

COUNCIL OF ROCKFORD GARDENERS, INC.

Organized 3/21/1980

E-Issue V 5 Issue 1

Editor: Kathy Batzkall

JANUARY, 2020

The 5 CRG Clubs:

Northern IL Daffodil Society
Plantaholics
Potpourri
Seedlings
Wildflowers

Council Motto:

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

Council Website:

councilofrockfordgardeners.org

Upcoming Meetings:

(Per website,
check with club to verify)

Plantaholics

February 4
Mary Ann Miller's home

Potpourri

January 14
Garden Trivia at Arch Smith's

Seedlings

No meetings
January 20 or Feb. 17

Wildflower

January 23
Wildflower Birthday Party
Thunder Bay Grill



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

Co-Presidents: Ann Somers & Sarah Britton

What a fantastic CRG Holiday Luncheon and Scholarship Fundraiser! Deb put together a wonderful day of celebration. She created a festive atmosphere with beautifully wrapped packages, pinecones and votives as centerpieces, red and green napkins and candy cane festooned cupcakes. Thanks, Deb!

Thanks to our clubs for providing great raffle items. Karin and Lynne organized and ran the raffle so well they BOTH won items... two each!!! We earned a whopping \$700 on the raffles! Thank you to those who bought raffle tickets!

Elaine, our Awards and Scholarship Chair, presented a \$2500 scholarship check to Walter Schmitt. His appreciation was heartfelt. Thanks to member support, CRG has awarded \$25,000 in scholarships over the last 20 years!

Alex Mills, Executive Director at Klehm shared his 15 favorite spring flowering trees and shrubs. Included were lilacs that were planted in the newly dedicated Ethel Johnson Lilac Garden. There will be beautiful growth to behold at Klehm this spring!

Until then, dream of sunny skies and southern breezes that warm the soil to create the perfect environment for all things green to sprout!

Keep playing in the dirt,

Sarah & Ann

"Winter is the time for comfort - it is the time for home."

~ Dame Edith Louisa Sitwell (1887 – 1964) British poet

JANUARY
2020

In This Issue:

P1
Club Information;
President's Pen

P2
Garden Q & A,
Sunshine,
Word of the Day

P3
Seed Shopping

P4
Holiday Luncheon

P5
Horticulture
Happenings

P6
CRG Council Report

P7
Recycling

P8
Indoor/Outdoor
Adventures

SUBMIT questions or
comments to:

CRGnews815@gmail.com

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



GARDEN TIPS AND TRICKS

You could win \$\$\$\$ by sending us your garden tips

Submit a garden tip to CRGnews815@gmail.com. Your name will be included in a drawing for a \$25 gift card to Pepper Creek. Drawing will take place at the December CRG Luncheon and Scholarship Fundraiser.



GARDEN Q & A

Q: Ann Somers commented, "I collected hickory nuts this fall. I read somewhere that I was better off trying to grow them in a pot in the spring. Trying to sow them directly in the ground almost assures they would become squirrel lunch. So, anyone have any experience germinating hickory nuts or acorns or buckeyes? Would appreciate any thoughts. Thank you."

Send suggestions to CRGnews815@gmail.com.



SEND SOME SUNSHINE

The Council of Rockford Gardeners has a "Sunshine" Committee to send cards to members who are ill or who have lost someone dear. Please contact Peg Goral to have a card sent.

Email: jignmag@comcast.net or phone: 815-877-1045.

WORD OF THE DAY Godwink

An event or personal experience, often identified as coincidence, so astonishing that it is seen as a sign of divine intervention, especially when perceived as the answer to a prayer.

Origin: God + wink; coined by Squire Rushnell, author of a series of books that include the phrase "When God winks" in the title.

SAVVY SEED CATALOG SHOPPING

By Kathy Batzkall

Well, what I thought would be an interesting topic for January turned out to be a surprise for me! Only two people of many I queried order from seed catalogs. The rest are like me—preferring to sit with a cup of coffee, watch the snow outside, enjoy the beautiful pictures and dream of spring and summer gardens!

Kathy Crandall recommended the Winnebago County Soil and Water Conservation District Tree Sale 2020.

An order form and pricelist is available online:

http://winnebagoswcd.org/swcd/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/20_tree_order_form_pricelist.pdf

Ann Somers has successfully ordered from Seed Savers in Iowa: <https://www.seedsavers.org/>

The Potpourri Garden Club took a trip up north a few years ago and saw many beautiful possibilities for growing plants from seeds at Jungs in Randolph, Wisconsin: <https://www.jungseed.com/>

For those of you who may want to embark on a seed buying adventure, EJ Rebman suggested a podcast, <https://joegardener.com/podcast/033-savvy-seed-catalog-shopping/> which I will summarize here:

To help narrow the field for your needs, consider the following tips for where to place your seed orders.

Make a Plan. It's the best thing you can do to prevent overbuying, impulse purchases, and sourcing the best companies for what you need.

Know your Limitations. Buy seeds that grow well in the conditions you have. Do you have a short growing season? Are there constraints on how much room you have to grow? There's no point in spending too much time with catalogs for plants that require conditions you can't offer.

What Type of Gardener are You? Perhaps your passion is vegetable gardening with not a lot of interest in flower gardening. Or you may insist on only buying certified organic seeds. Being realistic about who you are as a gardener will quickly help narrow the field.

Do you only need small quantities? Some companies specialize in offering smaller quantities. It's a good way to save money without having to buy more than you need.

Check Company Reputation. If you want to learn more about a company's reputation, you can visit online services such as Garden Watchdog. Or call the company and talk to the customer service department.



Thank goodness my seed catalogs finally arrived.
I almost started cleaning the house!

ment. Ask fellow gardeners who they like. Word of mouth from trusted sources is one of the best ways to get sound advice on the best seed-buying sources.

Deciding What to Buy

While it's human nature to stay in our comfort zone and stick with what we know and like, that can be quite limiting with all the wonderful options for seed varieties today. I confess to being one who tends to stick to what I know and like. Yet that is such a missed opportunity for great adventure and new discoveries. Here is my suggestion for the best of all worlds.

Tried and True: There's nothing wrong with sticking with what you know and like. There's a lot to be said for keeping with a winning track record. But don't stop there.

Something New: The best way to become a better gardener is always to experiment. And that certainly includes growing new plants. While you don't have to make drastic changes in your plant preferences, there are just too many varieties available to not venture out even a little. There's no harm in trying new things.

Something Fun: This is where you should let your hair down and go for something you've never tried before, not even remotely. Perhaps it's an unusual or exotic winter squash. Maybe it's a new cut flower variety or new-to-you native perennials. I guarantee that you will find a new excitement simply by growing something a little out of the ordinary.

Mix it Up: Even if your interest in seed starting and gardening is limited to vegetables, herbs, or flowers, grow some of each. Diversity is the key to a healthy, thriving garden. It's also the key to attracting a wide array of beneficial insects and pollinators. Your garden will thank you for it.

2019 HOLIDAY LUNCHEON AND FUNDRAISER

WALTER SCHMITT AWARDED CRG SCHOLARSHIP

The Holiday Luncheon and Scholarship Fundraiser took place on December 11, 2019 at Mauh-Nah-Tee-See Golf Club, and at this event the Council of Rockford Gardeners was honored to present Walter Schmitt a \$2500 scholarship. Walter is a veteran of the United States Army, who is studying at Kishwaukee College in Malta, IL and will graduate from Kishwaukee next fall with an Associate degree in Applied Science. His specialties are ground covers, succulents, aquaponics and hydroponics, as well as non-chemical biological control and integrated pest management.



Walter Schmitt and girlfriend, Stephanie.



Mauh Nah Tee See dining room dressed for the holidays.



Alex Mills, Executive Director of Klehm Arboretum.



Some of the many wonderful door prizes: gift certificates and a mini fireplace.

Deb Bieschke and Ann Somers created centerpieces of wrapped gifts surrounded with pinecones and votives.

HORTICULTURE HAPPENINGS

Gina Ross, University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener, Winnebago County

We ring in a New Year and Decade with Proven Winners 2020 Perennial and Annual Plant of the Year.

The Proven Winner 2020 perennial plant is Denim 'n Lace' Russian Sage *Perovskia atriplicifolia*. This Russian Sage will neatly grow upright and can be used in a perennial border. Dense panicles of sky-blue flowers attract hummingbirds and butterflies and are also deer resistant. It thrives in full sun with 6 or more hours a day. Denim 'n Lace has a height of 28 – 32" and a spread of 34 – 38". It is drought tolerant.

2020 Annual of the Year is The Diamond Collection of Euphorbia

Diamond Frost® *Euphorbia* is a classic style with an airy habit. It mingles beautifully with other medium vigor companions in hanging baskets and upright containers and has an open habit. Height: 12-18"

Diamond Snow™ *Euphorbia*, the newest member of the collection, can also be paired with other medium vigor companions in hanging baskets and upright containers. It has a branching habit and is much denser than Diamond Frost and its flowers are double, giving it a stronger, brighter presence in combinations. Height: 12-18"

Diamond Mountain® *Euphorbia* is a super-sized variety that is designed to work well in extra-large hanging baskets and upright containers and can also be used in the landscape. Height: 24-36"

The Diamond Collection thrives in sun, shade, heat, drought and poor soil. They are easy to grow and don't require a lot of fuss.

A gardening trend for 2020 is Vertical Gardening. Vertical gardening is a great way to grow plants in a small space whether it be on a deck, condo, apartment or house and the possibilities are endless. Sun or shade, there is something for everyone. Vegetables, herbs, perennials and annuals can be grown vertically.

Build a trellis - hang a basket - reuse a rack - plant with upside down pots – Create!!!



Russian Sage



Diamond Frost



Diamond Snow



Diamond Mountain



Wishing you a Very Happy New Year and a Great Gardening Season!

JANUARY 6, 2020 COUNCIL MEETING REPORT

TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance as of October 30, 2019..... \$3,715.14

Receipts: Holiday luncheon reservations & Misc..... 3,540.00

Disbursements:

Walter Schmitt – scholarship..... 2,500.00

Mauh-Nah-Tee-See Country Club..... 1,744.25

Change for Silent Auction..... 100.00

Ending Balance as of December 31, 2020..... \$2,910.89

- Submitted by **Becki Dennis**, Treasurer

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Programs – Ann Somers reported for Deb Bieschke. The Holiday Luncheon was great. The date for the Spring Luncheon is April 29th and will be the beginning of the 40th anniversary celebration of CRG that will last all year. Each club will be asked to do a table setting to be judged, and prizes will be awarded.

Publicity – No report. We still need someone to take over the Publicity position.

Awards – Elaine Parrovecchio reported that Walter Schmitt was the recipient of our scholarship. Elaine said that he was so nice, very polite, and appreciative of receiving the scholarship. He is very dedicated and focused on his studies.

Ann Somers reported that Council received \$215 in additional donations from members who were unable to attend but sent in a donation for the Scholarship Fund. In addition, Ann reported that we have given \$25,000 in scholarships over the years.

Civic and Conservation – Diane Donze had no report.

Garden Walk – Arch Smith reported that he has 8 gardens lined up for the Garden Walk on July 8, 2020, with 3 in Cherry Valley.

Arch also reported that Kathy Batzkall suggested doing more of a flyer instead of the tri-fold brochure, which would save money.

Horticulture – Ann Somers reported that Gina Ross will continue to write the articles for the newsletter.

Hospitality – Mary Pinter reported that there is no Council meeting in February. The next meeting is Monday, March 2nd, at noon, at Tavern on Clark. Officers will be installed.

Newsletter – Kathy Batzkall reported that she would like all information to her by the end of the week. Ann reminded us that the various clubs will do articles for the newsletter starting with Plantaholics in March, then Potpourri will have April, Seedlings will have May, and Wildflowers will have June.

Parliamentarian – Mary Pinter said that we are doing fine.

Sunshine – Peg Goral had no report.

Ways & Means – Lynne Franzen-Lynde reported that the raffle prizes were excellent, and \$700 was raised. That was the most money ever made on raffles, even though attendance was down. Lynne wants to thank the clubs for the prizes. Lynne reported that the 50/50 raffle collected \$160, so the winner got \$80.

Website – Kathy Batzkall reported that she needs the club membership lists by March 1, 2020.

Remember to check our council website for
club meetings and membership updates.
To get the password for the “Members Only” page,
consult with your club president.

[HTTP://COUNCILOFROCKFORDGARDENERS.ORG/](http://councilofrockfordgardeners.org/)

NOTES ON RECYCLING

Recycling Plastic bags and film

From How2recycle.info and Earth911.com

Plastic Bag Recycling Preparation

Remove anything inside the bags, such as receipts, stickers, or crumbs. All these items will contaminate your bag load.

Keep a bag collection bin in your house, such as one big garbage bag for all bags. Since they compact easily, you should be able to fit 50 to 100 plastic bags in one garbage bag.

Examples of plastic bags to include:

Retail, carryout, produce, newspaper, bread, and dry cleaning bags (clean, dry and free of receipts and clothes hangers)

Zip-top food storage bags (clean and dry)

Plastic shipping envelopes (remove labels), deflate bubble wrap and air pillows.

Product wrap on cases of water/soda bottles, paper towels, napkins, disposable cups, bathroom tissue, diapers, and female sanitary products

Furniture and electronic wrap

Plastic cereal box liners (but if it tears like paper, do not include)

Please recycle only clean, dry plastic bags and film.

Do not include:

Degradable/compostable bags or film packaging

Pre-washed salad mix bags

Frozen food bags

Candy bar wrappers

Chip bags

Six-pack rings

Why Recycle Plastic Bags

Plastic bags are among the most common sources of marine debris, where they can be mistaken as food by birds and fish.

Plastic bags don't biodegrade, meaning it will take hundreds of years for them to decompose in a landfill.

Recycling a ton of plastic bags (about 450,000 bags) saves 11 barrels of oil.

Store Drop-Off

Plastic bags, wraps, and films can't be recycled in your curbside recycling bins. But, you can take some of these items to local retail stores where they collect plastic grocery bags for recycling. Any package that you see with the How2Recycle Store Drop-Off label can be recycled this way. Schnucks, Walmart, Lowes, Target, Kohl's.

Which is better for the environment: paper or plastic bags?

When it comes to production, paper bags require 2.2 times more energy and 4.7 times more water to manufacture than plastic bags. Paper bags are also nine times heavier, meaning they use more energy to transport.

When it comes to disposal, both products are very easy to recycle, but paper bags are accepted in far more curbside programs. Paper bags are also an insignificant source of marine debris, and they biodegrade, unlike plastic.

If you're looking for the most eco-friendly alternative, bring your own reusable bags to the store. They take more resources to produce than paper or plastic, but they should each last five to 10 years.

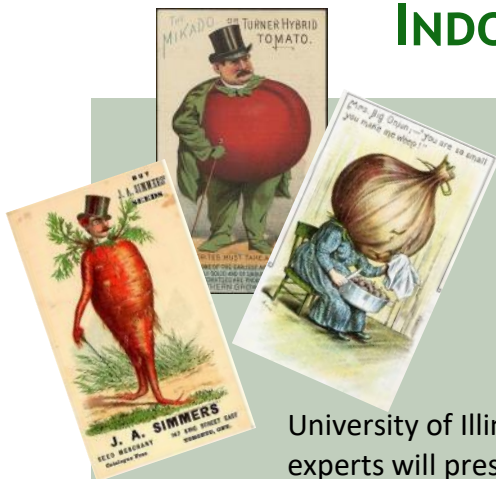
How fast do things biodegrade?

Science Learning Hub website

This table shows how long some common items will take to break down if left in the environment.

Vegetables	5 days –1 month
Paper	2–5 months
Cotton T-shirt	6 months
Orange peels	6 months
Tree leaves	1 year
Wool socks	1–5 years
Plastic-coated milk cartons	5 years
Leather shoes	25–40 years
Nylon fabric	30–40 years
Tin cans	50–100 years
Aluminum cans	80–100 years
Glass bottles	1 million years
Styrofoam cup	500 years to ∞
Plastic bags	500 years to ∞

INDOOR / OUTDOOR ADVENTURES



SAVE THE DATE...

Gardening for Food, Flowers & Fun

Presented by University of Illinois Extension

Saturday, March 7, 2020 | NIU Rockford (8500 E State Street, Rockford)

University of Illinois Extension educators, master gardeners and other plant and gardening experts will present a variety of education sessions and hands on workshops.

More information available at extension.illinois.edu/jsw or 815 986-4357.

Art Exhibition - "Bold Abstractions"

Rockford Art Museum

711 N. Main St., Rockford, IL

(815) 968-2787

Through January 26, 2020, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Free daily admission to all visitors during the exhibition

Blumen Gardens VIP Vintage & Maker Market

Friday, January 31 & Saturday, February 1

Blumen Gardens

403 Edward St, Sycamore, IL

Friday: VIP event 3PM to 8PM. Complimentary drinks, early bird shopping at the market, food trucks and specials. VIP event ticket: \$10

Saturday: 9AM to 4PM. \$2 entry fee will be donated to the food pantry. Shop from multiple vendors, food trucks, and join in on any of our make & take workshops.

Orchid Quest 2020

Olbrich Botanical Gardens

3330 Atwood Ave., Madison, WI

Saturday, February 1, 9 AM – 4 PM

Sunday, February 2, 9 AM – 3 PM

Fantastic displays of blooming orchids, hundreds of orchids for sale, informative lectures, raffle and silent auction.

Wisconsin Garden and Landscape Expo

FEBRUARY 7-9, 2020

Fri: 12-7pm | Sat: 9am-6pm | Sun: 10am-4pm

Alliant Energy Center | Madison, Wisconsin

For workshops and seminars, check the web-site:

<https://www.wigardenexpo.com/>

Chicago Botanic Garden Orchid Show

Canterbury Bus Tour with a hot gourmet luncheon, and time for shopping in Lake Forest

Wednesday, March 18

With more than 10,000 orchids, all blooming at once, the Orchid Show is the only show of its kind in the Chicago area! The colors are bold, the flowers elegant and bizarre, spread throughout seven rooms, making this a fascinating and interesting event. Departure at 9:00 am and arrive back in Rockford about 6:00 pm. Cost is \$95 per person; includes admission to the orchid show, luncheon and transportation.

Call Janet at 815.398.1454

or email CanterburyTours@comcast.net

"In winter we lead a more inward life. Our hearts are warm and cheery, like cottages under drifts, whose windows and doors are half concealed, but from whose chimneys the smoke cheerfully ascends."

—Henry David Thoreau