

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 9

Editor: Kathy Batzkall

NOVEMBER 2021



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

Co-Presidents: Ann Somers & Sarah Britton

A little girl stands at the window and waves to the leaves as they fall from the trees. Her brother and his pals from the neighborhood rake leaves until they have a giant pile and then take turns running and jumping into the pile. Pumpkins adorn front porches. Pots once filled with colorful flowers have ceased to bloom. Walkers are donning hats and gloves. Our gardens are entering a resting phase. Fall has arrived!

Gardeners, like their gardens, deserve some down time. It was a difficult and a long growing season... severe drought and a very late freeze tested our "usual" timing of fall duties. Rest a bit and then put together a nice winter porch pot filled with evergreens, pine cones, birch logs, red twig dogwood or whatever your heart desires. Buy an amaryllis bulb or other bulbs to force inside over the next several months when you can't be outside digging in the dirt. It will lift your spirits and nourish your need to grow something!

Keep an eye out. The USPS will be making a special delivery from the Council of Rockford Gardeners. Our "No Show" luncheon will keep us together in purpose and service. We will miss being together in person but look forward to gathering at a spring luncheon. *(Please note updated invitation on page 3)*

Keep playing in the dirt,

Sarah & Ann



NOVEMBER
2021

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SUBMIT questions or
comments to:

CRGnews815@gmail.com



Welcome to new CRG board members, and some farewells, too

Cindy Rittenhouse is our new Sunshine Chair. She encourages you to share information about members who might need a card to cheer or console them.

Her contact information is: cdy1ritt@gmail.com or 815 540-5876.

Yvette De Wispelaere is now the Horticulture Chair, and she will write horticulture stories for the newsletter.

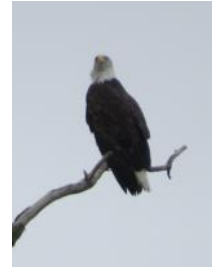
Farewell and thanks to **Peg Goral** for her many years as Sunshine Chair.

Farewell and thanks also to **Gina Ross** for her wonderful horticulture articles in the newsletter.

Potpourri Club's Rock River Adventure

Thanks to Lynne Franzene Lynde's great planning, Potpourri members plus a few guests and members from other clubs had a fun day cruising the Rock River in a paddle wheel riverboat on October 12. We enjoyed seeing the restored Blackhawk statue and several eagles in flight, as well as one eagle sitting on a limb near its nest.

It was a little windy and cool but the day was filled with good conversation and laughter. Lynne also provided us with a goody bag to tide us over until lunch.



Above photos by Cheryl Walker



Photo by David Stocker

IN THE NEWS: Bell Bowl Prairie gets support

Cindy Rittenhouse (left) of Plantaholics was on hand at the Chicago Rockford International Airport making a last-minute effort to save the Bell Bowl Prairie. Other concerned citizens, including members of the Natural Land Institute, also participated in the move to pause construction. Hopefully, a sustainable alternative design will be implemented to save indigenous pollinators and plants in this 8,000-year-old ecosystem. You can do your part by donating to National Land Institute or contacting the decision makers to ask them to collaborate with the sustainable design team: <https://www.naturalland.org/bell-bowl-prairie-contacts/>

You are cordially
invited to
not attend...

2021 Council of Rockford Gardeners

"No Show" *Holiday Luncheon &* *Scholarship Fundraiser*

WHEN: December 8, 2021

TIME: Whenever

WHERE: The comfort of your own home

RSVP: By December 1, 2021

Please do not
DRESS UP

Please do not
**LEAVE YOUR
COZY COUCH**

But please do
donate to our
**SCHOLARSHIP
FUNDRAISER**



About the Council of Rockford Gardeners Scholarship

Please Support the Council of Rockford Gardeners Scholarship Fund by donating to the "No Show" Holiday Scholarship Luncheon & Fundraiser.

Your continued support is critical to insuring the future of our ability to support our communities. Please show your support by sending a donation (consider what you would have spent attending in person). Make checks payable to CRG, and very importantly—include your phone number on the check. RSVP with check by December 1 to:

Mary Ann Miller
6622 Old Hunters Run
Rockford, IL 61114-7812

Please note change
from printed
invitations

About the "No Show" Holiday Scholarship Luncheon & Fundraiser

We will have fun raffle prizes donated by each of our 4 clubs, and your donation to the Luncheon will entitle you to be entered in the raffle drawing.

Please, please add your phone number to your check so that we can notify you if you win!

The first person drawn will have first choice and will be notified by phone on December 8th. The second name drawn will get to choose from the remaining 3 items, etc. Raffle items by clubs:

1. Cement Asian lantern; Plantaholics Club
2. Cement birdbath; Potpourri Club
3. **Wind chime** and Seedlings member Mary Kay Morrison's book, *Legacy of Laughter: A Grandparent Guide & Playbook*; Seedlings Club
4. \$40 Gensler gift card plus garden art piece; Wildflower Club

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call Deb Bieschke at 815.988.9486.

HORTICULTURE HAPPENINGS

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

How Pioneers survived winter

As winter approaches, and we gather the last of our gardens' bounty, I sometimes wonder how the early settlers prepared themselves for the cold and harsh months to come. Here is a glimpse into their daily lives.

Feeding a family was hard, physically, and emotionally, and a constant worry, especially during our long, frigid winter months. Much is written in journals about settlers having to eat their own horses and oxen or dying of thirst or bad water. It was not uncommon to be poisoned by cow's toxic milk, or losing an animal to sickness, which meant losing meat for the winter. Homesteaders had to be largely self-sufficient. They brought seeds on their journey for planting gardens and crops, kept chickens for eggs and meat, pigs for bacon, and cows for milk and, sometimes, meat. An accessible water supply was essential. Carrying water to the house, garden and livestock was grueling work and a constant task.

Settlers learned to forage as well as hunt, gathering berries and native fruit, nuts, and edible bulbs. Anything that could be hunted was 'fair game'. Rabbit, venison, turkey, buffalo, and geese were the most common offerings. How does calf brain pudding and roasted ox heart sound? A variety of meats were smoked, jerked, or cured to preserve them. Smoked meat was cooked for a long time over a charcoal or wood smoke. Jerking was a process in which meat was cured and air-dried in the sun. The frosty winter kept the meats frozen so they would not spoil. Pioneers would also catch fish and smoke their harvest.

Among the preservatives used by the pioneers were salt and beef tallow. Pioneer women would place meat in crocks and cover with tallow to preserve it. Honey was also used however it was difficult to harvest a lot of it.

Vinegar provided not only preservative properties but was also used as a natural antiseptic. It was used to preserve everything from vegetables to fruits to meats, fish, and fowl. The typical process involved immersing the food in vinegar in a cask or container. Sometimes salt was added for flavor and additional preservative qualities. The root cellar was used to preserve such vegetables as carrots, beets, turnips, radishes, potatoes, and parsnips. Root cellars offer consistent year-round temperatures and protection from sunlight, animals and insects.

Keeping a fire burning for warmth with wood or buffalo chips was a never-ending task. A family needed a wood pile as big as their cabin to cook and warm their home for

the winter. Chopping wood was a full-time job. Tasks such as milking the cows, churning butter, feeding chickens, collecting eggs, and feeding the livestock and horses were often done twice a day no matter the weather.

Planting and harvesting were time consuming and back breaking. Following the harvest, drying fruit (and some vegetables) was the next task. In 1858, the introduction of the Mason jar made canning possible, but the process was still very labor intensive. Baking was done daily. Stoves didn't have attached ovens until the 1800s, which meant that bakers needed either to build a separate, brick oven just for baking, known as a beehive oven, or they baked their bread directly on the hearth or in the coals of the fire itself.

The lack of readily available supplies brought out creativity in these pioneers. Molasses or honey stood in for sugar. Vinegar could be used to imitate lemons. The 1873 book, "Miss Beecher's Housekeeper and Health keeper," recommended that "two tablespoonfuls of snow, stirred in quickly [to the batter] is equal to one egg in puddings or pan cakes."

Because homesteading, farming, and ranching were so physically demanding, carbohydrates were important to maintain energy. Breads, potatoes, rice, and starchy foods were the backbone of their meals. Johnny cakes, cornbread, cornmeal mush, and bread and covered in butter! Fruit jellies sweetened breads and hardtack. Savory and fruit pies stuck to the ribs and were made with lard, salt, eggs, and vinegar. Soups and stews were also popular as they made what little the pioneers had go farther during the harsh winter. Here are recipes the pioneers used:

<https://homesteading.com/pioneer-recipes/>



A winter scene of pioneers

WHAT'S NOT TO LOVE ABOUT OAKS?

Lori Walsh and EJ Rebman

If you are thinking of planting a new tree this fall, please consider an oak. What's not to love about oaks?

- The swamp white oak is the state tree of Illinois.
- Oaks support more than 500 species of caterpillars, which is more than any other plant.
- The oak has a massive root system. Young trees' taproots are their main source of nutrition and stability, but are later replaced with strong lateral roots. These lateral roots lie in the top 48" of soil and may spread to occupy a space 4-7 times the width of the tree's crown.
- The acorns oaks drop not only to feed the squirrels and other mammals, but also birds and insects.
- Mature oaks sequester massive amounts of carbon into the ground.
- They have year-round beauty.

If you are interested in ecology and haven't read Doug Tallamy's books, please put them on your reading list. He is the author of *Bringing Nature Home* (Silver Medal winner by the Garden Writers' Association), *Nature's Best Hope* (New York Times bestseller), and most recently, *The Nature of Oaks*.

Every oak tree started out as a couple of nuts who stood their ground.

~ Henry David Thoreau



An oak tree is a daily reminder that great things often have small beginnings.

— Matshona Dhliwayo

GROWING YOUR VOCABULARY...

Masting - a periodic outsized production of acorns

You may have noticed this odd occurrence. One year there will be a crazy amount of acorns under an oak tree. The scientists have three different hypotheses on why this happens. The first hypothesis is that the tree is adapting against acorn predation. It is producing so many acorns that the squirrels and other critters can't possibly eat them all. This ensures that the species will continue. Another idea is that the trees are doing this to improve the probability of pollination. Oaks are wind-pollinated and more pollen blowing around means lots of successful pollination and more acorns. Or, how about this idea? Oaks allocate energy differently in different years. Sometimes the energy is used to grow more branches; sometimes it is used to produce more acorns. Remember that nature is complicated. Some scientists believe that the reason behind masting is some combination of all three ideas.

Leaf Marcescence - the retention of dead leaves hanging on a tree into the winter

There may be a tree in your neighborhood that retains its leaves all winter. It has always struck me as an odd

adaptation. It seemed to me that it would take extra energy to do this and that the extra weight could possibly endanger the branches during storms. Here are two theories on why some oak trees exhibit leaf marcescence. It is possible that leaves protect the growth points against browsing animals. Others posit that leaves trap snow, which increases moisture beneath the tree in the spring when the tree needs it to grow. By the way, "marcescence" is a great cocktail party word, if only you can find a clever way to work it into a conversation.

Leaf Litter - the organic layer of dropped leaves underneath a tree

This litter supports insects that decompose it and build beautiful and rich soil. It also improves water infiltration. Leaf litter is a valuable commodity. Be sure to treat it as such.

Carbon sequestration - securing carbon dioxide to prevent it from entering the Earth's atmosphere

Oaks have some of the densest hardwood in North America. This very dense and heavy wood sequesters many tons of carbon for the life of the tree.

VI BATES WILDFLOWER GARDEN



At the November CRG Council meeting, Ann Somers introduced Anita Johnson, a Seedlings member, who has been in charge of the Vi Bates Wildflower Garden at Klehm Arboretum and Botanic Garden since 2004. Ann remarked that it is a magnificent garden, and Anita is

working on finding out a “peak bloom time” for the wildflowers. Anita will then be able to inform all club members so they can go out and view the garden at their leisure.

Anita also reported that they have had a wonderful and exciting year. She has led tours of the garden for Council members and for the public.

Anita is always looking for woodland wildflower donations and then named a few plants that she needs: rue anemone, Dutchmen’s breeches, and Virginia bluebells. She has received donations of plants this past year from several club members.

The Vi Bates Wildflower Garden has received some blessings this year: Wild Ones Rock River Valley Chapter donated \$500. John Cabreva, an

Eagle Scout, approached Alex Mills, executive director of Klehm, and asked for a project for his scout troop. Alex suggested that the troop work in the Wildflower Garden where they cut out invasive shrubs and trees, spread mulch on the path and the seating area, planted 3 smooth hydrangeas, and dug holes and planted 100 daffodils and 100 winter aconites.

Anita’s spring goals are to plant even more Virginia bluebells. She would like donations either early when they first emerge – or after they are dry. She also would like to find and plant appropriate native trees and understory shrubs in the Wildflower Garden. Anita will get help from Laura Helmich regarding the appropriate trees and shrubs.

Spring Plant Sale AND Garden Boutique

As you are putting your garden to bed this fall and find that you have extra plants or extra garden items that you will no longer use, please consider saving them for the Spring Plant Sale and Garden Boutique.

The Council of Rockford Gardeners (all clubs) will be having a Spring Plant Sale and Garden Boutique, hopefully in late May. Proceeds from this sale will be used for our scholarship fund. We need the support of all garden club members to make this a success. The sale will be open to the public.

Also, as you bring in plants like Canna, set aside a few bulbs to start in early spring. Succulents and houseplants can be divided for the sale also.

Here are some suggestions for the sale:

- . Plants, plants, and more plants
- . Seeds, pots, plant stands, garden art
- . Garden related fabric, linens, jewelry, framed art
- . Greeting and note cards

- . Anything bird related: bird houses, feeders, birdbaths etc.
- . Vintage and new garden tools
- . Gardening books and magazines
- . Spring decor, wreaths
- . Glassware, mugs, plates, serving dishes
- . T-shirts, jackets, hats, gloves, boots



Items do not need to be new, but must be clean and in good sellable condition. If you go to garage sales, Salvation Army, Good Will or estate sales, keep an eye out for items to include in our Boutique. If you do garden crafts, make extra!

If you have any questions, ideas, or want to volunteer now, call or email Lynne at 815-985-2454 or ljlynde@aol.com.

This will be a huge undertaking and a lot of fun for our clubs. We are all so creative!! We will need lots of volunteers! More info to come in future newsletters.

Please support the sale in any way you can so we can assist a horticulture student with a scholarship!



NOVEMBER 1, 2021 COUNCIL MEETING REPORT



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

Balance as of October 1, 2021.....	\$2,677.95
Receipts (none).....	0.00
Disbursements: (none)	0.00
Ending Balance as of August 31, 2021.....	\$2,677.95

Programs – **Deb Bieschke** reported that Kathy Batzkall has designed an invitation for the Holiday No-Show Luncheon (33 pg 3). Scholarship donations should be sent to Mary Ann Miller. Winners' names will be drawn on Dec. 8. Arch Smith will deliver the heavy items to the winners. There will be one raffle ticket per donation by a member.

Publicity – **Susan Schumacher** reported that Carol Rhodes, GCI District 1 Director has resigned, with no replacement named yet. She was Susan's contact to send information for the Garden Glories magazine. She appreciates it when we send her information for the Facebook page.

Awards – **Ann Somers** reported that Elaine Parrovecchio is waiting to hear back from Janet Gallagher at Kishwaukee College about our scholarship recipient.

Civic and Conservation – **Ann Somers** reported that **Diane Donze** has 2 Habitat for Humanity homes to be dedicated on November 21st and we need volunteers to do porch pots.

Garden Walk – **Arch Smith** reported that he has plenty of gardens lined up for next year.

Horticulture – **Ann Somers** reported that Gina Ross will finish out the year, and Yvette DeWispelaere is our new Horticulture chairperson. Ann explained that the primary responsibility of the Horticulture chair is to write the newsletter article, however, Yvette is permitted to expand the duties if she chooses.

Hospitality – No report.

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

Parliamentarian – No report.

Sunshine – **Ann Somers** reported that we have a new Sunshine chairperson. Cindy Rittenhouse will take over the position. We can let Cindy know about cards to be sent by sending her an email: cdy1ritt@gmail.com or giving her a call: cell # (815) 540-5876.

Ways & Means – **Lynne Franzene-Lynde** asked if everything for the garden boutique is supposed to be donated or if she should purchase some old items to refurbish and be reimbursed. A discussion was held, and it was agreed that all items should be donated for the sale. Council members volunteered to lend tables and back drop items to Lynne for the sale. A committee will be set up to work on the sale, and

several Council members suggested that we will need an inventory list.

Website – **Kathy Batzkall** reported that she has no news. She has not heard back from the webmaster.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

No unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

I. District 1 – the GCI resignation was mentioned previously.

II. Bell Bowl Prairie – a reprieve has been granted until March as more research is needed. Ann reported that Council needs to be a part of this situation. Cindy Rittenhouse has gone to the meetings and is a good source of information.

Ann also talked to Diane Donze of Civic and Conservation regarding the Bell Bowl Prairie. Ann said that when Council first began, there was a big emphasis on conservation. Ann said that this is a huge deal regarding a big piece of land that has been around for 8,000 years. Anita said that it is a special ecosystem. www.SaveBellBowlPrairie.org

III. Council Funds – Ann Somers said that because we have not had any fundraisers, we do not have a lot of cash. However, we do have the No Show Luncheon coming up, and we will have money that we will get from that. We will wait till January for a report regarding the luncheon and then make a determination regarding any additional donations.

IV. Positions for 2022 – Current committee chairpersons should advise now if they will continue in their positions. Mary Ann Miller suggested that Arch Smith be the new president. He was the only member to volunteer for the position. Officers will change at the March meeting.

Ann said we hopefully can have a Spring Luncheon and Gathering of Clubs so all our members can get together. We have four different clubs, and they need to realize that they are part of Council. Also, there is a partnership between Council and the Master Gardeners, and our clubs do have many Master Gardeners. The Master Gardeners would like to have a table set up at one of our Garden Walk gardens. We can help each other.

Also, Ann reported that we have given scholarships totaling \$30,000 over the years.

Our next meeting will be on Monday, January 10, at 9:30 A.M. at Klehm Arboretum. There is no meeting in February. All garden club members are encouraged to attend.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE GARDEN EVENTS

KLEHM ABORETUM & BOTANIC GARDEN

The following 2 workshops are \$50 to the public, or \$47 per Klehm member. Register online:

<http://klehm.org/events/>

Thanksgiving Floral Centerpiece Workshop

Monday, November 22 | 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Visitor's Center Gallery

Join Sam Burbach, Director of Education & Programming at Klehm, to learn some of the basics of floral design and put together a centerpiece stuffed with gorgeous fresh flowers. All supplies will be provided.

Evergreen Holiday Container Workshop

Saturday, November 20 | 10:00 am – 12:30 pm **OR**

Saturday, December 4 | 10:00 am – 12:30 pm

This make-and-take workshop will demonstrate how to incorporate fresh evergreens into your holiday decorating, while creating a festive porch pot to bring home with you.



Containers, fresh greens, branches, cones, and ribbon will be provided. Please feel free to bring additional accessories or accents if you have a specific theme you'd like to fit. Gardening gloves are recommended and please bring pruning shears if you have any as our supply of shears to borrow is limited.

NICHOLAS CONSERVATORY & GARDENS

NCG TO-GrOW: Naturally Beautiful Holiday Cards

Sat, Nov 20 | 10:00am - 11:00am

In this class you will learn how to press your own paper and use natural ink and other elements to craft a holiday greeting card to take home. Take a stroll through the Nicholas Conservatory after your visit - admission is included in your class fee. Pre-registration required online or contact:

Lyndi Toohill: lynditoohill@rockfordparkdistrict.org;

Phone: 815-987-8858. More Info: <https://bit.ly/3jUbPrP>

All Aglow Holiday Light Display

November 27, 2021 - January 9, 2022

Celebrate the holidays at Nicholas Conservatory & Gardens! Enjoy sparkling lights throughout the outdoor gardens. (Lights are on dusk till dawn.) FREE!

More Info: <https://nicholasconservatory.com/all-aglow>

SEVERSON DELLS

Outside Hike with Severson Dells

Friday, November 26 | 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM

Don't fight the crowds on Black Friday; make your day-after-Thanksgiving green and active with a hike led by Severson Dells Director Ann. Free! Register by 11/23: <https://www.seversondells.com/events/optoutside-nov26-2021>

Luminaria at Severson Dells Nature Center

Friday, December 10 | 5:00 to 9:00 p.m. Friday, December 10 & Saturday, December 11 | 5 to 9 p.m.

This holiday favorite returns with the candlelit trail, make-your-own-s'mores, winter nature activities, live music and more. This event is free, but donations are always appreciated. No registration required. Friday performance by Canto Zenzero. Saturday performance by The Vince Chiarelli Band.

ROTARY BOTANICAL GARDENS

Holiday Light Show—Janesville, Wisconsin

Thursday-Sunday, starting Nov. 26 | 4:30-8:30 p.m. Also extra days December 20-22 and 26-30th. This year's dazzling after-dark walk on the Gardens' paths features more than ONE MILLION lights, themed light displays and animations for a family-friendly outdoor activity.

Details: <https://rbgholidaylightshow.com/>



Did you know??

Illinois is the nation's largest producer of pumpkins. 564 million pounds were produced last year alone, the majority of which are used for pies and other processed foods.