

COUNCIL OF ROCKFORD GARDENERS, INC.

Organized 3/21/1980

E-Issue V 6 Issue 5

Editor: Kathy Batzkall

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.



Ginny Hatwich photo

FROM THE PRESIDENT’S PEN

Co-Presidents: Ann Somers & Sarah Britton

Hot and dry... not a great combination for gardeners unless you’re growing cacti or pomegranates. It is more typical August than early June. We’ll adapt and water a little more; our plants and ourselves.

We had a great time at Klehm Garden Fair. Thanks to those who volunteered their time in the Council of Rockford Gardeners’ tent. Lots of interest in our CRG FREE Garden Walks. It was fun to hear visitors recalling specific plantings in gardens from previous walks. The gardens on our walks have inspired veteran gardeners with new ideas and encouraged new gardeners to attempt new and more complex projects. Time in a garden is well spent. We look forward to our ‘open to the public’ walk in 2022!

For 2021, we’ll enjoy our Pandemic Garden Walk. Open to our members and their guest, this walk consists of four gardens; one from each of our clubs. We thank Deb, Sherry, Sue and Pat for opening their spaces for us to enjoy!

The Ethel Johnson Lilac Garden is an ongoing project. We’ll continue to weed on the 2nd and 4th Mondays throughout the summer. New plants are arriving next week and will be added to the garden. Signage will be in place soon. It is a lovely garden now and will mature into an even lovelier garden. Join us whenever it fits in your schedule!

Keep playing in the dirt,

Sarah & Ann

JUNE
2021

In This Issue:

P1

*Club Information;
President's Pen*

P2

*Ethel Johnson Lilac
Garden update;
Miscellaneous*

P3

*Pandemic Garden
Walk;
Klehm Garden Fair*

P4

*Native vs Nativar;
CRG Facebook Page*

P5

*Horticulture
Happenings*

P6

*Council Meeting
Report*

P7

Garden Events

P8

Plant-a-Row

SUBMIT questions or
comments to:

CRGnews815@gmail.com



ETHEL JOHNSON LILAC GARDEN UPDATE

Anita Wetzberger, Amy Seiler, Lora Prochaska, Jackie Hessian and Ann Somers weeded the Ethel Johnson Lilac Garden at Klehm Arboretum & Botanic Garden on May 10. Members from all clubs of the Council of Rockford Gardeners are invited to continue to weed, plant and maintain the garden on the **2nd and 4th Mondays from 9 – noon** (or any amount of time between those hours).

We had another great crew May 24. Kristin Frank, Rosanne Southwood, Anita Wetzberger, Becki Dennis and Ann Somers provided weed removal with entertainment!

Our next work days are **June 14th and 28th**. Free entry into Klehm comes with your volunteering. Join us and get in on the fun! If you have questions please contact Ann Somers at: annsomers@comcast.net



KLEHM GARDEN FAIR

June 5-6: what a hot weekend! But, a tent, a nice breeze and gardening buddies made for an enjoyable time at Klehm Garden Fair. Thanks to Arch Smith, Kathy Batzkall, Susan Schmitz, Becki Dennis, Diane Donze, Sarah Britton, Judy Schellenberger, Deb Bieschke, Mary Pinter, Linda Baker, Sharon McKenzie, Julie Johnson, Jackie Hessian, Kathy Crandall and Ann Somers who braved the elements and promoted the Council of Rockford Gardeners! You are appreciated!



Arch greets visitors at our booth.



Ann demonstrates container gardening.



Susan Schumacher of Seedlings demonstrated how to make chive blossom vinegar at the Garden Fair.

1 cup fresh chive blossoms
1 1/2 cups vinegar

For directions, go to July 2020 CRG Newsletter on our website:

<http://councilofrockfordgardeners.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/July-2020-CRG-news.pdf>

A "PANDEMIC GARDEN WALK" FOR MEMBERS ONLY



Due to continued uncertainty about the Covid situation, we will not hold our regular garden walk for the public. Instead we will have a garden walk for members (plus guest)

Featuring 4 members' gardens:

July 7, 3-7pm

Watch for details in your email!

The Secret Sex Life of Plants



On May 11 members of the Potpourri club attended an educational and entertaining program entitled "The Secret Sex Life of Plants" lead by Ellen Rathbone at Severson Dells. It is a highly recommended activity.

We came across a very unusual plant, a one-flowered Cancer Root (also known as a Broomrape) which is a

parasite. This plant is usually found in woodlands and areas where there is seepage. This plant was found in the middle of a prairie and in an area that was fairly dry which was totally unexpected!

If you are interested in reading about this strange plant, please click on the link:

https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/woodland/plants/of_broomrape.htm

Ellen also suggested that if you enjoy native plants, you should check out Harlem Hills and Searles Prairie in June and July. Repeated visits will showcase different species throughout the season.

A Drop-in Brunch Guest

I had the funniest thing happen this weekend. I finished reading "The Nature of Oaks" by Doug Tallamy (which is a great read). In this book he tells about how important it is to take care of trees (oaks in particular) as they are home for about 600 species of caterpillars, which in turn feed the nestlings protein as they are growing.

We were at our neighbors for brunch on Memorial Day when down came a green inch worm from a nearby tree on the thread he had spun. The thread is their escape mechanism from a predator.

He landed on the underside of the umbrella.



I picked him up and placed him on a low leaf on a tree, and before I could get seated again, a blue jay had swooped down and grabbed that inch worm!

I wonder if the blue jay was the bird who the inch worm was escaping from, and the bird had kept track of where he was?

- EJ Rebman

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

NATIVE PLANTS VS. NATIVARS

by EJ Rebman and Lori Walsh, *Plantaholics* members

Last month we wrote about the importance of including some native plants in our gardens. Natives are adapted to our region, easy to grow, support pollinators, and help to restore soil health.

This month we'll distinguish between natives and nativars. A **native plant** is the straight species. Purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) is an example.

A **nativar** is a plant with modified traits like leaf color, variegation, autumn color, plant habit, or disease resistance. An example of a nativar is a double coneflower (*Echinacea Razzmatazz*). Double coneflowers make it difficult or impossible for bees and butterflies to gather pollen. In addition, some are sterile which disappoints goldfinches and other seed-gathering birds.



It's difficult to tease out which modified traits negatively impact the plant from a pollinator's or caterpillar's point of view. Some recent research has been done on this at the Mt. Cuba Center in Delaware: <https://mtcubacenter.org/research>.

Here's the skinny version of their results. Double flowers make life difficult for pollinators, as mentioned before with the coneflower example. Purple leafed nativars do not attract as many caterpillars as their green leafed counterparts. Variegated leaves provide less nutrition than solid green ones. The more variegation, the less nutrition. On the positive side, nativars that produce bigger or more abundant fruit are a bonus. Nativars with changes to their size or plant habit are equal to the straight species in their appeal to wildlife.

To simplify, skip purple leafed, double flowered, and variegated nativars. Feel free to include plants that produce larger or more fruit and nativars that have changes to their size or habit. And, of course, straight species are always winners. The wildlife and your soil will thank you!

A quote from Doug Tallamy, University of Delaware entomologist, comes to mind. He notes that the nursery trade "is still stuck on the idea of plants as enhanced decoration" rather than as essential to wildlife.

Grow your vocabulary

Pesticide

"A substance used for destroying insects or other organisms harmful to cultivated plants or to animals." This definition doesn't distinguish between harmful and good insects, so think before you spray.

Herbicide

"A substance that is toxic to plants, used to destroy unwanted vegetation" Consider the wildlife under the soil as well as any other critters that will be moving through the area in which you've used an herbicide.

Biodiversity

"Refers to all the variety of life that can be found on Earth (plants, animals, fungi and micro-organisms) as well as to the communities that they form and the habitats in which they live."

Permaculture

"A holistic way of living-in-harmony-with-nature worldview, as well as the technical approach for how to do so."

Council of Rockford Gardeners *NEW* Facebook Page!

The Council of Rockford Gardeners has a page on Facebook, the largest social network in the world. Since it is used by millions of people daily, it is a good tool to attract members and spread information about our clubs' activities. Our page is open to the public, and any member of the Facebook group can post.

If any club members are not on Facebook but wish to have photos or information shared, you can email it to Susan Schumacher at: sueschu13@hotmail.com.

HORTICULTURE HAPPENINGS

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

Edible Plants

Add some pizzaz to your summer salads, desserts and drinks by adding edible flowers to them!

Most edible flowers are best eaten raw, so start by picking them right from the garden, rinse with water and pat dry. Flowers will taste and look their best right after they have opened.

It's particularly important to remember that some flowers are poisonous and to make sure you avoid edible flowers that have been sprayed with a fungicide, herbicide or insecticide.

Here's a list of some of the beautiful edible flowers you can choose from.

- **Alliums Chives, leeks and garlic** are all delicious in green salads, potato and pasta salads and dips. Remove the central stem from the flower cluster to release the separate florets.
- **Lavender** has a floral taste with a hint of rosemary/mint combination. A little goes a long way. Use sparingly.



- **Nasturtium** blossoms have a peppery flavor. They are great in salads or as garnishes. Leaves are edible.
- **Marigold** blossoms have a citrus taste.
- **Calendula:** Sprinkle the petals in your salads. Colors range from pure yellow to orange and red.
- **Anise hyssop** tastes like black licorice. Separate the florets and add them to sweet or savory dishes.
- **Borage:** The flower has a light cucumber taste. Add to salads or freeze in ice cubes for cold drinks.
- **Bee balm:** A member of the mint family has minty-tasting flowers. Good for salads or drinks.
- **Chamomile:** English chamomile has small, daisy-like flowers with an apple-like flavor.
- **Mint:** Like bee balm, all flowers of the mint family are edible and have a pleasant taste. Try lemon balm or spearmint in iced tea.

Borage cocktail (I thought this was interesting) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r8A84gk1Vpw>

Edible Flower recipes for Spring and Summer <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHI2m1fksys>

How to store edible flowers <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yfhBaRqol1w>



Petals on a Pizza



Borage flowers in a drink



Nasturtiums in a salad

If you have never experienced the joy of accomplishing more than you can imagine, plant a garden.

– Robert Brault



Garden of Deb Jurs

JUNE 7, 2021 COUNCIL MEETING REPORT

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

Balance as of May 1, 2021	\$2,980.95
Receipts none.....	\$0.00
Disbursements:	
Garden Clubs of Illinois – additional dues.....	(18.00)
Ending Balance as of June 3, 2020	\$2,962.95

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Programs – **Deb Bieschke** reported that the Christmas Luncheon will be held on December 8th at Forest Hills Country Club.

Publicity – **Susan Schumacher** reported that you can post garden related things on our new Facebook page, or you can email the information to her at: sueschu13@hotmail.com.

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

Civic and Conservation – **Diane Donze** had no report.

Garden Walk – **Arch Smith** reported that we have 4 gardens for our Members Only Garden Walk. It is a very informal garden walk, and we do not need volunteers for the gardens.

The Garden Walk is a "Members Only Pandemic Garden Walk" – for members and a guest on Wednesday, July 7th, from 3-7.

Horticulture – **Ann Somers** reported that this is the last year Gina Ross will write articles for our newsletter, so a replacement will be needed for next year.

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

Newsletter – **Kathy Batzkall** would like articles to her by the end of the week after each Council meetings in order to have our newsletter completed.

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

Sunshine – No report.

Ways & Means – **Lynne Franzene-Lynde** had no report.

Website – **Kathy Batzkall** will contact the webmaster about sending annual bill.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ann Somers reported that having a booth at the Klehm Garden Fair worked out very well. Ann had a list of what to take and do for the booth. Ann said she agreed that Council will be back at Klehm next year for the Garden Fair. Ann also said that people knew about our past garden walks and volunteers gave people information about the website.

Ann thanked Susan Schumacher for agreeing to do a demonstration on chive blossom vinegar. Ann also did a demonstration on container gardening.

Ann reported that we will continue to work at Klehm in the Ethel Johnson Lilac Garden on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month from 9-12. There are 40-50 plants coming for the Lilac Garden and will be planted on June 16th. Ann will contact the regular volunteers first to come out and plant rather than weed.

NEW BUSINESS

Ann Somers reported that at Klehm's Garden Fair, our CRG booth was near Lifescape, and she learned about the RSVP section of Lifescape. RSVP stands for Retired Senior Volunteer Program. It is an organization for people 55 and over and helps them find volunteer opportunities such as Meals on Wheels. Ann will work with Lifescape to get our volunteer hours reported and to be used for community grants.

On June 30th, Lifescape will be meeting at the Home Depot on 173 at 8:30 A.M. They will have a free breakfast and then go out to help residents with a container garden. Volunteers are needed for 2 hours for this 1-day event. Home Depot provides the plants, and volunteers will do the planting. Ann thought that perhaps we could participate next year.

KNIB also had a booth at the Garden Fair. More information can be found on their website.

Ann also reported that she is trying to have Council do things that involve all 4 clubs. We need someone to lead and coordinate the project.

Ann again mentioned that we need to have more community involvement. Council can join other groups to get things done in the community.

Finally, Ann did a very informal installation of Susan Schumacher as 2nd Vice President (Publicity). Welcome, Susan!

Our next meeting will be on Monday July 5th, 2 days before our garden walk. We will be meeting back at Klehm in a different location.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE GARDEN EVENTS

KLEHM ABORETUM & BOTANIC GARDEN

Woodsong Concert Series

3rd Sunday in June, July, & August; Gates open @ 4:30 pm; Music starts @ 6:00 pm

Klehm's annual summer concert series is back! Enjoy some tunes amid the blooms and blossoms of our Fountain Garden at these Ravinia-style concerts featuring a variety of great musicians.

Create Your Own Jeweled Sun Catcher

Saturday, June 26; 10 AM – 1 PM; \$65 per person

ArtbyKarla will show you how to create a beautiful Jeweled Sun Catcher step-by-step. All supplies are included, EXCEPT you need to bring your own needle-nose pliers/wire cutters.

Feel free to bring drinks and snacks, but face covering required at all other times. Class is 3 hours long. Location: Visitor's Center Gallery; REGISTER ONLINE

Create Your Own Rain Chain

Saturday, July 10, 10 AM – 2 PM; \$65 per person

ArtByKarla will show you how to create an 8-foot-long rain chain using 2-inch clay pots and beautiful beads.

Class takes around 4 hours You may bring a lunch and/or snacks along, however a face covering is required at all other times. Class will take place in the Visitor's Center Gallery. REGISTER ONLINE

ANDERSON JAPANESE GARDENS

ArtbyKarla Koi Finger Painting— Thu, Jun 17, 11 AM – 2 PM

Create a 16" x 20" canvas of colorful koi using your fingers and acrylic paint. ArtbyKarla will give step by step instructions to create your own artwork under the pavilion. Children 12 and under must be accompanied by a paying adult. \$30 Members | \$35 Non-Members.



Potpourri Garden Club May meeting and plant exchange.

NICHOLAS CONSERVATORY & GARDENS

Outdoor Garden Tour

Thu, Jun 24, 2021 10:30am - 12:00pm

Join our volunteer docent on a tour of the outdoor gardens at Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens. Learn about native and exotic plants, shade and sun loving plants, and NCG and Sinnissippi history and fun facts. Walking shoes and a bottle of water are recommended. Meet in the lobby of Nicholas Conservatory. FREE
Contact: Lyndi Toohill: Phone: 815-987-1654; lynditohill@rockfordparkdistrict.org.

Savage Garden: The Real and Imaginary World of Carnivorous Plants

Sat, Jun 26, 10:00am - 3:00pm

Explore the bizarre and captivating world of carnivorous plants! View dozens of varieties of "meat-eating" plants including pitcher plants, Venus fly traps, sundews, and more. You'll learn about their delicate environments and how they developed their unique adaptations. Immerse yourself in this unique world and experience larger-than-life interactive sculptures that will give you a "bugs eye" view of these unique flora.

Regular admission rates apply. Pre-purchased tickets encouraged! (Tickets available starting June 15) Email: ncg@rockfordparkdistrict.org. Phone: 815-987-8858



Several Council members took a field trip to the Paine Art Center in Oshkosh, in March, 2020, where they enjoyed the art exhibits, floral arrangements, and beautiful tablescapes. Tea time was an added bonus! And we beat the Covid lockdown!

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>