

# COUNCIL OF ROCKFORD GARDENERS, INC.

Organized 3/21/1980

E-Issue V 5 Issue 8

Editor: Kathy Batzkall

SEPTEMBER 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)

## Some meetings canceled until further notice.

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

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

Co-Presidents: Ann Somers & Sarah Britton

September... time flies. Even if we aren't ready for summer to end, it is and that means fall gardening chores are on our 'to do' lists.

Houseplants that have thrived outside all summer need to be moved back into the house. Give them a good check for little critters. They can multiply at a rapid rate once indoors. Containers can be brought back to life with the addition of mums or ornamental kale or pansies. Pumpkins or ornamental gourds tucked amongst the plants and you've got a container that will be beautiful through Thanksgiving.

Do you remember those empty spots you saw in the spring and thought you'd plant some spring flowering bulbs in the fall? Our phones have become invaluable for this process. Check those photos you took and you can easily locate the empty spots.

Fall is the perfect time to plant trees. The derecho in August was not a friend to our trees. This would be a great time to replace those that were lost. Regardless of how your fall chore list reads, get outside and enjoy the sunny blue skies.

We've cancelled the December Holiday Luncheon & Scholarship Fund-raiser. We'll plan CRG events when we can do so in a manner that keeps us all safe. Take care of yourselves and garden on!

Keep playing in the dirt,

*Sarah & Ann*

SEPTEMBER  
2020

## In This Issue:

P1  
*Club Information;  
President's Pen*

P2  
*Plant Success Stories*

P3  
*More Plant Success  
Stories*

P4  
*Dr. Phil O'Dendron*

P5  
*Horticulture  
Happenings*

P6  
*CRG Council Report*

P7  
*Club News*

P8  
*A Poignant Story;  
Autumn at Klehm*

SUBMIT questions or  
comments to:

[CRGnews815@gmail.com](mailto:CRGnews815@gmail.com)

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



## Our Club Members' 2020 Plant Success Stories

### Angelica gigas

My favorite and unusual plant new to me last year was my **Angelica gigas** which I bought at the Flower Factory in 2019. It is a biannual so it only had leaves that summer which my husband kept telling me that it had to be a weed. This year it was such a surprise for me as, you can see in the photo. I think it's stunning and very different. All summer it has been covered with native bees every day. —EJ Rebman



### Mexican sunflower

I planted my **Mexican sunflower** seeds in a sunny spot and waited. It was probably the beginning of August before the blossoms began to show their color, but once they did it was a great show. I'm still enjoying these beauties. The butterflies seem to be happy with the blooms too.—Diane Donze

### Coleus

I bought **coleus** in May, it got cold and this plant was nipped by it. It took a long time to recover but it survived and thrived. It's one of my favorite plants to work with and does well at my front stoop.—Gina Ross



### Cherry tomato

We bought a **cherry tomato plant** from Bob's market in Roscoe. Our first tomatoes ripened July 12th. I started counting output. The plant grew to 4 foot tall. It required two fence posts and a second tomato cage as the plant grew. Our highest daily total was mid August at 117. Our total so far is 1,205 cherry tomatoes. The cherry tomatoes are smaller and production has slowed , but still producing. We have shared out bounty, eaten lots and made some tomato jam. It has been fun to watch and keep count.—Kristin Frank

*Plant Success Stories con't on p. 3*

## More 2020 Plant Success Stories

Con't from p. 2



Both the window box and the hanging plant are entirely planted with plants I either **wintered over** on a windowsill or plants we dug up from our garden. We didn't know early on with the pandemic if any of the Garden Centers were going to be open or not. We usually just buy most all the plants. When we first planted them, Charlie sarcastically said "well doesn't that just look great". But after a short time, they really started to look good.— Arch Smith



### Pineapple

My favorite, if I really must pick just one, would be my pineapple which I have babied for 3 years bringing it in during the winter to grow under grow lights. Finally this year it actually sprouted a pineapple. It is now about 5 inches tall plus another 5 inches for the green top. My luck will see a squirrel or chipmunk nibbling away at the fruit. Hope everyone had a wonderful summer garden.— Barb Selquist



### Dahlias

The plants that I am really proud of this summer are my dahlias. Last fall we stayed at an Airbnb in Surrey, England where the owner proudly showed me all her experimental plants in her private garden. Her dahlias were showstoppers! She said that she grew them from seed, and immediately picked off some seeds and gave them to me. I brought them home and looked on the internet to see what I could find out. It said, "You will need a little patience, as dahlia flower seeds take several seasons to produce blooms, but the effort is fun and can yield some surprising results" so I thought I would give them a try.

I planted them in a large plant pot and they grew very densely. I transplanted them with a spoon and have about 12 "pockets" of them around my garden. The challenge paid off, as I now have some of the most spectacular blossoms! The added bonus is that the flowers remind us of our trip.

- Susan Schmitz



# DR. PHIL O'DENDRON'S HORTICULTURE HINTS AND HUMOR

*Staff writer, Dr. Phil O'Dendron, PHD*

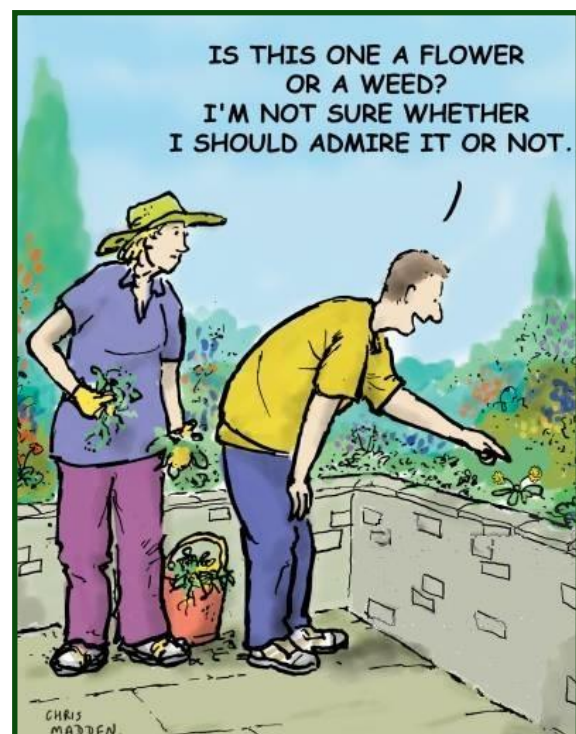
## Gardening can improve your well-being

**Green is Great** – Simply spending time out in nature has proven health benefits. Biophilia is the theory that all humans want to have a connection with other living things, and what better place to feel connected to the world than in the great outdoors, in your very own garden?

**Let's Get Physical** – Exercising not only improves your physical health, but your mood, too. Think about all of the digging, pulling, moving and bending that takes place in the garden. This type of physical activity improves your overall health in so many ways.

**Fresh Produce** – If you have fresh food in your very own backyard, you are more likely to enjoy eating it. Growing your own vegetables not only encourages you to eat more of them, it also provides a sense of achievement and can boost your pride.

**Sensible Sunshine** – Gardening often means long hours in the sun. It is extremely important to take care of your skin, so always wear sunscreen and perhaps a hat. That being said, the sun is also a great source of Vitamin D and can actually help with depression and other mood disorders.



# HORTICULTURE HAPPENINGS

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

## Migrating Fall and Winter Birds of Illinois

On my 5:30 am walk I noticed yellow finches munching on grass seed heads, a sign that Autumn is coming. Watching wrens leave for a warm place for the winter, we are reminded that fall migration is a more relaxed event for birds, compared to their spring arrival when they are looking for places to nest. Enjoying songbirds in your back yard is easy, all you need to do is provide them with water, food, and shelter. In August and September hummingbird feeders are active with migrating ruby throated hummingbirds. I've seen them at my feeders! Cedar wax wings and robins seek out native plants that bear fruit in early fall. American goldfinches appreciate the seed heads of purple coneflowers and blazing star liatris.

September is the peak time for migrating songbirds such as tanagers, grosbeaks, and warblers to head south since their diet is mostly insects. In fall, juvenile birds, as well as adults, migrate through Illinois, often at different times. Many of the young warblers and shorebirds look different than their parents, and many of the adult warblers have worn plumages.

The end of September brings flocks of broad-winged hawks. Hawks can be seen riding the thermals in the sky. Thermals are wind updrafts created by the sun warming the earth. They give hawks the boost they need to migrate to warmer climates. Come October, sparrows, ducks, scoters, and loons migrate through Illinois, as well as Cooper's hawks, red-tailed hawks, and peregrine falcons. Sandhill cranes are flying, too. On clear, sunny October and November days, you can hear their calls in the sky as they fly in formation to warmer climates. In Illinois, impressive numbers of Canada geese fly overhead or feast in cornfields in October, November, and December.

Now is the time to view migrating birds right here. Our forest preserves in Winnebago County and other natural areas here are rich resources to view the fall migration of songbirds and wetland birds.

<https://www.gorockford.com/blog/post/forest-preserves-offer-showcase-of-migrating-birds/>

<https://winnebagoforest.org/bird-watching/>

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

While some birds migrate for warmer weather, some remain to spend the winter here. The Christmas Bird

Count season signals the start of winter bird watching. Many bird watchers throughout the state, come together to count every bird they see for one day. The counts begin in mid-December and conclude in mid-January.

Winter is a time for gull and owl species that breed farther north to come to Illinois for more food. Ring-billed gulls live year-round in Illinois. From December through March, they are joined by the Iceland, Thayer's, and glaucous gulls. Good places to watch gulls in winter include Starved Rock Lock and Dam and Peoria Lock and Dam. Road trip anyone?

Locks and dams along the Mississippi and Illinois rivers, also attract bald eagles in winter. Illinois may have one of the highest winter populations of bald eagles in the nation. Sometimes 50 or more bald eagles, juveniles, and adults, can be counted at one point along the Mississippi River at such places as Mississippi Pali-sades State Park during winter. As ice on lakes and rivers concentrates, eagles flock along the locks where water remains open.

In our own backyards during winter, we can be entertained by birds that remain and those that come from further north. House sparrows, tufted titmice, American goldfinches, pine siskins, downy woodpeckers, black-capped chickadees, northern cardinals, dark-eyed juncos, nuthatches, and starlings are just a few of the birds that can be seen against our snowy backdrop. Fill your feeders, put suet out and enjoy our feathered friends during our fall and winter months ahead. In the meantime, keep your hummingbird feeders clean and filled since they will be around for the next couple of months before leaving for warmer weather.



Night Hawk



Owl



Bald eagle

# SEPTEMBER 14, 2020 COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

*Council met on September 14, outside at Ann Somers's home under the trees.*



## TREASURER'S REPORT

Beginning balance .....	\$3965.95
Receipts: .....	00
<b>Disbursements:</b>	
Secretary of State – Change of Registered Agent form fee .....	5.00
Secretary of State – Non Profit fee .....	10.00
<b>Total Disbursements:</b>	15.00
<b>Ending Balance as of August 31, 2020.....</b>	<b>\$3,950.95</b>

*Submitted by Mary Ann Miller, Treasurer*

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

**Programs** – Ann Somers reported that because of the pandemic there will be no December luncheon, and we do not know about the spring luncheon at this point.

**Publicity** – No report.

**Awards** - Elaine Parrovecchio reported that she will contact Janet Gallagher, Associate Professor of Horticulture at Kishwaukee College, in October regarding the scholarship that we will still support for a worthy horticulture student.

**Civic and Conservation** – Diane Donze reported that she is happy to say that they did the first dedication at the end of August. Sherry Seaver, representing Potpourri Garden Club, donated a mum plant. Diane has lined up volunteers from each club to do the next dedications, but she doesn't have the dates yet. She also reported that she received a nice thank you from the Habitat co-ordinator. Diane said that it is a "small nice thing" we do to show we care.

**Garden Walk** – Arch Smith reported that he has talked to all the garden owners, and they are willing to wait a year or so.

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

**Hospitality** – Mary Pinter had no report. Ann Somers said that the Council can try to meet outside again in October.

**Newsletter** – Kathy Batzkall reported that the newsletter will be completed by the weekend. Thanks to all members who submitted their 2020 Plant Successes!

**Parliamentarian** – Mary Pinter reported that we are doing fine.

**Sunshine** – If anyone would like to have a card sent, contact Peg Goral.

**Ways & Means** – No report.

**Website** – Kathy Batzkall said that if we have anything to submit about club activities or changes to the membership list to let her know.

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS**—No unfinished business.

## NEW BUSINESS

Ann hopes we can find ways we can get together to do garden club activities and be safe.

Our next meeting will be October 5th, the first Monday in October.

*Respectfully submitted, Jan Duncan, Secretary*

## Plant tags for your yard : )



# CLUB NEWS

## Potpourri Meeting - August 11, 2020

Potpourri had a fun-filled morning/afternoon of making cement orbs for succulents. The orbs looked cool and we all thought this would be fun and a piece of cake— wrong! In reality it's a bit trickier than we had imagined, but after a couple of mishaps most of us left with at least one successful planter. There were a few little things, like making the cement thick enough on the balloon, holding the balloon, and letting it dry safely. It was a bit like nurturing an egg. We had lots of laughs and it was just nice to be back together. Thank you to Lynne Franzene Lynde for instructing the class and Sherry Seaver for the use of her beautiful backyard.



Lynne Franzene Lynde  
leading class.



Some examples of our "creations."

## Habitat for Humanity Planter

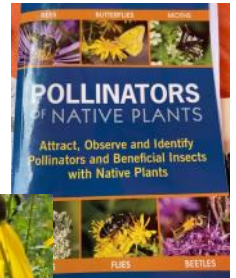


Sherry Seaver from Potpourri Garden Club donated the planter for the new Habitat for Humanity home owner. A huge thank you to Sherry!

## Seedlings Previous Meetings:

### Tour of Anita Johnson's pollinator garden

She provided reference books and plant names as part of the tour she offered fellow Seedling members.



### Fiona Fordyce's Garden

Fiona shared her philosophy on vegetable gardening, attracting pollinators, and ecology.



### Wetland at Ferguson Forest Preserve in Durand, IL.



## A Poignant, Positive Story

*By Melody Layng, Petals & Pickin's floral shop, Rockford*

My friends, I just have to post about an experience I had today at my flower shop. Today the most moving, touching, compassionate thing happened and it's something I will never forget! A grieving family came in to do an unbearable task: pick out flowers for a young daughter's funeral. It's such a heartbreaking story and a difficult time for sure.

While we were going over things, a gentleman customer came in to grab some flowers for his wife, and realizing that I would be a few minutes, he held up his money and said he'd leave it on the counter.

A short time later I went out to the counter to tally up the cost of the funeral and while doing that, the gentleman customer came back into the shop, walked up to the counter and said, "I'm going to pay for their



flowers!" I looked at him in disbelief and then told him that these were funeral flowers, not just a bouquet and he said he didn't care; he knew there was sadness for this family and he wanted to help them! I stood there speechless, just looking at him asking if he was

sure....he was VERY sure he said! I asked if he would go back into the family with me so I could let them know and he said, 'no, just to let them know their bill has been paid.'

As he left, I went back to the family and placed my hand on the young mother's back and said, "You aren't going to believe this, but the customer that was just here paid for all your flowers!" I wish the man could have seen the reaction to his amazing deed. Tears flowed uncontrollably. The family was shocked and so grateful, and quickly got up to go outside to see if he was still in the parking lot, but he was already gone. The fact that he wished to remain anonymous says so much about the kind of man he is.

I pray for this family and hope that they find strength in all the memories they have of their loved one who has now become their angel. And I also pray for the man who went above and beyond to help ease the burden of a grieving family whom he had never met. God bless them all.



## Autumn at the Arboretum

**Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden**

is excited to announce that our annual

**FREE fall community event,**

**Autumn at the Arboretum,**

will occur this year as a week-long series

of on-site and virtual activities and

programming from

**Sunday, October 11th to Sunday, October 18th!**

Visitors will have the opportunity to explore our 155 acres with a self-guided fall color tour and Klehm scavenger hunt, navigate a straw bale maze on the lawn of Clarcor Pavilion, participate in a doggy costume contest, and attend a fall color webinar - all for FREE!

Supporters can also tune into Klehm's website and social media accounts throughout the week for virtual updates, recaps, and what to look forward to in 2021.

For more information about the free activities and programming available during Autumn at the Arboretum, visit <http://klehm.org/autumn-at-the-arboretum/>

