

COUNCIL OF ROCKFORD GARDENERS, INC.

Organized 3/21/1980

E-Issue V 5 Issue 3

Editor: Kathy Batzkall

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 Cancelled

until the
'Stay at Home' mandate
is lifted.

Please check with your
garden club.



APRIL, 2020



Hellebore or Lenten Rose

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

Co-Presidents: Ann Somers & Sarah Britton

As we continue to find ways to adapt to the current stay at home situation in place because of the novel coronavirus, spring has arrived and our gardens are progressing in their usual manner. We can take comfort in that!

I'm spending more time observing the miracles unfolding in our gardens. On walks and on my daily turn around our yard, I see things of incredible beauty and rebirth. I'm looking at bud break and tiny green starts poking through the soil. Spring bulbs are providing a colorful show. Star magnolias are ready to explode in glory. The carpets of Siberian squill make me smile and make me hope lawn mowers aren't activated too soon! Get out there, keep physical distance and look at the magic happen!

I'm also exercising my brain by playing that game I play each spring-trying to remember what was planted where. I make lists, draw diagrams, use plant markers... and I still play the game! Do you too?

We are on hold with scheduling of CRG events and club meetings. We just don't know when or how we'll be able to gather. Rest assured we will be together when it is safe for us to do so. In the meantime...

Keep playing in the dirt,

Sarah & Ann

~ Save the Date ~

("Hopefully")

2020 Gathering of Clubs: Thursday, June 11.

APRIL
2020

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SUBMIT questions or
comments to:

CRGnews815@gmail.com

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



GARDEN CLUB PRESIDENTS' REPORTS

Plantaholics- This is one short and sweet calendar for Plantaholics. As we are all aware, everything has been cancelled for our April meeting but we were supposed to visit Pepper Creek and have a walking tour of their house plants. I would imagine that it would have turned into a walking tour of all the plants that they are growing for sales this spring. It would also have been a joy for our senses. The smell of a greenhouse in the spring always brings hope that it will be coming soon. The view of so many plants blooming is always a wonderful sight.

Potpourri- On March 10, Potpourri's program was held at Rock River Water Reclamation District. Thirteen members attended and had a very enjoyable and informative meeting. The foyer was very impressive with fish and turtles in large aquariums to prove that the water was very well treated and clean! We were shown a model of the layout of the plant and our guide explained the processes they use to reclaim the water. We were then taken on a guided tour outside to see some of the procedures that the water is put through so that we could experience the vastness of the plant. Following the guided tour we drove to Fresco at the Gardens for a delicious lunch!

Unfortunately, we had to cancel our meeting at Seversen Dells to view the spring wildflowers this month due to Coronavirus. Our next meeting is scheduled for May 19 when we hope to have our plant exchange meeting at Mary Ann Miller's home.

Seedlings- Seedlings had to cancel March meeting for safety of members.

Wildflowers- Wildflower Club is hoping to go to Cherry Hill Farm on May 28. Our April trip to Flower Factory is cancelled.

It's spring!

Get out and enjoy it while keeping physical distance from your neighbors, friends and anyone who doesn't live in your house.



GARDEN CLUB NEWS

Get to know the Potpourri Garden Club

In March of 1978 a group of enthusiastic women met under the guidance of Edythe Bailey to form a new garden club. Many of the women were newcomers to Rockford. The first formal meeting was April 12, 1978 and Shirley Pettis was elected the first president. Members suggested several names for this new venture and "Potpourri" seemed to be everyone's favorite. The first members of Potpourri were Edythe Bailey, Marge Bloomquist, Mary Cloery, Shirley Freund, Inez Hayden, Vera Jackson, Sharon Johnson, Hazel Klirt, Sue Leshner, Lorraine Lightcap, Ginny Loesch, Shirley Pettis, Eleanor Rowland, Jan Schabecher, Sylvia Schultz, Laura Schulz, Robert Sell, and Gladys Swensen.

The members of Potpourri had lofty dreams of enhancing gardening skills, attempting service projects, trips to gardening centers and shops, plus the added benefit of acquiring new friends. Projects taken on were plantings at Lewis Lemon School, areas along the river in Shorewood Park, several flower plantings in local nursing home grounds, plus some help in the beautification of parts of the downtown area planters. A major venture was at Midway Village and Museum Center. In the Spring of 1980, Potpourri took charge of the herb garden and spent a lot of time planting, weeding, harvesting, and drying the herbs. When this was accomplished, they packaged the herbs for sale in the museum's gift shop, complete with directions for



Tea and tour at Ravenstone Castle, Harvard, IL..



Bison watch at Nachusa Grasslands.



Plant exchange and luncheon at Mary Ann Miller's.



Garden Trivia winners at Arch Smith's home.

using the herbs. The project lasted for many years.

Several members were also active in the Winnebago Garden Council, which Potpourri became part of. Disagreement with goals of the Winnebago Garden Council led several clubs to form another garden council. The Council of Rockford Gardeners was formed in 1980 and Potpourri became one of the founding clubs. Several of their members have been members on this board, even up to this day. They have supported garden walks, entertaining District I meetings, enjoyed elegant council Christmas luncheons with floral designers as the program and the Spring luncheon awards events. For many years they had a table of handcrafted items or tempting foods to sell as a money-raising project. The club always had success in their spring plant sale. They have shared gardening skills, recipes and tempting morning coffees, as well as pot-lucks.

Over the years the club have lost some members who moved, or chose to leave, but it has always attracted new members. In 1978 the club comprised of 18 members and in 2020 we have 36 members.

Potpourri has maintained its goals of enhancing gardening skills, attempting service projects, trips to gardening centers and shops, and I think the members will all agree that we have cultivated a bountiful garden blooming with new friends.

THE GARDENS OF CHICAGO'S GOLD COAST

Submitted by Elaine Parrovecchio

The gardens of Chicago's Gold Coast consist of several private homes along North Astor, West Burton Place, North Clark, North Dearborn, Lake Shore Drive, West Shiller, and North State Parkway.

Many of the gardens are open to the public during the Dearborn Garden Walk and Heritage Festival held annually the third Sunday of July. Some are magnificent spaces in the grand mansions along Chicago's Gold Coast and many are tiny spaces transformed into personal retreats.

This beautiful area was not so beautiful until the 1950's when the homeowners became determined to restore their neighborhood to its stature. In 1955, a lady named Louise Richards introduced a concept and name "Garden Walk". Only a few families participated in that first garden walk and opened both their homes and garden to the public. Over the next few years more and more families participated and the garden walk became the biggest hit ever! Articles appeared in both the Wall Street Journal and Time magazine. Forty one years later, the garden walk is still receiving national attention as one of the nation's premier summer events.

This garden walk is not free, as ours is, and I don't know what the fee is. Participants must buy tickets in advance but they contribute to the beautification of the city of Chicago. They replace damaged parkway trees, contributed to the installation of garden benches in Lincoln Park gardens and maintain the decorative planters at each intersection along Dearborn Street

Wouldn't it be fun to sometime be able to take a tour of these magnificent gardens?



Garden Fair at Klehm

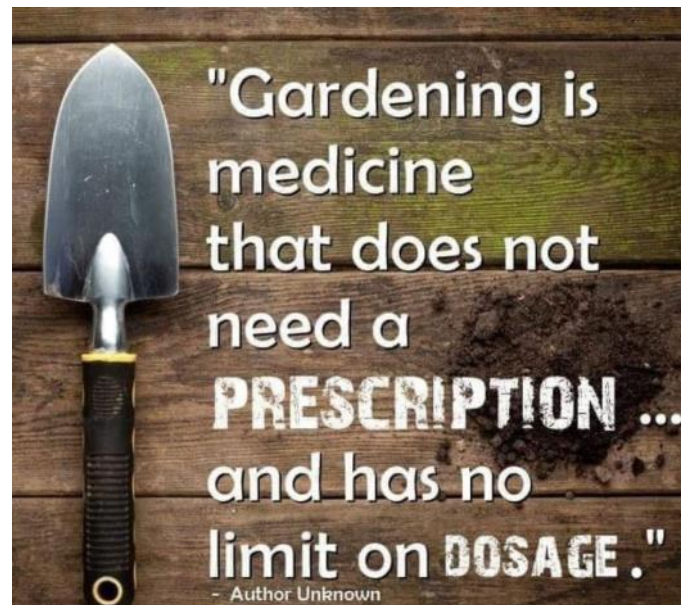
June 6: 9-5

June 7: 9-4

Council of Rockford
Gardeners
will have a tent
and tables.

We'll be running video of garden walks.

Again, this is dependent on the pandemic..



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/)

HORTICULTURE HAPPENINGS

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

It's for the Birds

Spring is in the air, signaling the onset of breeding season for our North American birds. They are now beginning to build nests, lay eggs and raise their young. Here are some ways we can promote their success by making their lives easier and safer.

Hold off trimming hedges and shrubs. Many species of birds build nests in small hedges and shrubs. Don't disrupt birds building their nests.

Put out eggshells for birds. Eggshells help female birds replace calcium lost during egg production and laying. Save your eggshells, dry them out in the oven (10-30 minutes at 250 degrees), crumble them into small pieces, and spread the pieces on an open spot on the ground.

Don't mow meadows or brushy areas between late April and mid-August. This will allow field sparrows, prairie warblers, meadowlarks, and other birds to nest in peace.

Provide water for bathing and drinking *all year long, if you can*—but make sure to keep it clean. Your bird-bath may be the first place in your yard that parent birds take their offspring. Young birds can be dependent upon the only water source they know. Make sure the average water depth is less than three inches. Birds appreciate shallow water.

Offer short pieces of pet or human hair in onion bags or put it in obvious places. Many bird nests have some animal hair in them. It's soft, insulating, and easy to gather. When you groom your pet (or when you yourself are groomed), save the hair to spread around your yard for the birds to use. Be sure to clip hair or fur into pieces no longer than two inches.

Continue to provide high-protein foods such as mealworms, peanuts, and suet. Keep them fed. Energy-packed foods will attract your backyard birds (and their young) to your feeders. These young birds will learn at an early age where your feeders are.

Keep your cat inside (and ask your neighbors to do the same). Cats take an incredible toll on songbirds, and low-nesting species and their young are especially vulnerable to cat predation. Do the birds a favor and keep this unnatural predator away from places where birds nest.

Migratory birds have separate ranges for their breeding and wintering activities, whereas "resident" birds live in the same region year-round. Nests found early in the spring tend to belong to non-migratory residents, while migrants return and breed later in the spring and summer. You can expect to find a chickadee nest earlier in the spring than a warbler nest. However, there are always exceptions such as the American Goldfinch, which tends to nest during the late summer despite being a year-round resident. Use your location and the timing of the nest to help identify the builder.

Note the location of the nest. Is it on the ground? In a tree or shrub? On a building? Different species favor specific locations for building their nests.

The [Focal Species Guide](#) can be sorted by region to help you find potential breeding birds in your area.

How many eggs are there? This can vary widely for many species, but some birds, such as Mourning Doves and hummingbirds, have very consistent clutch sizes.

The [Clutch Size chart](#) can help you pick some likely candidates building a nest in or near your yard.



Robin's Nest



house wren nest



hummingbird nest

Remember now's the time to pick the garlic mustard in your yard before it gets out of control.

APRIL 6, 2020 VIRTUAL COUNCIL MEETING REPORT



TREASURER'S REPORT

Beginning balance \$3921.45

Receipts:

Seedlings, dues \$450.00

Plantaholics, dues \$405.00

Wildflowers, remainder of dues \$30.00

Total Receipts: \$885.00

Disbursements:

(Several checks outstanding) 00.00

Ending Balance as of April 8, 2020..... \$4806.45

- Submitted by **Mary Ann Miller**, Treasurer

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Programs – Deb Bieschke – The CRG Spring Luncheon will not take place on April 29. Alternatives are in the works. The thought currently is to use June 11 which was the scheduled GoC date and combine the two events. This is, of course, dependent upon the pandemic and its horrible advance.

Publicity – No report.

Awards – Elaine Parrovecchio had no report.

Civic and Conservation – Diane Donze reported that In light of recent recommendations by the Winnebago County Health Department, Habitat for Humanity is cancelling the upcoming Home Dedication. This will be rescheduled at a further date. While it pains us to have to cancel such a joyful and momentous occasion, we recognize and uphold the responsibility that we all share to do what we can for the well-being of our entire community.

Garden Walk – Arch Smith reported As of now, we are moving forward with the Garden Walk as planned on Wednesday, July 8, 2020. Of course, we still need to take a 'wait and see' attitude due to the pandemic. I have contacted each garden owner and let them know of our plans. Each owner has been informed that in the unfortunate event we cancel, we would like to feature their gardens in our 2021 Garden Walk. I'm hoping we will be back to some sense of normalcy and allowed to move forward with our well received annual event.

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

Hospitality – Mary Pinter reported that Hopefully CRG Board can meet Tuesday, May 4. The place and time will be emailed to all.

Newsletter – Kathy Batzkall reported that Seedlings will be responsible for an article in the May edition.

I welcome any garden questions or tips to include in the newsletter. I also welcome any photos of your individual garden club meetings or events. Your feedback and contributions are needed and appreciated! *Please send to: crgnews815@gmail.com by the first of each month.*

Parliamentarian – Mary Pinter said, "Phew... we're dodging a bullet by not being able to gather. So many rules!"

Sunshine – Peg Goral No report... Though I would like to say we are sending everyone a 'thinking of you' and hoping you are all safe and healthy!

Ways & Means – Lynne Franzen-Lynde had no report other than prep for the banquet that is on hold.

Website – Kathy Batzkall – May I ask for one contact from each club to help me keep the website information current in regards to changes in club calendar events, changes in membership, photos of meetings or events, etc. I would appreciate monthly feedback or updates.

Please keep our Webmaster, Bryan Tomlinson, in your prayers. He recently lost his wife after her battle with cancer, and he misses her immensely. Bryan was her around-the-clock caregiver at their home for over 2 years, even feeding her every 90 minutes. He is a kind and generous soul.

VIRTUAL GARDEN ADVENTURES AND WEBINARS

Instead of saying we are “stuck at home” during this year of crisis, we should say we are “safe at home.”

To keep your mind active, please enjoy some links to garden and other activities, on this page and the next.

WEBINAR SERIES PRESENTED BY UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION EDUCATORS

In addition to these webinars, the University of Illinois Extension offers many other ideas on the website:

<https://extension.illinois.edu/>.

Listen to podcasts, review blogs and newsletters to find something that interests you, even resources and tips about COVID-19.

Other webinars include topics such as: The Backyard Orchard, Grow Your own Cut Flowers, and Emotional Eating.

DROUGHT TOLERANT ANNUALS & PERENNIALS

April 15, 2020

10:30-11:30 AM

Rainfall amounts can vary from year to year. Drought tolerant plants are adapted to limited water conditions or prefer a quick drying location. Discuss different annual and perennial flower options for your landscape.

BIG FLAVORS IN SMALL SPACES: CONTAINER FRUITS

April 22, 2020

10:30-11:30 AM

Discuss how dwarf cultivars of blueberries, strawberries, brambles, and even apple trees can be planted on your patios or small outdoor areas to provide those big fresh fruit flavors in small spaces!

NORTHERN ILLINOIS BERRY SCHOOL

April 29, 2020

May 6, 2020

10:30-NOON

This 2 part program, which is focused strictly on berry production, will give an overview of production, weed and insect control, and general management suggestions and will focus on strawberries, blackberries, blueberries and raspberries.

COLORFUL VEGETABLES

May 13, 2020

10:30-11:30 AM

The best ways to entice new gardeners is growing unique and colorful vegetables. Learn about plant characteristics that cause these changes, and popular & new cultivars of unique vegetables.

ALL SESSIONS OFFERED VIA ZOOM FROM YOUR HOME COMPUTER

NO COST TO PARTICIPATE | REGISTER TWO DAYS PRIOR TO WEBINAR

REGISTER ONLINE AT: [GO.ILLINOIS.EDU/GROWINGHORTWEBINAR](https://go.illinois.edu/growinghortwebinar)

Nicholas Conservatory

<https://nicholasconservatory.com/>

Online Yoga Class

Thursdays: 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM. Cost: \$10

Please register at least 15 minutes prior to class start to ensure you get the Zoom link for the class.

See website for complete information.

Madison Audubon Society

<https://www.facebook.com/MadisonAudubon>

Now is a great time to learn about birds! Adult education classes with interactive online webinars. Watch **Friday Feathered Features** (write-ups on great birds and critters at the sanctuaries), **blog posts**, and more.

Or check out **National Audubon's Joy of Birds** page for fun articles, videos, and bird-cams.

VIRTUAL GARDEN TOURS

As you stay in your home, you can enjoy these amazing garden video tours via YouTube .

For best results, choose to skip the ads.

You will see many more garden links to view once you are on the YouTube page.

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew in Richmond on the outskirts of London:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ioG_Vfh0Kxw

An English Country Garden Through the Seasons

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=english+cottage+garden+tour

Claude Monet's Garden, Giverny, France

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rjWx2WNXFF4>



Chicago Botanic Garden

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aV0Ryaw0hGc>

Great Gardens of England

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lofrAwQVZqM>

Biltmore Estate Garden Tour

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=evqWft9rz2o>

New York Botanical Garden Orchid Show

https://www.nybg.org/take-a-virtual-tour-of-the-orchid-show-jeff-leathams-kaleidoscope/?fbclid=IwAR0UYDL71-LRD9J9ELcdZK1JFFXg-Do3Aa_vdW8xhDzj1pwER3Z7uU7X2vM

Hawaii Tropical Botanical Garden, Papaikou, HI

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BtZ0dcUzGX8>

MORE VIRTUAL TOURS AND INTERESTING SCHTUFF...

If you have viewed enough gardens, here are some other ideas:

Tour the Vatican

<http://www.museivaticani.va/content/museivaticani/en/collezioni/musei/tour-virtuali-elenco.html>

OpenCulture.com offers educational media:

Free online courses, ebooks, artwork, movies, even free coloring books and paint by number:

<http://www.openculture.com/>

The Joy of Painting with Bob Ross

https://www.youtube.com/user/BobRossInc/playlists?view=50&sort=dd&shelf_id=7

THE 8 R'S OF LIVING GREEN



When in doubt, throw it out...

Recycling contamination occurs when materials are put into the wrong container - recyclable bin vs trash. Recyclables that contain residues such as food waste, oil, and grease (think greasy pizza boxes) are considered contaminants, and should be thrown out, not recycled.