

# COUNCIL OF ROCKFORD GARDENERS, INC.

Organized 3/21/1980

E-Issue V 5 Issue 6

Editor: Kathy Batzkall

JULY 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)

**Canceled:**  
Meetings thru July;  
Garden Walk

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

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

Co-Presidents: Ann Somers & Sarah Britton

In this time of pandemic, we've been given the opportunity of extra time in the garden. Gardeners are a different breed. We aren't so much troubled by our unmade beds as we are the weeds growing in our garden beds. The dirt under our fingernails is a sign of accomplishment. The extra bin for recycling garden pots is a necessity. The pile of 'garden shoes' by the door means we are ready to plant or harvest or water on the run. This is a time for us to appreciate our green spaces. Get outside-count the different shades of green, listen to the birds and the bees, smell the air, feel the breeze, see, really see what is growing ... though you might want to go out early in the morning because it is hot out there!

*Look around*

*Look at what we have*

*Beauty is everywhere-*

*you only have to look to see it.*

*-Bob Ross*

Keep playing in the dirt,

Sarah & Ann

JULY  
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 REMINISCENCES

## My Family's Hydrangeas

*Submitted by Susan Schmitz*

My parents bought their first house in Surrey, England, in 1962.

It was a very modest home and they thought it would make a great "starter" home. The first thing that caught the observer's eye was a huge Hydrangea Macrophylla bush immediately outside the front door.

It bloomed profusely every year and its large mophead (pom-pom) flower blossoms were a mixture of pink/blue/purple. My parents got many compliments about it.

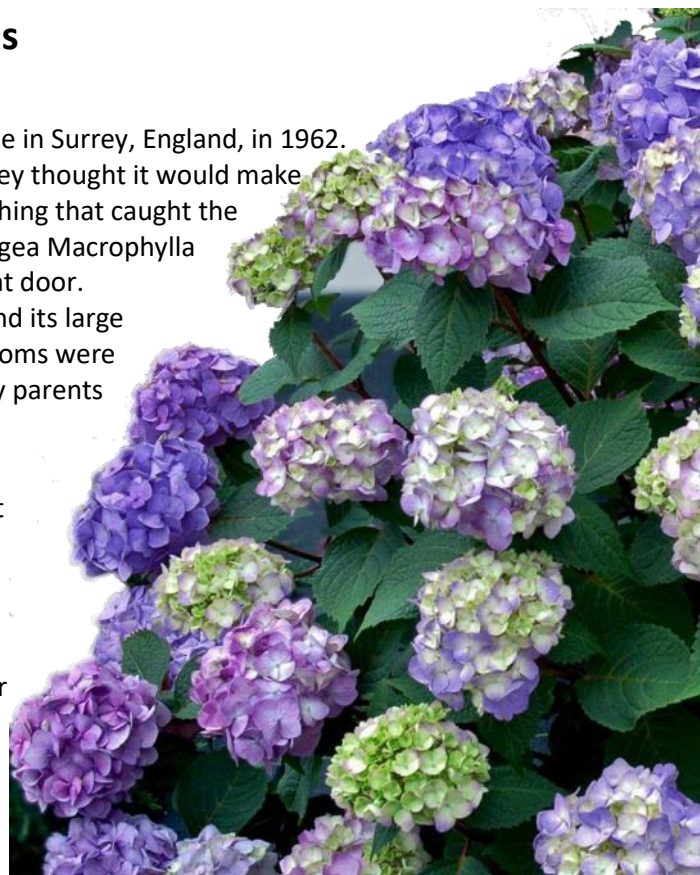
Neither Mum nor Dad had much gardening experience, so the plant basically took care of itself. It was so prolific that they had to cut it back severely every year.

However much they decimated the poor plant, it came back bigger and stronger.

When my father died in 1987, friends gave my mother a white Lacecap Hydrangea. She planted it in the front of the flowerbed "so she could see it from her sitting room." Obviously, she had no clue how big it would grow!

After Mum moved into a retirement home, I was responsible for clearing the home and putting it on the market for sale. On my last visit to the home, I discreetly took two cuttings from each of the hydrangeas, wrapped them in damp paper towels and slipped them into my wash bag.

When I returned home, I put some rooting powder on each cutting and was eventually rewarded with four healthy hydrangeas. Whenever I water them, I always laugh to myself that Dad and Mum's legacy lives on in the form of plant material even though they were not gardeners!



## A Reflection on Childhood Flowers

*Submitted by Deb Bieschke*

I have a sweet spot for the flowers of my childhood. Peonies, Lilacs, Lily the Valley, Poppies, Daisies, Sweet Peas, Iris, and Hollyhocks.

They bring me right back to the house I grew up in, and my Mother. I've shared some of these with friends over the years, and when they send me photos of them blooming it's a beautiful thing.

# PHIL O'DENDRON'S HORTICULTURE HINTS AND HUMOR

*Please welcome our new staff writer, Dr. Phil O'Dendron, PHD*

## How watering your plants may be stunting their growth

Have you ever noticed how plants thrive after a good rain? The next time you water your garden, it might just be a good time to think about the chemicals in your water. Chlorine is one of the top 10 manufactured chemicals in the United States. Chlorine can kill bacteria and could have a negative impact on good soil bacteria that benefits your plants. Chlorine can also injure plant roots and can actually stunt the growth of plant's root systems.

**SOLUTION:** Plan a trip to your local hardware store and purchase a "RV FILTER". This small tubular filter can be placed on your outdoor faucet and then by attaching your garden hose to it will allow you to water your garden with Chlorine free water. Watch your garden really grow!



## 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](mailto:jignmag@comcast.net)  
or phone: 815-877-1045.

## Water all the roots, not just some:

Most often we think about watering plants only at the base of the stem where they grow out of the ground. Most plants, however, have roots that grow up to 1 foot or more out from the main stem. Make sure to water more than just the center of things and try giving a little water to the outlying roots as well.



Why was the gardener so very embarrassed?



Because she kept wetting her plants.



# GET TO KNOW BENJAMIN BANNEKER

From The Cultural Landscape Foundation <https://tclf.org/>

Banneker was born Benjamin Banneky in Elkridge Landing, Maryland, to a father who was an emancipated slave.



Early on, the younger Banneker took an interest in astronomy. His scientific interests led him to build what is said to be the first clock in America, in 1753.

In 1772 Banneker was hired by a neighboring family, the Ellicotts, to assist with the construction of a mill. He established a relationship with the family, who provided him with astronomical tools and texts, allowing him to pursue his interests and begin work on an almanac.

The Ellicotts' son Andrew shared Banneker's scientific mindset. A successful geographer, Ellicott was retained as a surveyor by Thomas Jefferson to work with Pierre Charles L'Enfant on the creation of a plan for the new capitol city that would become Washington, D.C.

Ellicott asked Banneker to work with him on the project, and in 1792, the two men were placed in charge of the design after L'Enfant's controversial dismissal and departure with the plans in tow.\*

It is rumored that Banneker redrew L'Enfant's plans from memory. Banneker and Ellicott's modified version of L'Enfant's plan is known as the Ellicott plan. In 1791, during his work in Washington, Banneker published Banneker's Almanac.

After concluding work on the Capitol, he wrote and published the almanacs annually. Following his death, Banneker's work was used by the abolitionist movement as proof of the significant accomplishments and contributions of this African American, whose work helped shape the nation's capital city.

History: In 1792, the Federal government purchased 17 sizable parcels as sites for specific public uses. Most of these remain recognizable today as public open spaces, although some were never developed as public space, and some are the sites of major public buildings with only residual grounds.

During the Civil War, many open spaces became ideal campsites for troops protecting the capital, and crude encampments, barracks, temporary offices, and hospitals were erected on them. What little planting and landscaping had been completed before the war was damaged or neglected. Following the war, Congress and the city returned their attention to improving and beautifying the city's infrastructure.

*\*George Washington fires Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant:* In February 1792 President George Washington dismissed city planner Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant, who had been hired to design the new capital but continually argued with the Federal City commissioners. One of L'Enfant's most offensive acts was demolishing the house of local landowner Daniel Carroll because it stood in the way of a new road. Although Carroll was eventually reimbursed for the damages, the event led Washington to fire L'Enfant. However, L'Enfant's design for the city was still adopted and is visible in the grid and spoke pattern of Washington, DC. today.

## WORD OF THE DAY

### Psithurism:

(n) The sound of wind in the trees and rustling of leaves.

# HORTICULTURE HAPPENINGS

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

## Basil the “King of Herbs”

Basil is native to tropical regions from central Africa to Southeast Asia. It is a tender plant and is used in cuisines worldwide. It is believed that basil originated in India, but the herb has been cultivated for over 5,000 years and has spread around of the globe. Throughout history, basil was believed to have almost magical powers. It was used as an antidote for snake bites and was believed to give strength during religious fasting.

It was found in mummies in Egypt because the ancient Egyptians used this herb in the embalming process. In Greece, basil was a symbol of mourning. The herb was referred to as *basileus phuton*, meaning magnificent, royal, or kingly herb. Today, basil is frequently referred to as the ‘King of Herbs’. It was also once known as the ‘herb of poverty’ because it was believed to provide protection to the poor.

In medieval times, many doctors thought basil was poisonous. During this same time, others believed that basil was good for “cheering the spirit” and “clearing the brain”. Basil was not introduced in Britain until the 16th century and was later brought to North America by British colonists.

Basil, (*Ocimum basilicum*), also called great basil, is a culinary herb of the family Lamiaceae (mints) Basil is an excellent source of vitamin K, manganese, iron, vitamin A, and vitamin C. It is also

a good source of calcium, magnesium, and omega-3 fatty acids. When basil's oils are extracted to make an essential oil, it can be used for treating cuts, wounds, and skin infections. Basil is found most often in Italian and Asian cuisines.

There are 150 species of basil with the most popular being Sweet basil. Other popular basil varieties include Thai, lime, lemon, and purple ruffle basil. Basils can be used in cooking, vinegars, baking and drinks! Use your imagination to concoct your own blends

This easy-care herb can be grown indoors in much the same way as we do outdoors. In either case, this wonderfully sweet and fragrant herb can become an indispensable part of your kitchen creations.

**Growing basil indoors** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L7Op9L5hK4U>

**Growing basil outdoors** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1SG\\_MYmkDMU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1SG_MYmkDMU)

**40 ways to use basil** <https://www.tasteofhome.com/collection/25-fresh-basil-recipes/>



Key Lime Basil Pie



Salmon with Basil Relish



Strawberry Basil Cocktail

## VIRTUAL COUNCIL MEETING REPORT

\* Council meetings are canceled through July, therefore no reports.

\* Klehm Garden Fair now scheduled for September 26-27



ANDERSON  
JAPANESE  
GARDENS

The Gardens are open with some social-distancing restrictions. Timed entry reservations are recommended for all visitors, but are not required. Open daily 10 am to 5 pm – last entry is at 4 p.m.



Midway Village Museum  
*Rockford's*  
HISTORY MUSEUM

### Midway Village Museum Victorian Village Opens

One-Hour Guided Walking Tours through August  
Midway Village Museum staff and all visitors to the museum campus are required at this time to follow all State of Illinois mandates for social distancing.

Call ahead to make a reservation at 815-397-9112.

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday: 11 am, Noon, 1 pm, 2 pm, 3 pm.

\$7 Adults; \$5 Children (ages 5-17)

To book a tour click on this link: <https://fareharbor.com/embeds/book/midwayvillage/items/239296/calendar/2020/07/?flow=288747&full-items=yes>



NICHOLAS  
CONSERVATORY & GARDENS

### FACILITY REOPENING TO PUBLIC JULY 9

#### Carnivorous Plant Exhibit

Starting July 9

#### Food Truck Tuesdays

Through September 29, 4-9 pm

Enjoy tasty eats from Rockford area food trucks!

#### Virtual Tunes on the Terrace

Wednesdays, 7:00–8:15 pm

Enjoy musical performances from area artists in the comfort of your own home.

Weekly concerts will be streamed live from Nicholas Conservatory. To tune in live, like the Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens - Rockford Park District Facebook page.



### Garden Fair at Klehm

*New Dates!*

Saturday, September 26 | 9 AM – 5 PM and

Sunday, September 27 | 9 AM – 4 PM



## Flowers are Love's Truest Language

*They say:*

I love you  
I need you  
I thank you  
I am sorry  
I celebrate with you  
I share your joy  
I enjoy your company  
I am proud of you  
I pray for you  
I feel your pain  
I am here for you  
I want to comfort you  
I miss you  
  
Be my everything  
Marry me  
Share your life with me

- Mariann Reilly

## Attracting Pollinators to Your Garden

<https://ourfairfieldhomeandgarden.com/>

There are quite a few ways to attract pollinators to your garden. Native plantings, providing water sources, avoiding pesticides and building nesting sites will help bring and keep pollinators for your plants.

And there are different types of insect pollinators that might surprise you. We mostly think of the Hymenoptera group of bees and wasps. But did you know that ants are also considered pollinators? Also familiar to most of us are the Lepidoptera consisting of butterflies and moths.

But did you know that Diptera (flies, midges and mosquitoes) are also pollinators? And beetles are too!

Pollinators eat nectar and they rely on decaying fruits. Make a Pollinator Picnic with old fruit or melon rinds.

Lay them in an old tray or trash can lid. Any fruit that has become too ripe is perfect for your pollinators.

After they feast on it for a few days, you can add the leftovers to your compost.

If you do not want to attract ants, fill the bottom of the tray with some water. Place your Pollinator Picnic away from outdoor play and dining areas to avoid possible stinging.



## Quartet Performs to an Audience of Plants - *RollingStone.com*

Barcelona's Gran Teatre del Liceu finally reopened on June 22 after months of inactivity due to COVID-19 — to an audience of approximately 2,292 house plants.

A string quartet performed Giacomo Puccini's "Crisantemi" to the packed house, and was shown on Liceu's website.



The opera house — which opened in 1847 — teamed up with conceptual artist Eugenio Ampudia for the event. The plants were brought in from local nurseries and were donated to healthcare professionals following the performance, mainly at the Hospital Clínic of Barcelona.

## Seedlings holds Zoom event in June

*Susan Schumacher demonstrated how to make chive blossom vinegar.*

### CHIVE BLOSSOM VINEGAR

#### Ingredients

- 1 cup chive blossoms (fresh)
- 1 1/2 cups vinegar (of choice)

<https://www.thespruceeats.com/chive-blossom-vinegar-1327760>

#### Directions

##### ♦ The Best Method:

- Gather the ingredients.
- Crush the blossoms to release their scent and flavor.
- Loosely pack them into a clean glass pint jar (it is not necessary to sterilize the jar first).
- Pour the vinegar over the chive blossoms until they are completely immersed in the liquid. Stir the chives down into the vinegar with a spoon or chopstick.
- Tightly cover the jar and label it with the date. Store at room temperature away from direct light or heat for 2 weeks.
- Strain the vinegar into an attractive, clean glass bottle. Compost or discard the spent blossoms.
- Cork or tightly cover the bottle.

##### ♦ The Quicker Hot Vinegar Method

- Gather the ingredients.
- Place the chive blossoms and optional chive leaves in a clean, heat-proof glass jar (it is not necessary to sterilize the jar).
- Heat the vinegar until it comes just to a simmer (don't let it get to a full boil).
- Pour the hot vinegar over the chives.
- Cover tightly and label the jar with the date. - Store at room temperature away from direct light or heat for 3 days.
- Strain the vinegar into an attractive, clean glass bottle. Compost or discard the spent blossoms.
- Cork or tightly cover the bottle.



#### Tips

For best results, pick chive blossoms when they are fully opened but have not yet started to fade and go to seed.

White wine vinegar works well with onion-like flavors, but you could also use red wine vinegar or homemade apple vinegar.