135.24
Total disbursements.....	<u>0.00</u>
Ending Balance as of September 30, 2018.....	\$3,135.24
Submitted by Becki Dennis, Treasurer	

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Programs – **Ann Somers** reported that our Christmas luncheon is to be held on Wednesday, December 5th, at Mauh-Nah-Tee-See Country Club. The proceeds from our luncheons fund our scholarships. We need to emphasize that on our flyer and in any advertising of our luncheons.

Brian Pruksa from Midway Village will do a short presentation – no more than 30 minutes.

In addition, Ann will add a section to the flyer stating that “I am unable to attend but would like to make a donation”. Members all agreed that this was a good idea.

A discussion was then held regarding the order of the luncheon – when to do the raffles, maybe during lunch instead of at the end. The raffles could be spread out. And perhaps the speaker should talk right after lunch. We need to speed up the length of the luncheon. We could do 3 raffles during salads, 3 during the main course, and 3 during dessert. Members suggested not doing it during the main course. Awards could be at the end of the main meal.

Ann said that we will meet again in November and that we should think about the order of the raffle, speaker, and awards for the December luncheon.

Ann sends the flyer to the District 1 presidents and to the Master Gardeners in Winnebago County. She also sends them to some McHenry County Master Gardeners. It also goes out to others who know the speaker. In addition, she sends it to the Freeport Garden Club.

We usually have between 80 – 100 people for the luncheon. Ann suggested that we share the flyer with anyone who might be interested. We should “invite a friend”. Advertise the luncheon by word of mouth.

Deb Bieschke reported that the Spring Luncheon will be held on Wednesday, April 24, 2019 at Mauh-Nah-Tee-See Country Club.

Publicity – No report.

Awards – **Elaine Parrovecchio** was in touch with Janet Gallagher from Kishwaukee College and told her that we were again giving scholarships to Andre and Ulysses Vallejo. Janet thought it was great as they are very active in the program at Kishwaukee College. Elaine sent a letter out to each of them.

REPORTS FROM 9/10/18 COUNCIL MEETING CONTINUED

Awards (continued)

At the awards luncheon Elaine will tell everyone why they chose them again. This is the last time to award scholarships to them as this is their last year. Elaine will say that they are ambitious and dedicated and that we are following up on their journey.

Civic and Conservation – **Diane Donze** reported that on Sunday, September 23rd, Susan Schmitz and Mary Pinter delivered planters for Habitat, and there is one more to be done. Susan had pictures of the planter she took, and Ann suggested that she send the pictures to Kathy Batzkall to put on the website.

Garden Walk – **Arch Smith** was not in attendance, but Ann Somers reported that Arch has 8 gardens lined up for the 2019 Garden Walk.

Horticulture – **Gina Ross** was not in attendance, but Ann Somers reported that Gina is writing an article for the newsletter.

Hospitality – **Mary Pinter** was not in attendance, but **Ann Somers** reported that we will again meet here at Mary's Café on November 5th at 9:00 A.M.

Newsletter – **Ann Somers** reported that we should get any information to **Shirley Wiklund** by Saturday. If we have any Garden Gab or any questions, send them to Shirley. We want the newsletter to be fun. We have 11 members who don't use email, and their newsletters are snail mailed to them.

Parliamentarian – **Mary Pinter** was not in attendance.

Sunshine – **Peg Goral** was not in attendance. Ann reported that she saw Geri McNeany, and Geri fell down the basement steps and broke her leg back in August. She will have Peg send her a card. Be sure to email Peg with any card requests.

Ways & Means – **Karin Emery** was not in attendance, but Ann Somers reported that Karin will let the club presidents know how many raffle prizes they need to provide for the luncheon. If anyone wants to provide a raffle prize, let Karin or Ann know. Anyone can contribute a raffle item.

Website – **Kathy Batzkall** was not in attendance. Ann Somers reported that she and Kathy are working on a master list of members. Each club needs to let Kathy know of any changes, additions, or deletions to their membership list. Kathy needs current information for the website.

Also, send Kathy photos of club or Council related events.

