

# COUNCIL OF ROCKFORD GARDENERS, INC.

Organized 3/21/1980

E-Issue V 5 Issue 4

Editor: Kathy Batzkall

MAY 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](http://councilofrockfordgardeners.org)

## Upcoming Meetings, GoC, Garden Walk Cancelled

Please check with your  
garden club on status of  
individual club activities.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

Co-Presidents: Ann Somers & Sarah Britton

Gardening beautifies our environment. It provides exercise and fresh air. It boosts our spirits. It feeds our souls and our bellies. It is literally what sustains us.

Our local food pantries are serving larger numbers of our neighbors because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We have an opportunity to help those neighbors by providing produce to our local food pantries. Please consider planting an extra row of beans, or hill of squash or zucchini, an extra tomato or pepper or whatever vegetables you want to donate to a food pantry. The University of Illinois Extension has been working with local food pantries to establish safe methods of accepting produce from individual gardeners, community gardens, church gardens and other gardens in the community who have bounty to share. Be a part of serving our community!

We are all disappointed we had to cancel the spring luncheon, the GoC and the Council of Rockford Gardeners FREE Garden Walk. Audrey Hepburn said, "To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow." Tomorrow will come and we'll be together as our clubs gather to explore and learn. Until then, keep your garden going and growing!

Keep playing in the dirt,

*Sarah & Ann*

MAY  
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.



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

Submit a garden tip to [CRGnews815@gmail.com](mailto: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.

## When to Cut Peonies

*Submitted by Ann Somers*

Jeff Jabco, Scott Arboretum at Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, shared this tip about when to cut peonies to be blooming at the time you want! When the flower bud starts to show color but is not yet open, lightly squeeze it with two fingers. If it feels like a marshmallow, the large ones used to make S'mores, it is ready. Cut the stem off at the length you want and then roll it up in newspaper and put it in the refrigerator. It can stay in the refrigerator for days or a couple weeks. When removed, you recut the stem (an inch or two), put it in water and it will fully open in a day or two.



## GARDEN Q & A

**Q:** Mary Pinter wants to know what a dioecious plant is. Even though she was a nurse, we have to provide some sex education. : -)

**A:** "Dioecious" and "monoecious" are terms that refer to plant reproduction. They are adjectives used in horticultural descriptions. Dioecious describes a plant group that includes distinct male and female plants. Monoecious describes a single plant that bears both male and female flowers.

Some well-known Dioecious plants include holly, asparagus, mulberry, ginkgo, persimmon, currant, juniper bushes, and spinach.

# GARDEN CLUB NEWS

## The First 70 Years of Seedlings Garden Club: 1949 – 2020

Long ago, in September 1949, a group of 15 women met to form an evening garden club. They decided to name it "Seedlings" and join the Winnebago County Garden Center as its' fourth club. Dues would be \$3 a year and they also would collect 25 cents per member, at each meeting, for petty cash. In that year, they had a plant exchange, a summer picnic and a potluck as well as shared articles. The treasury ran \$125 - \$200. When it seemed plentiful, the club bought US Savings Bonds. After a few years, they voted to join the Illinois Garden Club, for \$.50 a member, so Seedlings members could receive "Garden Glories." Seedlings was one of the largest clubs in the Council by 1954! As the 50's progressed, Seedlings members became officers in the Council and supported its many activities – flower shows, 2 day Garden Tours, educational programs (speaker in 1959 about Dutch Elm disease) and fundraisers like selling vanilla, plastic bags and scouring pads.

As the 50's ended with both low membership and a low treasury, they started the 60's off with a 'Card Party' to bring in new members. Programs expanded to members showing slides of trips; conservation, organic gardening, raising and cross-breeding orchids, the value of birds, Japanese flower arranging, how to make pressed flowers and much more. We took field trips; Morton Arboretum, Bea Bob's Handy-Crafts shop, Sinnissippi green house and sunken gardens, Woodward Governor gardens, many community members' gardens and especially the first of many spring wildflower walks at Vi Bates home in Tullocks Woods. We also began community service work donating seeds, potting soil and plants to the School of Hope for the kids to plant and providing cookies and small Christmas gifts for the residents of River Bluff Nursing Home. During the 60's, the Center began serious discussions of

owning a building or a room in a building for Center activities and a library. As the decade was ending, Seedlings began to educate our members about speaking out regarding local issues - the first which was preserving a virgin prairie at the airport.

During the 70's Seedlings continued to have diversified programs and our interest grew concerning conservation and beautification efforts. We wrote a letter to the proper sources contesting the new landfill near Baxter Road; advising beautification of downtown Rockford and the Court House area; expressing support for a nature trail

along the old Chicago/ Northwestern Railroad track; and signing a petition restricting snowmobiles from State Parks and County Forest Preserves.

In 1980, Seedlings majority voted to no longer be part of the Winnebago County Garden Center. As this was a difficult

decision, we took several months before joining the already created Council of Rockford Gardner's. Seedlings membership grew as did its dues - now \$13. We found new places for field trips! Ethel Johnson took us on a tour of her friend John Anderson's beautiful Japanese Garden. We began wildflower plantings and a prairie plot along the Sinnissippi Bike Path as well as plantings at United Cerebral Palsy's new site. In August of 1989, we celebrated our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

As Seedlings flourished in the 90's, we won the National Council of State Garden Clubs award for increase in membership in 1996. During the early part of this decade, we supported the development of NIBS – the Northern Illinois Botanic Society. A Seedlings member, Laura Wyatt, became NIBS' first executive director and Ethel Johnson was among those who developed this concept into a reality. Later in this decade, NIBS name became Klehm in honor of those who donated the property to "forever remain an arboretum."



Seedlings continued on page 4



*Seedlings continued...*

2000 arrived and Seedlings continued to grow. We took many local tours of public and private gardens and gardening related businesses; Wind Ridge Herb Gardens, Tinker Swiss Cottage, and Wild Birds Unlimited to name a few. With the influx of new members, we were open to new ideas and new topics. Unfortunately, our long time member Vi Bates, passed away early in this decade. Seedlings decided to establish the Vi Bates Memorial Wildflower Garden at Klehm. We were able to transplant wildflowers from Vi's garden as some of the over 400 plants added the first year. Klehm staff has always been very supportive; however, long time member Anita Johnson has been the driver, organizer, heart and backbone of developing and maintaining this beautiful site.

The second decade of 2000, led Seedlings and Council to distribute more information via the internet - our minutes, meeting notices and Council's newsletter. Being an evening club had always led to a diverse group of members. It once was stay-at-home Moms, full time workers and everything in-between. However, it had changed to retirees, part time workers, full time workers

and many volunteers. It became harder for members to volunteer to hold an office. Seedlings went from Co-Presidents to representatives who attended Council meetings and program coordinators running their meeting.

It has been difficult for me to condense 70 years of Seedlings into an article. I have left out so many important facts. At both the 60<sup>th</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinners, I gave a presentation – which I could never keep to a half hour. As a member since 1973 (with a few years off when my work life was crazy), I have found Seedlings to be a group of women who got together to learn, educate each other, support and take care of the community and world, enjoy friendships and have fun! We have adjusted to the changes in our world and society. We have become leaders in our group and the community. Conservation and sharing guided our actions. Congratulations Seedlings on 70 years of serving. May you continue to make our community and world a better place!

Respectfully submitted,

Jan Bowman

April 22, 2020



### **Spectacular video of Monarchs in Mexico**

PBS TV has a series called "Spy in the Wild" and in this particular preview, a drone disguised as a hummingbird is sent in to film videos of the monarchs waking up after winter.

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/watch-breathtaking-monarch-butterfly-swarm/21864/>

## **Garden Fair at Klehm**

### **New Dates!**

**Saturday, September 26 | 9 AM – 5 PM**

**Sunday, September 27 | 9 AM – 4 PM**

Council of Rockford Gardeners  
will have a tent and tables.

We'll be running video of garden walks.

*This is dependent on the pandemic.*



## **Mark Dwyer Presents:**

### **Cool Plants and Hot Garden Trends of 2020**

This free educational lecture by Mark Dwyer will be hosted virtually rather than in-person at Klehm. More information regarding the date, time, and platform to be announced: <http://klehm.org/>

Biography – Mark Dwyer operates Landscape Prescriptions by MD, a landscape design and horticultural consulting business in Janesville, WI. He has degrees in landscape architecture (University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana) and urban forestry (UW-Stevens Point) and prior to his current endeavor, was the Director of Horticulture at Rotary Botanical Gardens (Janesville, WI) for 21 years. Mark's true passion is obtaining, growing, observing, photographing and enjoying all types of plants!

# HORTICULTURE HAPPENINGS

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

## Container Gardening with Perennials

While vacationing last summer in the Pyrenees, we were often treated to downtown streets lined with beautiful flower containers. They would be filled with perennials and just a sprinkling of annuals for continuous color. This inspired me to plant my containers with perennials this season, for a beautiful and budget friendly garden project. Whether you have sun or shade, a garden or a patio, there are colorful solutions something for everyone. And container gardens are perfect for those who don't have much space for planting.

Because perennials are tolerant of colder weather, you can get a head start on planting now as opposed to waiting until warmer weather for annual planting. Adjusting the soil in your container is much easier than in your garden, where the soil is mostly clay.

A first step is to select locations for your containers. Is it going to be a sunny or shady spot? When grouping containers, remember that mixing sizes and shapes will enhance visual appeal. Also, think contrast and color, for example, a bright green container with hot pink or purple flowers. Be sure and start with a clean container. Disinfect previously used pots with a mild bleach solution and rinse thoroughly.

**Drainage:** Good drainage is necessary for your containers. When choosing a container make sure it has a drainage hole. Before putting in potting soil, add a drainage layer. This could be pea gravel or shards from a broken ceramic pot. Containers that are terra cotta loose moisture faster than ceramic painted containers. Ceramic and terra cotta containers must be taken inside prior to cold weather to keep them from cracking.

Potting soil is appropriate for most plants. Because the plants are in a container and not the ground, watering them will eliminate the nutrients in the soil more quickly so it's good to supplement with an organic fertilizer using it according to the directions. They will also need to be watered more frequently. When choosing plants for the containers make sure to group the ones that have the same requirements together. Such as putting all sun plants together, succulents in the same container etc. Remember for design, using plants that are THRILLERS, FILLERS and SPILLERS. Thrillers are the focal point, add in the fillers and the spillers are the plants that are around the edge of the containers that spill over.

**Overwintering:** At the end of the season perennials that are in containers can be transplanted into your garden, or you can leave them in the containers and overwinter them. To overwinter containers, thoroughly water just before the ground freezes to give them a reserve supply of moisture during warm winter spells. Pots can be buried in the ground and then dug in the spring. They can also be overwintered in a cold frame or an unheated garage after the frost. If you are overwintering containers outside, place them close together. Do not place them on pavement or a deck that is above ground. Cover plants with leaves or evergreen boughs. An insulating blanket can also be used. The east side of the house is the best spot to overwinter plants. When spring comes it's wise to repot the containerized perennials. Put in new soil with a slow release fertilizer and divide any plants that have gotten too large for the container.

### Examples of Perennials for

**SUN containers:** Yarrow, Aster, Dianthus, Echinacea, Daylily, Heuchera for sun, Iris, Sedum, Salvia, Lungwort, Phlox, Lamium, Scabiosa, Spiderwort.

### Examples of Perennials for

**SHADE containers:** Lady's Mantle, Hosta, Bergenia, Ajuga, Bergenia, Ferns, Brunnera, Heuchera (some varieties grow in the shade)



# MAY 2020 VIRTUAL COUNCIL MEETING REPORT



## TREASURER'S REPORT

Beginning balance .....\$4806.45

### Disbursements:

Xlerator (website) .....85.50

District 1 Dues .....10.00

GCI Dues .....745.00

**Total Disbursements:** .....840.50

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Ending Balance as of May 6, 2020.....\$3965.95

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

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Programs – Deb Bieschke:** No programs scheduled at this time.

**Publicity – No report.**

**Awards – Elaine Parrovecchio:** no report.

**Civic and Conservation – Diane Donze:** Dedications of Habitat for Humanity homes are on hold for the near future.

**Garden Walk – Arch Smith:** The Council of Rockford Gardeners FREE Garden Walk 2020 has been cancelled. Garden owners have been notified and have agreed to be a part of our 2021 walk.

**Horticulture – Gina Ross** will continue to write the articles for the newsletter.

**Hospitality – Mary Pinter:** Our June Council meeting is cancelled.

**Newsletter – Kathy Batzkall:** **Wildflowers will be responsible for an article in the June edition. Please send ideas, photos to: [crgnews815@gmail.com](mailto:crgnews815@gmail.com) by the first of each month.**

**Parliamentarian – Mary Pinter:** no report

**Sunshine – Peg Goral:** Please continue to send requests for correspondence to those members who could use a bit of sunshine. Peg can be reached at: [jignmag@comcast.net](mailto:jignmag@comcast.net)

**Ways & Means – Lynne Franzen-Lynde:** no report

**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.

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## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Klehm Garden Fair scheduled for June 6 & 7 has been postponed until September 26 & 27. CRG will have a booth.

## NEW BUSINESS

Please consider planting an extra tomato or pepper or row of beans or anything to share with our local food pantries. The need will be greater this summer. U of I Extension Master Gardeners will have drop off locations. More information on the Plant a Row initiative will be available soon.

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/)



# IN THE NEWS AND ON THE INTERNET

## HOW DIRT MAKES YOU HAPPY

### ***Antidepressant Microbes In Soil:***

by: Bonnie L. Grant, Certified Urban Agriculturist  
[www.gardeningknowhow.com/](http://www.gardeningknowhow.com/) edited to fit this space by KB

Prozac may not be the only way to get rid of your serious blues. Soil microbes have been found to have similar effects on the brain and are without side effects and chemical dependency potential. Read on to see how dirt makes you happy.

Natural remedies have been around for untold centuries. These natural remedies included cures for almost any physical ailment as well as mental and emotional afflictions. Modern scientists only recently are finding remedies that were previously unknown and yet, still a part of the natural life cycle. Soil microbes and human health now have a positive link which has been studied and found to be verifiable.

*Mycobacterium vaccae* is the substance under study and it is found in soil. It may stimulate serotonin production, which makes you relaxed and happier. Studies were conducted on cancer patients and they reported a better quality of life and less stress.

Lack of serotonin has been linked to depression, anxiety, obsessive compulsive disorder and bipolar problems. The bacterium appears to be a natural antidepressant in soil and has no adverse health effects. These antidepressant microbes in soil may be as easy to use as just playing in the dirt. Most avid gardeners will tell you that their landscape is their "happy place" and the actual physical act of gardening is a stress reducer and mood lifter. The fact that there is some science behind it adds additional credibility to these garden addicts' claims. Backing it up with science is fascinating, but not shocking, to the happy gardener. *Mycobacterium antidepressant* microbes in soil are also being investigated for improving cognitive function, Crohn's disease and even rheumatoid arthritis.

Gardeners inhale the bacteria, and have topical contact with it. The natural effects of the soil bacteria antidepressant can be felt for up to several weeks. So get out and play in the dirt and improve your mood and your life! Ann and Sarah aren't lying!!

## NEW RECYCLE LABELING

How2Recycle is a standardized labeling system that clearly communicates recycling instructions to the public. See <https://how2recycle.info/>

The goal is to reduce confusion by creating a clear, well-understood, and nationally harmonized label that enables industry to convey to consumers how to recycle a package.

Some of the current members include:

Bic, Domino, Ocean Spray, Gerber, Endust, Chobani, fairlife, Fruit of the Loom, Walmart, Aldi, Campbells.

Any film packaging or bag that has the How2Recycle Label shown at right is recyclable, however, not all items are accepted at all drop-off locations. Check with your local drop-off to see what is accepted. Check locally by zipcode on the website:  
[howtorecycle.info](http://howtorecycle.info)

If you are looking to reduce plastic waste in your life, one of the easiest steps you can take is to stop accepting plastic shopping bags. Bring your own reusable bags and support stores that take a plastic free approach.



## Word of the Day: Ephemerals

Spring-flowering ephemerals are plants that only last a brief time. The natural habitat for most spring ephemerals is a woodland, before the leaves of the overhead canopy develop. The first hint of warm weather triggers spring ephemerals to grow. They go dormant and their foliage disappears from view shortly after they stop flowering. But once the warm weather takes hold, ephemerals usually die back on top while their roots continue growing under the soil. Examples: Virginia bluebells, Dutchman's breeches, bloodroot, trout lily, trillium.

## Such Singing in the Wild Branches

by Mary Oliver

It was spring  
and I finally heard him  
among the first leaves—  
then I saw him clutching the limb  
in an island of shade  
with his red-brown feathers  
all trim and neat for the new year.

First, I stood still  
and thought of nothing.  
Then I began to listen.  
Then I was filled with gladness—  
and that's when it happened,  
when I seemed to float,  
to be, myself, a wing or a tree—

and I began to understand  
what the bird was saying,  
and the sands in the glass  
stopped  
for a pure white moment  
while gravity sprinkled upward  
like rain, rising,

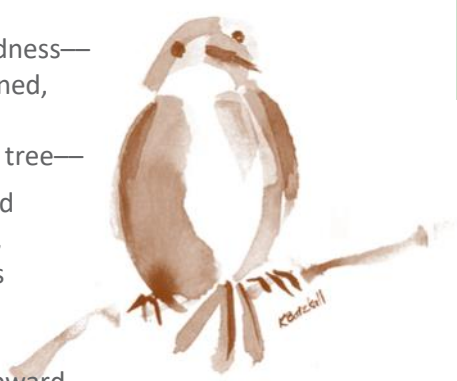
and in fact  
it became difficult to tell just what  
it was that was singing—  
it was the thrush for sure, but it seemed  
not a single thrush, but himself, and all his brothers,  
and also the trees around them,  
as well as the gliding, long-tailed clouds  
in the perfect blue sky—all of them  
were singing.  
And, of course, so it seemed,  
so was I.

Such soft and solemn and perfect music doesn't last  
For more than a few moments.  
It's one of those magical places wise people  
like to talk about.

One of the things they say about it, that is true,  
is that, once you've been there,  
you're there forever.  
Listen, everyone has a chance.  
Is it spring, is it morning?

Are there trees near you,  
and does your own soul need comforting?  
Quick, then—open the door  
and fly on your heavy feet;  
the song may already be drifting away.

-Mary Oliver



## Hoo Haven in Need of Supplies

You can help with the needed items for rehabilitation of wild birds, raptors and animals at Hoo Haven, which is in constant need of:

- Bath Towels
- Unsalted peanuts
- Ajax
- Lots of Paper Towels
- 55 Gallon Garbage Bags
- Gallon Zip Lock Bags
- Quart Zip Lock Bags
- 2 Gallon Zip Lock Bags

Contact Karen at [karen@hoohaven.org](mailto:karen@hoohaven.org) for details.

## Virtual Wildflower Walkabout

Through Cedar Cliff Forest Preserve. Hosted by  
Severson Dells Nature Center and Boone County  
Conservation District . May 13, 6 – 7 PM .

Click on the following link at that time:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/184987789287925/>

Thank you , Joan Tilson, for submitting this graphic:

