

COUNCIL OF ROCKFORD GARDENERS, INC.

Organized 3/21/1980

E-Issue V 6 Issue 3

Editor: Kathy Batzkall

APRIL 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

Please check the website
for club meetings
and activities.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

Co-Presidents: Ann Somers & Sarah Britton

We begin our 41st year having not been able to celebrate our 40th with the events that had been planned. As restrictions due to Covid are lifted (please let this continue), we are able to meet and greet our fellow gardeners and share our knowledge and talents, celebrate our common gardening interest and 'Enjoy nature's beauty and bounty through work and creativity.' That is the motto of the Council of Rockford Gardeners. What an ideal!

We hope you've made your reservation for the April 26 tour of Vi Bates Wildflower Garden at Klehm Arboretum and Botanic Garden. Vi Bates was instrumental in getting CRG off the ground. This wildflower garden has been lovingly tended by Anita Johnson, a member of Seedlings and our tour guide, and is a beautiful tribute to our past which benefits our present and will live into our future.

Into the gardens... it's time to begin spring cleanup. Spring bulbs are doing their thing! Magnolias and other flowering trees are close behind! This is the start of the rainbow of colors and shapes and textures that make up our landscape. Get out and experience the joys of gardening!

Keep playing in the dirt,

Sarah & Ann

APRIL
2021

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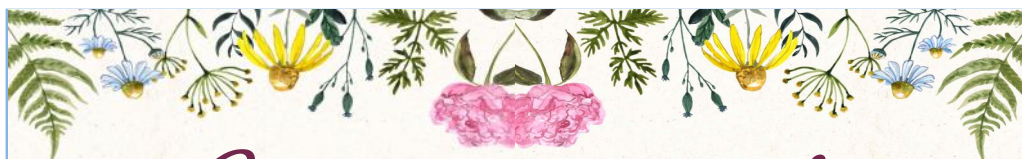
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Dr. Phil O'Dendron;
Haiku Challenge

SUBMIT questions or
comments to:

CRGnews815@gmail.com

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



You are invited

Council of Rockford Gardeners invites you to tour the

Vi Bates Wildflower Garden

Klehm Arboretum and Botanic Garden | 2715 S Main St, Rockford, IL

Monday, April 26

Tours begin at noon and 2 p.m. and will be led by Anita Johnson of Seedlings. Anita has a vast knowledge of wildflowers and of this particular garden. You'll learn about this woodland treasure and the Council of Rockford Gardeners' connection to the garden. Tours will last approximately 1½ hours and will begin at the Visitor's Center.

Reservations are required and limited to 20 per tour. Please call Sam Burbach, Education and Programming Director at Klehm at 815 965-8146 or email samburbach@klehm.org. Deadline for making reservations is Monday, April 19.

Regular admission rates apply: Adult \$8; Senior Adult (age 62+) \$5

Free for members of KABG

Payment may be made over the phone when reservation is made
or paid in-person on the day of the event.



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 we will have a garden walk for members only, featuring members' gardens:

July 7, 3-7pm

- ☞ Each club will provide one member's garden
- ☞ The walk is limited to members and their guests
- ☞ Plant identification at all gardens

**Contact Arch Smith with additional suggestions or ideas:
815-501-640 or racs71@yahoo.com**



Responses to the Question

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

Anita Wetzberger

Besides my top 4 must-have veggies to plant (beans, greens, tomatoes and cukes) to supplement my perennial flowers I 'must' fill in with snapdragons, Victoria blue salvia, sunflowers and impatiens. But of course I can't limit to 4! These are the ones I'd miss the most.

Gina Ross

I had large aged pines removed, so I am planting plants that attract song birds and planting natives

Maryann Miller

Tomatoes. Can't live without tomatoes! Then there are the beautiful giant lite green begonias as well as the hanging begonias. Anything bright for shade areas.

Liz Hill

I plant flowers in the garden. In pots, on the deck; tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, wax beans, basil.

Kathy Crandall

I am planting more fruit, currants, blueberries, sour cherry and something a bit weird - huckleberry bushes. (Guess I had too much time to look at catalogs!)

When we were at Glacier National Park a couple of years ago, it was huckleberry season. I loved them! My husband is great at digging holes!

Dawn Urban

Sunflowers, tomatoes, cantaloupe, marigolds

Peg Goral

My planting days are past, except for some herbs.

Karin Emery

We have added a small green house behind the shop. We planted seeds for morning glories, basil, thyme, yellow pear tomatoes, peppers, flowering kale and nasturtium. Great fun watching them grow even when there was snow on the ground!

Carole-Anne Stewart

Since the Polar Vortex a couple of years ago I have been replacing some of the fall-out. Last year was especially heart-breaking when I had to take down my 10 year old Fountain Beech and replace him with a new much smaller specimen. This past Fall I took down my Tina Crab by my front entrance, and cleared away many other shrubs and ground cover from about a 15' x 15' area. My new blank canvas will be coming to light soon with a Japanese Maple as the focal.

Rosanne Southwood

On our Wildflower club garden walk I was introduced to the Popcorn plant (*Senna didymobotrya*) and I plan on getting one or two this Spring. I understand that they sell out fast and are pricey. The Popcorn plant leaf has a powerful scent of movie theater popcorn. It has pretty yellow flowers on its blooms that rise straight and tall above the leaves. In our climate it's an annual and gets 2-3 feet tall in a sunny moist location.

Mary Pinter

I am going to plant cleome and guara as two new plants I haven't tried. I will also plant the usual begonias and succulents.



“HOMEGROWN NATIONAL PARK PROJECT”

by EJ Rebman and Lori Walsh, Plantaholics members

Doug Tallamy’s project mission is, “a grassroots call to action to restore biodiversity and ecosystem function by planting native plants and creating new ecological networks.”

Wouldn’t it be exciting to be on the ground floor of this massive project?

To register, go to <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/>. The site interactively records the progress of gardeners across the United States as they plant native and provide and extend corridors for pollinators. We’ve signed up (it’s easy!) and we hope you will, too.

Doug Tallamy suggests five areas that we can consider as we become part of the Homegrown National Park Project.

Strategize about how you might reduce your lawn. The Homegrown National Parks aspires to repurpose half of America’s lawnscape for ecologically productive use.

Add keystone plantings in the area that used to be lawn. A keystone species are plants that provides a critical source of food and/or shelter for other species. Choose an oak tree, says Doug. Other keystone plantings could be native perennials, willows, birches, hickory, and pines just to name a few.

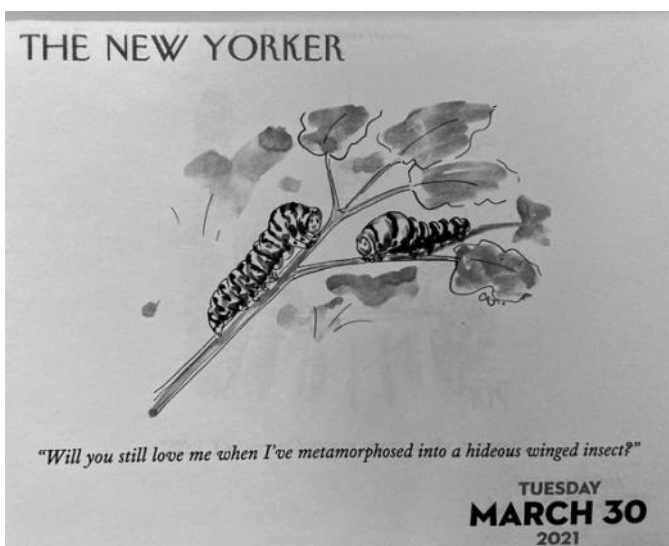
Leave the leaves! They return nutrients to your soil that the tree roots will use next year. If this looks untidy to your eye, can you find an area near the back of your property for leaves? Could you leave some under your mulch? Remember to cover your soil using an organic mulch. Leaf mold is excellent for feeding the living soil.

Plan to **add plants that support pollinators**. Do you have a small space in the sun where you could add pollinator plants? And remember, no pesticides.

Start removing serious invasive species Invasive species reduce biodiversity and can cause extinction of our native plants. Think kudzu in the south. <https://www.invasive.org>illinois>speciesofconcern>.

*“In the past, we have asked one thing of our gardens: that they be pretty.
Now they have to support life, sequester carbon, feed pollinators and manage water”*

-Doug Tallamy



HORTICULTURE HAPPENINGS

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

Create a bird friendly yard



I'm experiencing a garden revival. The pines in my backyard, providing shade, a place for birds and a privacy screen were removed last year as they aged out, leaving me with a wide-open space to get creative.

This new planting area will be dedicated to attracting birds with shrubs, trees and flowers they can feed on and nest in. To attract birds and most wildlife to your garden, provide them with food, water, shelter, native shrubs, trees, vines and wildflowers. Even in an established garden, a space can be found for native plants. The most common backyard birds in our area are the Northern Cardinal, American robin, black-capped chickadee, downy woodpecker, dark-eyed junco, American goldfinch, house sparrow, blue jay, pine siskin, white-breasted nuthatch, blue jay, cedar waxwing and house wren. Remember the hummingbirds too!

Migrating birds have begun gracing our yards and will continue through May as they make their way from warmer climates. We'll see them again beginning in late August and continuing through November as they as they make their way to warmer climates.

Everyone's yard and soil situation is different, so consider what you have to work with. Is it a shaded yard? Total sun? No trees? A mix?

In creating a bird oasis, a suitable planting solution can be developed for almost any backyard. Begin by reducing the area devoted to grass. Compared to meadow and garden areas, turf requires two to three times the amount of water for it to thrive. Your pesticide and herbicide use will decline as well. A variety of plants offers increased feeding opportunities for wildlife. The planting area can always benefit from adding organic matter and mulch to help maintain moisture and nutrients.

Plants with flowers, seeds and berries are most effective in attracting birds. Before deadheading, remember that seeds can be left for birds to feed on. Plants that bear fruit are a treat for birds in late fall.

If you don't have a yard, consider adding containers at your doorstep. Filling them with a mix of annuals and perennials will attract everything from hummingbirds and cardinals.

Incorporate a variety of features for birds to visit in your yard. Tall trees, arbors, flowers, grasses and trellises with vines, water features or bird baths will all attract birds. Create some protected spaces for them to nest. Add a birdbath for them to splash in.

The dietary preferences of backyard birds range from seeds and berries to many varieties of insects. Here is a list of some of their favorite insect entrées:

1. Bluebirds: grasshoppers, crickets, beetles, larvae, moths
2. Cardinals: beetles, grasshoppers, leafhoppers, stinkbugs, snails
3. Chickadees: aphids, whitefly, scale, caterpillars, ants, earwigs
4. Grosbeaks: larvae, caterpillars, beetles
5. Nuthatches: tree and shrub insects such as borers, caterpillars, ants and earwigs
6. Oriole: caterpillars, larvae, beetles, grasshoppers
7. Sparrows: beetles, caterpillars, cutworms
8. Swallows: moths, beetles, grasshoppers
9. Titmice: aphids, leafhoppers, caterpillars, beetles
10. Warblers: caterpillars, aphids, whitefly
11. Woodpeckers: larvae, beetles, weevils, borers

Five common Northern Illinois birds and feeding them: <https://www.mycedarwood.com/post/2019/05/07/5-most-common-birds-in-northern-illinois-and-how-to-feed-them>

Illinois native plant link: <https://iiseagrant.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/1-ILLINOIS-NATIVE-PLANTS-FOR-THE-HOME-LANDSCAPE.pdf>

Illinois native trees and shrubs: https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/trees/tree_index.htm

Make Everyday Earth Day!

APRIL 5, 2021 COUNCIL MEETING REPORT



TREASURER'S REPORT

Balance as of March 1, 2021.....	\$3,600.95
Receipts (dues):	1,650.00
Disbursements:	00.00
*(A disbursement of \$2,000.00 was made from the previous September 26, 2020 balance of \$3,950.95 to the 2020 scholarship recipient.)	
Ending Balance as of March 1, 2021.....	\$3,600.95

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

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Programs – **Deb Bieschke** had no report.

Publicity – No report. We are working on filling this position.

Awards – **Elaine Parrovecchio** reported that that we have one scholarship recipient from 2020 and will have a new scholarship recipient for 2021. They will both be honored at the next luncheon. Ann reported that the Garden Clubs of Illinois asked her if we still did a scholarship in 2020.

Civic and Conservation – **Diane Donze** reported that there is nothing new for Habitat for Humanity so far. They are trying to do 3 homes this year. Diane said that if we have any other donation suggestions to please contact her. Several suggestions were made, including the Rock River Valley Food Pantry or Miss Carly's.

Garden Walk – **Arch Smith** sent out an email to the club presidents regarding the Garden Walk, which will be for members and their guests only this year. It will not be open to the public. Each club will put up a single garden, so there will be 4 gardens total. The Garden Walk is planned for Wednesday July 7th, from 3-7. Lori Walsh volunteered to do a plant identification list on each of the gardens.

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

Hospitality – **Ann Somers** informed **Mary Pinter** that we will start back with meeting on the first Monday of the month. Ann said that our May meeting will be at a surprise location! We will continue to meet outside.

Newsletter – **Kathy Batzkall** reported that she would like each club to contribute photos for the Newsletter.

Parliamentarian – **Mary Pinter** said that that all is good.

Sunshine – Please let **Peg Goral** know if anyone in our clubs needs a card.

Ways & Means – **Lynne Franzen-Lynde** reported that she has learned that Ways & Means also includes fundraising, after a discussion on fundraising for this year in which we have no luncheon funds coming in.

Website – **Kathy Batzkall** requested that each club please check all of their club information on their club page on the website. She would like us to make sure everything is correct.

NEW BUSINESS

Susan Schmitz asked about the Garden Fair, and Ann Somers said that we are signed up to have a free booth with a tent in the non-profit area. It is for information only, no fundraising. Flyers with all the club information and the scholarship information will be available. Arch Smith offered to pay for a new banner. Ann reported that we will be manning the tent for 2 days.

Ann also reported that our By-Laws state that each member "shall serve on one or more committees each year". We need to work on getting our 111 members involved in the clubs.

Ann again reminded us that this is her last year to serve as President. By March of next year (2022) we need someone to take over for a 2-year term. New officers take over in March. There is no meeting in February, and Ann will be done in January. All other officers are staying in their positions for this year.
We are looking for a new president for 2022.

Council is working on the tours of the Vi Bates Wildflower Garden, the Gathering of Clubs and other activities. These are for all club members. All members are invited to attend Council meetings also!

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE GARDEN EVENTS

EARTH DAY: APRIL 22

ILLINOIS ARBOR DAY: APRIL 30

All states in the US now have an official Arbor Day, a great day to plant a tree!

KLEHM ABORETUM & BOTANIC GARDEN

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

Spring Twilight Tranquility Walk

Sunday, April 25, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

Watch the moon rise from the east while the sun is setting in the west. Watch for the raccoons. Listen for the owl.

Wear footwear suitable for trail walking and dress appropriately for the weather. Bring a mask. Because this is an after hours program, plan to arrive early as the gates will close promptly at 6:30 PM. Group size is limited, so register early to be sure to secure a spot!

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

Virtual Plant Sale Fundraiser*

Online Ordering in April; Order Pick-ups Friday, May 7 & Saturday, May 8. More information TBA.

**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.

ANDERSON JAPANESE GARDENS

Anderson Japanese Gardens opens for the season on Friday, April 16th!

Peace Pole Class, Art by Karla, Saturday, May 1, 2021 at 10 AM – 3 PM

Tickets: andersongardens.org/cultural-educational/cultural-arts/artbykarla.

Members: \$65; Non-Members: \$70

Create your own personalized Peace Pole for your garden. ArtbyKarla will show you how, step-by-step.

All supplies are included in the cost of the class, except for varnish which needs to dry overnight. The Peace Pole is a PVC post sleeve measuring 4"x4"x44". Please bring your lunch or snacks, as this class takes approximately 5 hours.



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

Staff writer, Dr. Phil O'Dendron

SPRINGING INTO YOUR GARDEN

- 1. Clean out the garden.** Time to clean your garden and remove all the winter debris after temperatures remain above 50 for 5 days. This is also a good time to sharpen your garden tools.
- 2. Revitalize the soil.** Since your soil is likely dried out and packed after winter, it's time to add moisture. Add organic material like compost or manure.
- 3. Trim old plants.** Some plants will need to be pruned so they'll grow anew in the spring. Make sure to wait until mid-April or May in case there's an unexpected freeze.
- 4. Add mulch.** In addition to fertilizers and organic materials, you should think about adding mulch to your flower beds and garden. One to three inches of mulch helps to prevent weeds and diseases.



" We used to tiptoe through the tulips... Now we just waddle through the weeds!"



Haiku poetry challenge

Dawn Urban, Potpourri member

Haiku poetry has fascinated me for about 15 years. This ancient form of poem writing is renowned for its small size as well as the precise punctuation and syllables needed on its three lines. It is of ancient Japanese origin. Haiku poems are typically about nature and usually about a specific season.

The rhythm is: first line 5 syllables, second line 7 syllables, third line 5 syllables.
I find enjoyment in their balance and brevity.

Let us see what you can write!

Please submit your haikus to the editor's email: CRGnews815@gmail.com.

Here are some floral examples from Basho, both of which are included in a scholarly book, *THE JAPANESE HAIKU* by Kenneth Yasuda:

Underneath the eaves
A blooming large hydrangea
Overbrims its leaves.



In the twilight gloom
Of the redwood and the pine
Some wisteria bloom.