

COUNCIL OF ROCKFORD GARDENERS, INC.

Organized 3/21/1980

The 4 CRG Clubs:

Plantaholics

Potpourri

Seedlings

Wildflowers

Council Motto:

“Enjoy nature’s bounty
and beauty through work
and creativity.”

Council Website:

councilofrockfordgardeners.org

Club calendars listed
on website,

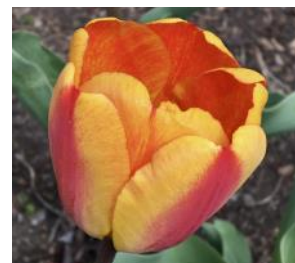
or please check with your
garden club on status of
individual club activities.



E-Issue V 6 Issue 4

Editor: Kathy Batzkall

MAY 2021



Ginny Hatwich photo

FROM THE PRESIDENT’S PEN

Co-Presidents: Ann Somers & Sarah Britton

April showers bring May flowers. What do May flowers bring? Pilgrims!

This is a brilliant time of year for gardeners. We are on the search for the emergence of tiny green sprouts that will grow and flourish and fill our garden beds throughout the summer. We haunt garden centers and nurseries looking for the best and brightest plants to fill empty spaces or wedge them into a spot because we just can’t live without that specific plant. These are joyful moments! Every now and again we need to stop and live in the moment. Inhale the scents and admire the colors of spring. They are fleeting but oh so wonderful when here!

Anita Johnson and Rhonda Johnson shared their knowledge and their dedication to the Vi Bates Wildflower Garden at Klehm on April 26. What a sensory and educational experience that was! How many wildflower gardens will be added to our home gardens as a result of that tour? Thanks for sharing, ladies!

CRG will have a booth in the Fountain Garden area during Klehm’s Garden Fair on June 5 and 6. Each club is providing volunteers to help promote our clubs and let the community know who we are and what we do. If you haven’t taken on a shift during the fair, stop by the tent and say hi and thank our members who are ‘working!’

Keep playing in the dirt,

Sarah & Ann

MAY
2021

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SUBMIT questions or
comments to:

CRGnews815@gmail.com



TOUR OF VI BATES WILDFLOWER GARDEN AT KLEHM ARBORETUM

Anita Johnson, of Seedlings Garden Club gave 2 presentations at Klehm Arboretum & Botanical Garden on April 26 especially for Council of Rockford Gardeners. Anita is an expert on native woodland wildflowers and she has worked tirelessly to help design, plant, and promote the Vi Bates Woodland Wildflower Garden at Klehm. Anita explained the many benefits of native plants, not the least of which is that they need no chemical fertilizer, pesticides, or herbicides to thrive once they are established. Anita gave us a tour of the garden and pointed out many outstanding specimens that they have conveniently labeled to help people learn about them.

- Story by Ginny Hatwich



Above photos by Susan Schumacher



Photo by Diane Donze



Photo by Arch Smith



Virginia Bluebells



Bloodroot

Photos by Ginny Hatwich

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 4 members' gardens:

July 7, 3-7pm

- ☞ Each club will provide one member's garden
- ☞ The walk is limited to members and their guest
- ☞ Plant identification provided

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



**Imperial Crown in
Maryann Miller's garden**



Garden Plant Sale

Friday, May 14 and Saturday May 15

At the garden of Diane Fitz

2834 Westfield Road, Winnebago

10am-3pm

Cash only

**GARDEN CLUB
MISCELLANEOUS**

Let your day
Be a garden
Of pleasures
And
Your year
Blossom with
Every dream
That is close
To your heart.

*Inspired by
Japanese Gardens*

*Submitted by
Sue McMillin*

NEONICS, NATIVES, AND PEEKING

by EJ Rebman and Lori Walsh, Plantaholics members

Have you asked about neonicotinoids?

Neonicotinoids (neonics) are a type of neurotoxic insecticide. These pesticides are often used as a soil drench and render every part of the plant - leaves, nectar, pollen, fruit - permanently toxic to all insects, including bees. Be a savvy and responsible shopper and ask if your favorite greenhouse sources plants that have been treated with neonics. Use your dollars to buy only plants that will support healthy ecosystems and that have not been treated with neonics. Why would we purchase a plant that would poison the pollinators?

Peek in the pot

Spring plant shopping can be a whirlwind. We're all trying to find particular plants in particular colors and we want to buy the healthiest specimens possible. To find a healthy plant, carefully peek inside the pot and examine the roots. The roots should be white or tan and be long enough to somewhat hold the soil into the

shape of the pot. Avoid brown, crumbly, or foul scented roots. If the roots have completely filled the space inside the pot, the plant is potbound and should be passed by or root pruned when you get it home.

Going native

Native plants are beautiful, belong to our region, and support our native pollinators. The more native plants we bring to our gardens, the more pollinators will follow. Natives need little supplemental water and fertilizing because they are adapted to our climate. Bee balm, pale purple coneflower, butterfly weed, New England aster, goldenrod, blazing star (liatris), elderberry, columbine, garden phlox, dutchman's breeches, and oakleaf hydrangea are a few examples of easy-to-source natives. Most local nurseries offer native plants. Wild Ones is a national organization who educate and promote native plants. Their website is www.wildones.org



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

Staff writer, Dr. Phil O'Dendron, PHD

DANDELIONS

It's just about time for another of the annual rites of spring: the declaration of war on dandelions. Ironically, the dandelion plant isn't technically considered a weed, although the average person would probably describe it as such. Dandelions are actually members of the Asteraceae family, or composite flowers. This large family includes asters, sunflowers, chrysanthemums, and daisies. Those early-to-bloom dandelion plants, play a crucial role in the health of bees and butterfly larvae in April and May because the flowers are an important early food source for pollinators.

Many types of bees, beetles, birds, butterflies and a host of other beneficial insects all look to the dandelion as a source of nourishment in early spring. And when those dandelions are sprayed with chemicals, it can be fatal to their health and well-being.

Dandelion sprays ultimately kill microorganisms in the soil and dramatically reduced the earthworm populations. When pollinators visit dandelions in their search for nectar, they also consume the pesticides, which can have deadly consequences. The bee population has been declining over the past few years because of a phenomenon called colony collapse disorder, or CCD, which was first identified in 2006. Research feel there is a direct link to the use of various chemicals in yards, gardens and fields. One of the greatest threats to pollinators is industrial agriculture's widespread use of pesticides.

DANDELION



Hummingbirds use soft dandelion down to line their small nests. Creatures beneath the ground benefit from the dandelion's roots. The dandelion's deep taproot pulls beneficial nutrients such as calcium from deep in the soil and makes them available to other plants. Like other leafy greens, dandelions are also edible, and are probably more nutritious than most of what is growing in your garden. Compared to spinach, dandelion leaves have "eight times more antioxidants, two times more calcium, three times more vitamin A, and five times more vitamin K and vitamin E and also good sources of magnesium and potassium."

So the next time you go to war on your crop of dandelions, if you must get rid of them, it's best to do so naturally.

*The Dandelion means: Healing from emotional pain and physical injury alike.
Intelligence, especially in an emotional and spiritual sense. The warmth and power of the rising sun.*

HORTICULTURE HAPPENINGS

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

Celebrating the Mothers of Gardening

Happy May! I thought we should celebrate some of the women who shaped the way we garden today.

Gertrude Jekyll (1843-1932)

Jekyll was a well-known British artist and garden designer, popular for her use of flowering edges. Her attention to color and form in planning and planting a garden has influenced British and North American garden design trends greatly since her lifetime. She designed more than 400 gardens over the course of her life. The most well-known of these is probably her personal garden at Munstead Wood. **Some key elements of Gertrude Jekyll's design:**

Use Color: When using color for example, the pots you are putting plants in Jekyll recommended a color called 'invisible green' - just a green that sort of retreats into the background, one that's not an eyesore.

Monochromatic color: Jekyll liked white in the garden as it creates a feeling of calmness. She chose birches in her garden as the white reflects on the silver birches.

Make sure you give thought to where you are putting plants as you want them to thrive.



Gertrude Jekyll garden

Vita Sackville-West (1892-1962)

Many contemporary garden design elements can be traced back to Sackville-West, including the use of garden "rooms," self-seeding plants, monochromatic planting, and theme gardens. Sackville-West was an author and avid gardener. Sissinghurst Castle Garden where she lived, is split up into different garden rooms, each of which has its own theme. The garden's design elements include the use of monochromatic flowers and a respect for nature's ability to take care of itself.

Garden Rooms: Created by using hedges or existing walls.

Mown Grass as Paths: This allows visitors to meander through the garden

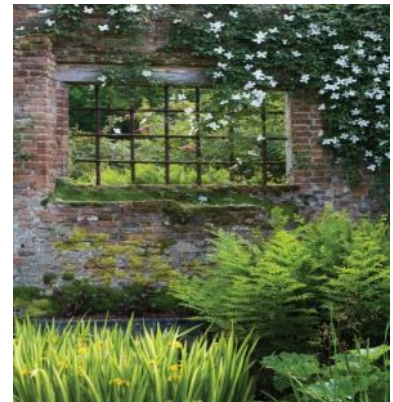
Self-seeding plants: Creating a natural low-maintenance approach to gardening.



Vandana Shiva

Vandana Shiva (1952-)

Shiva is an environmental activist and feminist. She started out as a physicist with a PhD in quantum physics and later moved to work on science, technology and environmental policy. Shiva has worked tirelessly to bring about change in the way commercial farms and gardens produce crops in order to promote environmentalism. In 1991, she founded an organization called Navdanya (which means "Nine Seeds") whose mandate is to educate farmers on the positive aspects of diverse plantings as opposed to monoculture farms. In order to promote diversity in India's farms, the organization established more than 40 seed banks across the country to provide local farmers with access to varied crops. Much of Shiva's work has focused on women in agriculture and her writings, such as *Staying Alive* and *Most Farmers in India are Women* highlight the important—and often overlooked—role that women play in farming and agriculture, particularly in third world countries.



Vita Sackville-West garden

"The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies." – Gertrude Jekyll

MAY 3, 2021 COUNCIL MEETING REPORT



TREASURER'S REPORT - Submitted by **Mary Ann Miller**, Treasurer

Balance as of March 1, 2021.....	\$3,600.95
Receipts (dues):	45.00
Disbursements:	(665.00)
Garden Clubs of Illinois — dues	655.00
District I — dues.....	10.00
Ending Balance as of April 28, 2021.....	\$2,980.95

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Programs – **Deb Bieschke** has booked the Christmas Luncheon at Forest Hills Country Club.

Publicity – **Susan Schumacher** had no report since this was her first day on the job. We are thrilled to have her with us. Susan is going to start a Facebook page and will post information on the Garden Walk and the Luncheons. If anyone wants things posted, email the information to Susan, and she will post the events.

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

Civic and Conservation – **Ann Somers** reported that Habitat for Humanity is starting up again, and **Diane Donze** is working on some additional things.

Garden Walk – **Ann Somers** reported that we have 113 members in Council, and this year the Garden Walk will be for members and their guests only – hopefully only 1 guest per member. It will not be open to the public. Each club will put up a single garden, so there will be only 4 gardens. Arch is planning to have the Garden Walk from 3-7 on Wednesday July 7th.

Horticulture – **Gina Ross** will continue to write the articles for the newsletter and is open to suggestions for topics.

Hospitality – **Ann Somers** will notify **Mary Pinter** of the time and place of the June meeting.

Newsletter – **Ann Somers** reported that **Kathy Batzkall** would like articles to her by the end of the week of our Council meetings in order to have our newsletter completed and sent out a week after the meeting.

Parliamentarian – **Mary Pinter** reported we are doing a “wonderful job”.

Sunshine – **Ann Somers** reported that **Peg Goral** will send a card to anyone, so notify Peg if anyone needs a card.

Ways & Means – **Ann Somers** said that our primary source of fund raising is our luncheons. We haven't been able to hold them, and we need to consider other ways to raise money. Ann suggested holding a plant sale

next May and a ‘gently used’ garden boutique with plants and garden items donated by members.

Website – **Kathy Batzkall** had no report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ann Somers reported that the tour of the Vi Bates Wildflower Garden was awesome, and there was a waiting list since it was limited to 20 members per tour. Ann said that we need more events that are for all Council members, including the Wildflower tour once a year.

Council's connection to Klehm goes pretty deep, with the Vi Bates Wildflower Garden and Anita Johnson, and the Ethel Johnson Lilac Garden. This past winter some of the lilac bushes were lost, but they will be replaced. The weeds are prolific! Cleanup is needed in these gardens, and Ann hopes we could get 6-8 members to help. A suggestion was made to have the cleanup of the Ethel Johnson Lilac Garden on Monday, May 17th from 9-12. Ann will arrange it with Klehm.

Anita and Rhonda work hard on the Vi Bates Wildflower Garden and need volunteers to help plant and weed.

A tour of the Peony Garden for all of Council may be coming up at the end of May. It will be less formal and members would not need to make a reservation.

Ann also reported that she might have someone to help her revise the By-laws.

NEW BUSINESS

Ann reported that she had a call from Shelter Care asking for a donation of 6” potted plants for their luncheon. A discussion was held regarding making that donation, but it was agreed that Ann would call and tell them “no.”

Council will be at the Klehm Garden Fair in June in the non-profit area. We will have a video and club information and do something with pollinating and maybe getting seeds to hand out. And we will hand out coloring sheets for the kids to take home.

Our next meeting will be on Monday June 7th.

All garden club members are encouraged to attend.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE GARDEN EVENTS

KLEHM ABORETUM & BOTANIC GARDEN

Go Public Gardens Days May 7-14, 9 AM – 4 PM

The week's activities will include free daily admission, a Spring Smartphone Tour and Scavenger Hunt, an educational webinar "Mini Meadows" (Monday, May 10), and a Botanica presentation and workshop (Wednesday, May 12). Price: Free

ANDERSON JAPANESE GARDENS

Mindful Art Series: Making Art in Nature

The instructor will be on site to assist and encourage, but each student's artwork will be reflective of their own thoughts and experiences.

TUESDAY, MAY 18 | THEME: PATIENCE | ART MEDIUM: WATERCOLOR. \$55 Non-members; \$50 Members

TUESDAY, MAY 25 | THEME: BALANCE | ART MEDIUM: CHARCOAL. \$55 Non-members; \$50 Members

May Lecture

KIMI KO GUNJI | THURSDAY, MAY 20 | 7:00 PM

Topic: Professor Gunji has been a regular presenter and lecturer for the Anderson Japanese Garden since 2002. She has given season by season tea ceremony demonstrations, various Japanese art related workshops such as wagashi (Japanese sweet) making, kimono dressing, chabana (Japanese tea ceremony flower arrangement) and Japanese cooking. She conducted with Tim Gruner, AJG garden curator, a special weekend seminar, kokoro and the gardener: Health for Spirit, Body and Community in the summer of 2019.

NICHOLAS CONSERVATORY & GARDENS

Simply Spring: The Butterfly Exhibit

March 20-June 6, Hours vary

NCG TO-GrOW: Bumble Bee Nests

(In-Person Class) Sat, May 15, 9:00am - 9:45am

Learn how you can attract Bumblebees to your yard. Then, build your own nesting box. Includes admission to Nicholas Conservatory butterfly exhibit after class. \$10/kit + \$4/person.

Pre-registration required.

HAIKU POETRY CHALLENGE

April Rain

Rainy April days
Daffodils stand tall and proud
Pleasing eyes and hearts
- Patrice Vecchio

Nice Spiders

Spiders have eight legs
They consume pests in our homes
Better than pesticides
- EJ Rebman

Weeds

Weeds grow everywhere
tall, short, vines, green invasive
I did not invite
- EJ Rebman

Spring color

Green pink yellow blue
Green - three hundred shades of it
Grass stains on my shoe
- Mike Helstrom

Lilacs

Lilacs are blooming.
Impossible purples, plums,
pale lavender, too.
Dawn Urban

Thank you to all who submitted poems!

University of Illinois Extension

Plant-a-Row 2021

Share your Harvest with the Hungry



Year Round Drop-off Sites in Rockford

University of Illinois Extension

1040 North Second Street
Monday-Friday, 9am to 4pm

Rock River Valley Pantry

421 South Rockton Street
Monday-Friday, 8:30am to 3pm

Winnebago-Boone Farm Bureau

1925 South Meridian Road
Monday-Friday, 8:30am to 4pm

Seasonal Drop-off Sites

mid-May - mid-October

Cherry Valley Public Library

755 East State Street, Cherry Valley
Tuesdays, 3:30pm to 5:30pm

The Landscape Connection

4472 South Mulford Road, Rockford
Monday-Saturday, 9am to 6pm
Sunday, 11am to 3pm

July 7 - September 8

Edgebrook Farmers Market

(Edgebrook Shopping Center, corner
of North Alpine and Highcrest Roads, Rockford)
Wednesdays, 10am to Noon

What is Plant-a-Row for the Hungry?

- University of Illinois Extension-Winnebago County Master Gardeners work to raise awareness about the issues surrounding hunger in our community.
- Plant-a-Row for the Hungry provides a much needed outlet for vegetable gardeners to donate their over-abundance of produce, which helps to meet the increasing demands on local food pantries.
- U of I Extension inspires gardeners to "*plant an extra row*" of veggies in their gardens with the intent of donating that extra produce to help end hunger.



GWA
Foundation

**Plant a Row
for the Hungry**



QUESTIONS? Contact

University of Illinois Extension-Winnebago County
1040 North Second Street, Rockford, Illinois 61107
(815) 986-4357

(visit our office on the Rock River-access via Ethel
Avenue stoplight-south of the Nicholas Conservatory)

<http://extension.illinois.edu/jsw>