

COUNCIL OF ROCKFORD GARDENERS, INC.

Organized 3/21/1980

E-Issue V 6 Issue 2

Editor: Kathy Batzkall

MARCH 2021



The 4 CRG Clubs:

Plantaholics

Potpourri

Seedlings

Wildflowers

Council Motto:

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

Council Website:

councilofrockfordgardeners.org

**Most 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

It's March! The big melt is in full swing. We'll have more winter days but we have turned the corner and you can literally smell spring. Daffodils are pushing through; alliums are showing themselves and winter aconite is blooming. Our outdoor garden season is about to begin or as the previous sentence suggests, it already has! Get your tools in order and ready to go!

Our clubs are coming up with safe, fun and informative ideas for club meetings. The Council of Rockford Gardeners FREE Garden Walk 2021 is being reimagined. Tours that include all CRG members are in the works. Creativity is a natural to gardeners, maybe add a little hope and positivity... who among us hasn't tried to grow a higher Zone plant in our Zone 5 spaces! We've got this!

Keep playing in the dirt,

Sarah & Ann



No Council Meeting Minutes This Month

MARCH
2021

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Get to Know...

SUBMIT questions or
comments to:

CRGnews815@gmail.com

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



A SPECIAL GARDEN WALK FOR MEMBERS ONLY

*Due to continued uncertainty about the Covid situation,
we will not hold our regular garden walk for the public this year.
Instead, Arch is working on a plan to have a garden walk
for members only, featuring members' gardens:*



Members Only Garden Walk July 7th 3pm-7pm

**each club will provide a member's garden
will be limited to members and guests
could do a door prize at each garden
will do a plant identification at all gardens**

**If anyone has any additional ideas and / or
suggestions feel free to contact Arch Smith
815-501-1640 or racs71@yahoo.com**

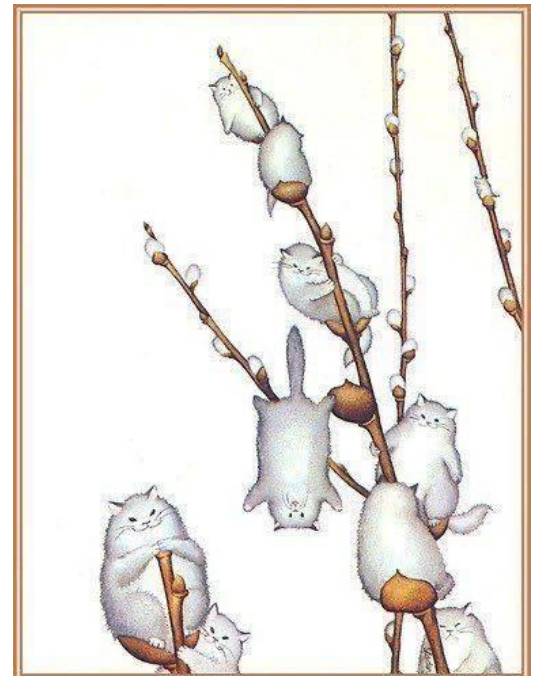
This proposal is a work in progress everything is subject to change



The Legend of the Pussy Willow

According to an old Polish legend, many springtimes ago a mother cat was crying at the bank of the river in which her kittens were drowning. The willows at the river's edge longed to help her, so they swept their long graceful branches into the waters to rescue the tiny kittens who had fallen into the river while chasing butterflies. The kittens gripped on tightly to their branches and were safely brought to shore.

Each springtime since, goes the legend, the willow branches sprout tiny fur-like buds at their tips where the tiny kittens once clung.



Artist: Rose Mary Berlin

Please resist the urge to clean up your gardens until after temperatures are consistently above 50 degrees for 5 days!

Many butterflies, bees and other pollinators are currently overwintering in the dead leaves and hollowed out stems of last year's plants.

If you clean out your garden now, you will literally be throwing away this year's butterflies, bees and other beneficial pollinators.



Potpourri Club outing at Rock Cut State Park

To see your club's photos
or stories published
in the newsletter,
please send them to:
CRGnews815@gmail.com



What are 4 favorite things – vegetables
or flowers– that you will be planting
in your garden this year?

Please send responses to CRGnews815@gmail.com

A SPRING WALKABOUT IN YOUR “HOMEGROWN NATIONAL PARK”

by EJ Rebman and Lori Walsh, Plantaholics members

Take a walkabout

We are all anxious to get out into our gardens. We want to thoughtfully consider how we choose our activities because we want to protect and support our overwintering critters. Please don't hurry to clean up your garden. A healthy spring garden is a messy garden. Remember that bees, butterfly and moth eggs and pupas as well as spiders, and many others overwinter in pithy stems and leaves left in the garden. We need to give the little insects time to awaken before they get mulched up, killed and thrown in a lawn waste bag. Remember the 55/5 rule - delay cleaning up your garden until it has been 55 degrees for 5 days in a row.

Evaluate plantings

Something we can do in our gardens while we wait for the weather to warm is to take stock of how many plants we have that support pollinators. Even more fun is seeking out places for new plants in your space. Some of the needs of pollinators include evergreens for birds to hide in so they can nest and plants that attract insects. If we desire the beauty and companionship of birds, we need to ensure that our gardens can feed their babies. Nestlings are fed 6,240 - 9,120 caterpillars before they fledge.

Appreciate bees

As we are touring our gardens we may notice native bees buzzing about. Did you know that researchers predict that our own species would survive only another 4 years without bees? 70% of native bees nest in the ground and they don't sting. Unless provoked or defending their nest, most bees won't sting at all. We're glad to welcome these pollinators to our yards!

Use natives

Many plants support pollinators. Native plants do it best, with minimal care. Plan your native plant garden by googling "nwf plant finder". Tap "Native", then add your zip code to find a wide array of native plants that can fit into many garden situations. We are excited to create a network of Homegrown National Parks with you!

And of course, please, no pesticides...



Pollinator Plant List

Many of the plants listed are host plants for various butterflies and moths and are noted with an (H).

Annuals

Alyssum
Cleome (H)
Cosmos
Evening primrose
Flax
Lantana
Mexican sunflower
Morning glory
Mullein
Poppy
Sunflower (H)
Snap dragon (H)

Tomato
Verbena
Zinnia

Herbs

Basil
Borage
Catnip
Comfrey
Dill (H)
Fennel (H)
Hyssop
Lavender

Mint
Oregano
Parsley (H)
Sweet marjoram
Rosemary
Thyme

Perennials, biennials

Aster (H)
Beebalm
Beard tongue
Bellflower
Black-eyed Susan (H)

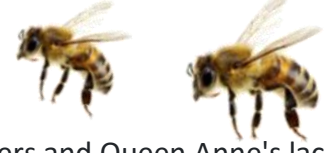
Blazing star
Butterfly weed (H)
Coneflower
Hollyhock (H)
Joe Pye Weed
Larkspur
Lead plant (H)
Lobelia, great blue
Milkweed (H)
Monkshood
Mint
Native rose
White indigo

HORTICULTURE HAPPENINGS

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



Plant for Bees



Happy Spring! While many of you are pouring over garden catalogs, looking for just the right plants for your garden remember the plants that attract bees to your garden.

When we bite into a crisp apple, eat a piece of blueberry pie or a juicy peach we have bees to thank. The list is long as to the effect they have on our food supply. So, let's help them and us out when planning and planting our gardens this year. Planting trees, flowers, shrubs to the plants we put in our planters all contribute to a healthy landscape for bees.

Bees pollinate roughly three-quarters of all fruits, nuts and vegetables grown across the country and one of every four bites of food can be credited to bee pollination. Bee populations are in decline for several reasons, including the use of pesticides, parasites, and a lack of flowers on the landscape.

Single flowers, those with one ring of petals provide more food for pollinators than double flowers, in which extra petals have replaced pollen-laden anthers. Blue, purple and yellow flowers are most appealing to bees. Flat or shallow blossoms, such

as daisies, zinnias, asters and Queen Anne's lace, will attract the largest variety of bees.

Bees need shelter from rain and cold. If you already have an established garden adding shelter for bees is as simple as leaving some decaying branches for them. Bring your garden to life by planting containers with bee friendly plants and placing them in your existing garden.

Provide nesting areas for bees such as areas with dry grasses and a muddy area for mason bees.

Bumblebee at work

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SZrTndD1H10>

Plants attracting beneficial bees

<https://beekeeperbasics.wordpress.com/2017/06/26/top-100-plants-you-can-grow-to-help-increase-bee-population/>

Containers with Bee friendly plants

<https://www.houzz.com/magazine/blooming-container-gardens-that-welcome-butterflies-and-bees-stsetivw-vs~108941436>



Bee friendly containers to keep your garden buzzing with activity

The hum of bees is the voice of the garden.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS EXTENSION

Think Spring Gardening Series

The University of Illinois Extension is offering the virtual Think Spring Gardening Series in place of their annual in person gardening days which will not be held this year due to the ongoing pandemic. The series will be held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings beginning March 16 and going through April 1. The presentations will be from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. each evening and will be held via the Zoom platform. You must pre-register to receive the Zoom link to join the presentation. The series is being held free of charge, but donations are being accepted to help offset the cost of programming. Register at <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=23189>



Tuesday, March 16 **Designing a Garden to Attract Birds**

Dr. Michael P. Ward, Associate Professor, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Science, University of Illinois.

Dr. Ward will bring to the presentation his understanding of avian ecology and behavior and his knowledge of birds' habitat selection, describing design features and plantings we can introduce in our home gardens to make them both inviting to and protective of the variety of song birds that frequent this area.



Thursday, March 18 **Lessons for the Red Oak Rain Garden**

Eliana Brown, Water Quality Specialist with Illinois Extension and Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant, and Layne Knoche, Visiting Outreach Associate with Illinois Extension and Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant.

The Red Oak Rain Garden, located on the University of Illinois Urbana campus is a site that soaks up rainwater and supports pollinators. Many lessons were learned throughout the process of designing and building it that homeowners can apply on a smaller scale to their own properties. Eliana and Layne will share with you lessons learned and how you can be successful establishing a similar type of landscape on your property.



Tuesday, March 23 **Bulb Lasagna-Creating Layers**

Mark Dwyer, Owner and Founder of Landscape Prescriptions by MD

Spring is always busy for gardeners but it's not too early to think about adding bulbs to your landscape later in fall. By observing gaps of color and interest in the spring garden, identifying areas for "bulb beautification", to be addressed later in the year, is prudent and worth the time. Your bulb planting should consider the "layered" or "lasagna" approach in putting multiple varieties of bulbs in close proximity (even the same hole!) to create

amazing, layered compositions while maximizing beauty in even a small space. We'll discuss some great bulbs to consider as well as how to create your own "bulb lasagna" out in the garden.



Thursday, March 25 **50 Shapes of Shade**

Martha Smith, Illinois Extension, Horticulture Educator
Trees and shrubs come in a wide array of shapes. Have you ever thought of how those shapes can be used in the landscape to their best advantage? Columnar or weeping or rounded? Not only their summer forms and shade cast but their winter silhouette? Martha Smith, Horticulture Educator University of Illinois Extension will share some of her favorite shapes and how to use them in the landscape.



Tuesday, March 30 **Succulent Wreaths**

Bruce Black, Illinois Extension, Horticulture Educator
Bright and textured succulent wreaths are living plant wreaths for any occasion. Succulents are desert plants turned houseplants. Learn more about what succulents are, their biology, and how to build and care for a succulent wreath in this presentation.



Thursday, April 1 **Starting Seeds Successfully**

Grant McCarty, Illinois Extension, Local Food Systems & Small Farms Educator

Starting seeds indoors for your vegetable garden can be challenging. You need proper equipment and the right environment to be successful. Each year, there are new varieties in seed catalogs, but most of these depend on you starting them indoors before planting this spring. This class will go through the basics of selecting varieties, using seed starting equipment, and trouble shooting.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE GARDEN EVENTS

KLEHM ABORETUM & BOTANIC GARDEN

Pre-registration and pre-payment are required for all events. No walk-ins accepted on the day of the event.

Forest Messengers Tranquility Walk

Friday, March 26 6:30 PM – 8:30 PM Walk in silence and listen. Listen for the sounds of the settling birds. The sounds of the sun setting and the moon rising. The sound of the universe breathing. The sound of your spirit expanding. What do the messages say?

Wear footwear suitable for trail walking and dress appropriately for whatever the weather might bring. Bring a mask for indoor use, and for use outdoors when physical distancing is not possible. All ages are welcome with the understanding that this is a silent, meditative experience. Because this is an after hours program and the arboretum will be closed to the general public, please plan to arrive a few minutes early as the gates will close promptly at 6:30 PM.

ADMISSION: \$3 per Klehm member, \$5 per senior (62+), \$8 per public adult.

Create Your Own Rain Chain

Saturday, April 10, 10 AM – 2 PM

ArtByKarla will show you how to create an 8-foot-long rain chain using 2-inch clay pots and beautiful beads. You will be able to paint your pots in any color and design of your choosing.

As this class takes around 4 hours, please feel free to bring a lunch and/or snacks along, however a face covering is required to be worn at all other times. Class will take place in the Visitor's Center Gallery.

ADMISSION: \$65 per person

Virtual Plant Sale Fundraiser

Online Ordering in April Order Pick-ups Friday, May 7 & Saturday, May 8 Klehm's newly formatted Plant Sale Fundraiser* is going virtual this year! Purchase plants online in April with order pick ups on May 7 and 8. More information TBA.

**While we have appreciated the support throughout the years, Klehm will no longer be accepting plant donations for this sale.*

NICHOLAS CONSERVATORY & GARDENS

Simply Spring: The Butterfly Exhibit

March 20-June 6, Hours vary

NCG TO-GrOW: Butterfly Zen Garden

(In-Person Class) Sat, Apr 17, 9:00am - 9:45am
Create your own zen garden style butterfly puddler to help the monarchs get the essential minerals they need. Includes admission to Nicholas Conservatory butterfly exhibit after class. \$10/kit + \$4/person. Pre-registration required.

NCG TO-GrOW: Bumble Bee Nests

(In-Person Class) Sat, May 15, 9:00am - 9:45am
Bumblebees are an essential component of any home garden. Learn how you can attract them to your yard. Then, build your very own nesting box so you can encourage the bumblebees to stay! Includes admission to Nicholas Conservatory butterfly exhibit after class. \$10/kit + \$4/person. Pre-registration required.

TAKEAWAYS FROM THE WISCONSIN GARDEN & LANDSCAPE EXPO

This year's Garden Expo was a virtual experience which you can still catch up on for free by going to YouTube.

Start with "Old-Fashioned Flower Favorites You and the Pollinators will Enjoy!" by clicking on

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uv423qg44sw>. Scroll down for lots of other available videos, such as:

"Tending the Valley: A Prairie Restoration Odyssey" by Alice D'Alessio

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AqrP8HBAE2Y&feature=emb_logo.

"Sensational Seasonal Plants" presented by Mark Dwyer, former Director of Rotary Gardens, Janesville, WI.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7YYVhC0ybg>

GET TO KNOW BEATRIX FARRAND

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



Beatrix Farrand, the only founding woman member of the American Society of Landscape Architects in 1899, was born in New York City and studied horticulture and garden design. Through her New York social connections, she received major estate commissions and quickly developed a reputation for her elegant, restrained style and rich architectural detail. Her thoroughness of approach and attention to detail was appreciated by such exacting clients as Abby Aldrich Rockefeller, whose garden at Seal Harbor, Maine, Farrand designed, and Mildred and Robert Woods Bliss, with whom she collaborated for 26 years on Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C. Dumbarton Oaks remains her finest surviving work. Farrand is also recognized for her campus work, including Princeton and Yale.

Her career included commissions to design about 110 gardens for private residences, estates and country homes,

public parks, botanic gardens, college campuses, and the White House. Only a few of her major works survive: Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C., the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Garden on Mount Desert, Maine, the restored Farm House Garden in Bar Harbor, the Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden at the New York Botanical Garden (constructed after Farrand's death), and elements of the campuses of Princeton, Yale, and Occidental.

She began practicing landscape architecture in 1895, working from the upper floor of her mother's brownstone house on East Eleventh Street in New York. Since women were excluded from public projects, her first designs were residential gardens, beginning with some for neighboring Bar Harbor residents. With the help of her mother and with her aunt Edith Wharton's social connections, she was introduced to prominent people, which led to working on a variety of significant projects. Within three years she was so prominent in her field that she was chosen the only woman among the founders of the American Society of Landscape Architects, although she preferred the British term "landscape gardener."

Farrand did the initial site and planting planning for the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. in 1899. In 1912, she designed the walled residential garden,

Bellefield, for Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Newbold in Hyde Park, New York (now a part of the Franklin D. Roosevelt National Historic Site).

For the White House, the first Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, Ellen Loise Axson Wilson, had commissioned Beatrix Farrand to design the East Colonial Garden (now redesigned as the Jacqueline Kennedy Garden) and the West Garden (now the redesigned White House Rose Garden) in 1913. After Mrs. Wilson's August 1914 death the project languished until the second Mrs. Wilson, Edith Bolling Galt Wilson, had its installation restarted and completed in 1916. She received the commission from J. Pierpont Morgan to design the Morgan Library grounds in New York City, and continued as a consultant for thirty years (1913–43).

Dumbarton Oaks site plan

Her most notable work was at the Dumbarton Oaks estate in Georgetown for Mildred and Robert Woods Bliss (1922–1940). Her design was inspired by her European ventures, especially from the Italian Renaissance gardens, and consisted of establishing a sophisticated relationship between the architectural and natural environments, with formal terraced gardens stepping down a steep slope and transitioning to a more naturalistic aesthetic approaching the creek.



Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C.