

COUNCIL OF ROCKFORD GARDENERS, INC.

Organized 3/21/1980

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Editor: Kathy Batzkall

OCTOBER 2023



The 4 CRG Clubs:

Plantaholics
Potpourri
Seedlings
Wildflowers

Council Motto:

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

Council Website:

councilofrockfordgardeners.org

Email editor:

CRGnews815@gmail.com

Club calendars are listed
on our website,
or please check with your
garden club on status of
individual club activities.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S PEN

Another summer has come and gone. CRG just finished our last Wednesday at the Rock River Pantry Garden. Cindy Rittenhouse and her husband, Mark Fatheree, worked with me on our last scheduled Wednesday. We had a great time and were surprisingly busy in comparison to the other Wednesday I volunteered this past summer. The staff and clients are always so appreciative. I always leave with a good feeling.

A special thank you to Susan Schmitz for her persistent dedication in organizing our Wednesday volunteers. At our last Council meeting we unanimously decided to carry on volunteering with a few slight changes. Next summer each of our four clubs will be responsible for arranging volunteers for one month. All of this is spelled out in the Council minutes prepared by our secretary, Jan Duncan.

Another change for next year, the Council has arranged for less sun, well sort of. CRG is in the process of donating a shade shelter. For those who have volunteered in the past this will be a very welcomed addition. Hot sun is great to grow crops, but maybe not so great for getting volunteers. So, help is on its way! Barbara Flores who heads up the Pantry Garden was speechless when Susan Schmitz presented our donation plans to her.

Last month I mentioned a new CRG initiative called Project Plant a Seed, where we will be planting seeds in the minds of our community about who we are and what we do. If any club members have any great ideas in getting CRG's name out there, please share them with me.

Finally, we are always looking for fresh ideas. Our March 2024 Council meeting will be a luncheon open to all members. We will be installing our CRG officers, presenting our Petal of Honor award and will be rewarding a college recipient with a CRG scholarship. So, on behalf of the Council, I wish to welcome all of you to come join us.

In closing, please remember, "*Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds you plant.*" - Robert Louis Stevenson



Planting seeds in the minds
of our community on
who we are and what we do

Please share any of your ideas with us

CRG GARDEN CLUB ACTIVITIES

October
2023

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SUBMIT questions or
comments to:

CRGnews815@gmail.com



Seedlings September meeting, a garden walk through Bev Cicolello and Deb Zahniser's beautiful garden! This was planned by Amy Seiler.



Plantaholics trip on October 3 to Grand Detour, Illinois to visit Grungy Roots, a house plant emporium. It was such fun to see this unique and very different indoor plant display. Ashley, the owner, gave an amazing presentation on different plants and answered many questions.



NOTE:

Please save your clean plastic produce containers for use in the Rock River Valley Pantry garden next summer.



CRG GARDEN CLUB ACTIVITIES

Wildflower trip on September 28th to Countryside Nursery in Crystal Lake where a great presentation on native plants was attended.

They also have a beautiful cutting garden.



Susan Schumacher's beautiful planter



FALL CLEANUP

Pat Belezza, Wildflower member and Horticulture Co-chair

Traditional raking and bagging of all organic yard waste has huge environmental consequences. According to the EPA, masses of bagged plant material take up more than 32 MM tons/year. This generates large amounts of methane gas, a destructive greenhouse gas that is 23 times better at trapping heat in the atmosphere than CO₂. "Solid waste landfills are the largest man-made source of methane in the U.S."

Leaving leaves in place in our gardens helps protect plants over the winter, helps conserve water all year, breaks down and enriches the soil, and acts as a natural mulch. Leaves left on the lawn, when mowed with a mulching blade on the mower, are cut into such small pieces they disappear and break down to enrich the lawn.

In our yard, Jerry has found a solution that works well for us. We go to Florida from January through April. When we return in May, the grass is long and the flower beds are all in lush growth. It is too hard to climb into them to pull out dead stalks without trampling everything. That leaves the fall to prepare beds as best we can. As soon after hard frosts



and when everything is completely dry, he takes our old mower and sets the blades as high as they will go (about 4" or so) and mows over all the hostas, daylilies, and any perennials without a high crown. (If he forgets to tell me beforehand, we have a "come to Jesus" confrontation because he mows all my plant stakes with the plants and I have to remake them all.

Don't mow over ferns, any plants with high crowns, or evergreen plants such as heuchera (coral bells). This leaves the ground blanketed with a warm mulch for the winter and by spring everything is mostly broken down and enriching our clay soil. The leaves in the front yard

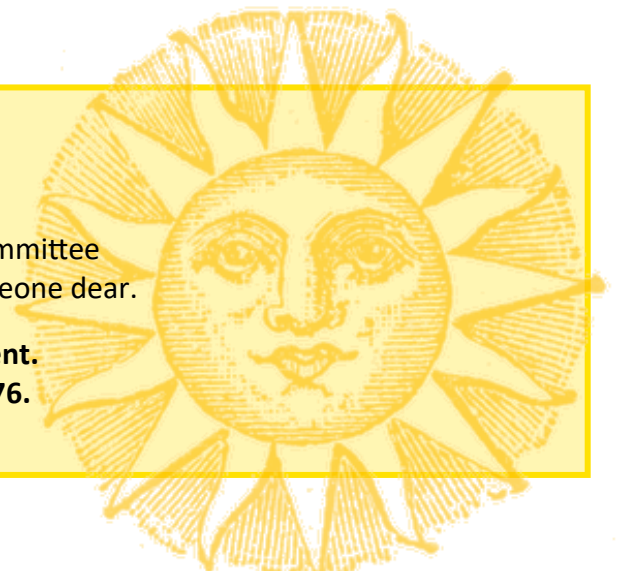
get mowed with a mulching blade and disappear. We have an enormous amount of leaves in our wooded back yard that fall on the grass. He rakes them on a tarp, dumps them in an open spot in the woods, and mows over the pile several times, reducing them to tiny pieces that break down over the winter.

This year, before you go to all the work of raking, bagging, and hauling, consider mowing and leaving. It helps your yard, your back, and the environment.

SEND SOME SUNSHINE

The Council of Rockford Gardeners has a "Sunshine" Committee to send cards to members who are ill or who have lost someone dear.

**Please contact Cindy Rittenhouse to have a card sent.
Email: cdy1ritt@gmail.com or phone: 815-540-5876.**



THE BARNs OF RURAL AMERICA

By Yvette DeWisleare,

Guest writer, University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener, Winnebago County

The sun sets behind the Dutch Gambrel barn like a ball of fire over the horizon. There's a chill in the air and I can smell the grain harvest as the trucks carry their loads to the elevator and farm wives bring meals to the fields. The days grow shorter and there's a heaviness to the air. Gracefully aged at over 125 years this beauty was originally a dairy barn, later used for pigs. They take visitors to the barn and show them the "secret pig place" window where they could view the pigs safely, and they're excited when the trucks came to take the pigs to market to "be bacon." (I don't think they entirely grasped the pigs have to die first..) Very soon the barn will house farm implements for winter. The loft is filled with straw after the summer wheat harvest which used mostly for animal bedding and will be emptied by mid-spring.

Originating in Europe, varying in shapes and sizes, these hand-hewn structures dot the rural landscape. They are the history of farming in America. Barns come in all shapes and sizes. The English Barns, originally built for grain farming have doors on their long sides. Architecturally influenced by church design, Dutch style barns have doors located on the short ends. Some believe Round Barns were built to keep out evil spirits, as they have no corners for them to hide. Mainly used in dairy production, Bank Barns are built into the earth and are popular with Swiss and Germans. It gave access to both the upper and lower levels of the barn easily. Barns have openings on the second level for easy access to store hay and straw- the haymow. It may seem silly- but I did recently have someone ask.

Those little additions to the top of the barn... a cupola (turret) for ventilation. Sometimes it may

look like a small room, then it's called a Belvedere (To offer a pleasant view of the surrounding area.)

Painting barns was considered not only extravagant, but "showy" and vulgar, however, during the 1700's, Virginia farmers found it a necessity to protect wood from decay.



Pennsylvania Dutch Barn with Flourishes and Circular Stars

They had to find a way to deter the growth of moss and mold on the wood. By adding red iron oxide and lime to skimmed milk, the farmer discovered a reddish, plastic-like coating that hardened quickly and lasted for years. Sometimes, it peeled off in sheets, so linseed oil was added to make the concoction soak into the wood. Giving us "barn red", absorbing the sun's rays which

kept livestock warm during the winter. Records show farm stock blood was also used, according to Native American custom, so named "Indian Red". This was not weather-proof and only used inside the barn.

Pennsylvania Farmers and Dutch settlers painted circular star patterns and other flourishes on their barns, "just for luck," otherwise known as "Hex Signs." Nine colors are predominately used. They all make sense if you think about them: **White** is purity and **Black** is for protection and binding the elements together, while **Brown** represents the earth and strength. **Purple** is for Royalty, **Red** represents charisma, lust and passion and **Orange** is for abundance. **Yellow** brings us the sun and **Green** if for growth and fertility, and **Blue** is calm and peaceful. Animals are also used, including, but not limited to: the **Eagle** or **Rooster** for Strength, Courage, and Protection; **Doves** represent friendship and peace in marriage. The **Hereford Cow** - protects farm animals and pets. The Hereford also highlights the important role that food and food

THE BARNES OF RURAL AMERICA

CONTINUED...

animals play in our lives, while **horses** ensured protection for farm animals and pets. What's fascinating about these settlers and the flourishes on their barns, is they're also found on birth and church records, and carry forward to their headstones... but that's a story for another time.

Representing American Folk Art, Donna Sue Groves collaborated with the Ohio Arts Council in 2001 to create 20 quilt squares in the area. She wanted simple geometric shapes and bold colors that could easily be viewed from a distance, and used canvases of 4x4 or 8x8 feet plywood or sheet metal to create quilt squares. Today it is one of the fastest growing public arts movements in the country. A fellow Master-Gardener and friend from Kirkland, Pam Metcalf, painted several for neighbors after rebuilding her farm home after the Fairdale tornado and while undergoing chemotherapy. A battle she did not win.

Holding a long and cultural history as a weather instrument is the weathervane, also known as a windvane or weathercock.

First documented in 48 B.C, created by Greek astronomer Andronicus, a bronze windvane to resemble the Greek God Triton ruling the sea with a body of a fish and the head and torso of a human, holding a trident in his hand to identify the wind's direction was mounted atop the Temple of Aeolus in Athens, Greece. Weathervanes and roosters? Described by Pope Gregory I as, "the most suitable emblem of Christianity," representing Peter's denial of Christ, Pope Leo IV had a rooster put up over St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, and Pope Nicholas I decreed to have a cockerel dome or spire. Weathervanes came to the new world and were placed on barns and house. When mounted and balanced properly, the weathervane can catch the slightest wind and rotates on the axis from any direction, turning the pointer to line up with the direction of the wind.

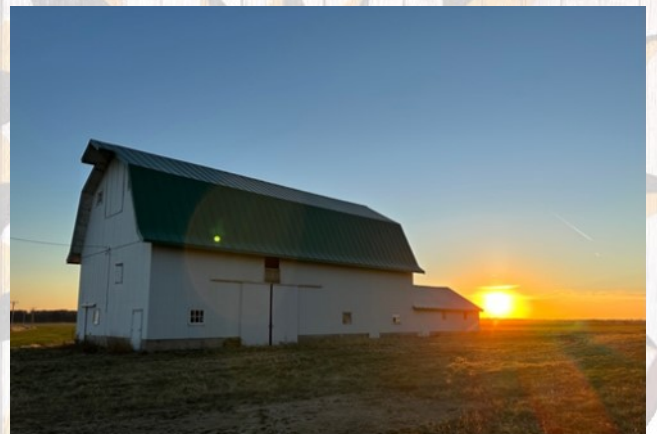
Take a scenic drive and enjoy our agricultural history.

Editor's Note: McHenry County has a barn quilt trail that you can drive following the map at this website:

<https://www.naturallymchenrycounty.com/things-to-do/farms-u-picks/barn-quilts/>



Barn squares painted by Pam Metcalf, Kirkland, IL



Our barn at sunset - Harvest



OCTOBER 2, 2023 COUNCIL MEETING REPORT

TREASURER'S REPORT

Submitted by **Mary Ann Miller**, Treasurer;
Reported by Arch Smith

Balance as of September 1, 2023 **\$8,512.99**

Receipts:

Potpourri - new member 15.00
\$8,527.99

Disbursements

District 1: new members (87.00)

Ending Balance as of September 2023 **\$8,440.99**

President Arch Smith reported that Mary Ann submitted a list of suggestions for donating approximately \$2,500 of our bank balance. Her garden related suggestions included: Midway Village, Nicholas Conservatory, Natural Land Institute, and Nachusa Grasslands. She also suggested non-gardening donations could be made to any of the food pantries, Rock House Kids, or homeless shelters. Mary Ann wants to keep around \$5,000 in our treasury for scholarships.

So far this year we have donated \$500 to Severson Dells and \$1,200 to Klehm Arboretum.

Committee Reports

Awards – Elaine Parrovecchio reported that she will contact Kishwaukee College at the end of October. It was mentioned that Abbey, one of our scholarship recipients, teaches classes at Village Green and has been in their commercials on TV.

Civic and Conservation – Diane Donze reported that there are two homes being built, and they are waiting for the high school students to finish them off. Diane’s contact person at Habitat is not getting back to her.

Programs – Arch Smith reported that: 1-The Fall Frolic was a success, and 85 people attended. We presented the owners with a garden stone. 2-The Program Committee decided to forgo the Christmas party. 3-March Installation of Officers. At this meeting we will present the “Petal of Honor” award to a member. We will also present the scholarship check to our scholarship winner. The meeting is the first Monday of March: March 4, 2024. All members are invited and encouraged to attend. 4- Arch also reported that Salamone’s North has a room available for meetings, and there is no room charge. 5-In June, there will be a garden tour of the Flanary garden for all CRG members and a guest. Tours will be at 1:00 P.M. and at 5:30 P.M.

Publicity – Susan Schumacher reported that if people want anything posted on Facebook, they need the consent of the people in the picture. There is “applied consent” when in a public setting. But at a private club gathering, they should ask permission to post the picture.

Garden Walk – Arch Smith reported that he has six private gardens lined up and one community garden (Womanspace). The Walk will be on Wednesday, July 10, 2024, from 1-8. A suggestion had been made that we could have a container for donations for the scholarship fund at each garden, and Lori Walsh volunteered to make and decorate the containers.

Horticulture – Pat Bellezza reported that Wildflowers had been to Countryside Nursery in Crystal Lake and had a presentation about native gardens, where the message was “help the pollinators.” **Pat Wengrow** was introduced as Pat Bellezza’s co-chair, and they will work out a schedule for submission of newsletter articles.

Hospitality – Alice Moczynski reported that our next meeting will be on Monday, November 6, at Mary’s Market.

Newsletter – Kathy Batzkall was not in attendance but Arch reported that the deadline for sending any photos or stories to her is Friday.

Parliamentarian – No report.

Sunshine – Cindy Rittenhouse sent Arch a report stating that she sent the following: A “get well” card to Sarah Britton for her broken foot. A “congratulations” card to Elaine Parrovecchio on her engagement. A “thank you” card to Jim and Donna Bielfuss for hosting us at the Fall Frolic.

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

Website – No report.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

I. Food Pantry Garden: Susan Schmitz reported that the food pantry garden is now closed. Members agreed that it was a worthwhile cause and want to continue.

Susan suggested that each club take a month to work at the food pantry garden. A motion was passed for this idea, and a drawing resulted in a schedule: June—Seedlings; July — Potpourri; August—Plantaholics; September —Wildflowers. Arch Smith volunteered to be the new contact person.

II. Fall Frolic: Sherry Seaver said that for future Fall Frolics each of the four garden clubs will plan the Fall Frolic in the following order: Plantaholics, Potpourri, Seedlings, and Wildflowers. The Fall Frolic can be any date in September.

Next meeting will take place Monday, Nov. 6 2023 at 9:30 a.m at Mary’s Market, State St., Rockford

All garden club members are encouraged to attend.

Respectfully submitted,
Jan Duncan, Secretary



MARK YOUR CALENDAR FOR THESE GARDEN EVENTS

KLEHM ABORETUM & BOTANIC GARDEN

2715 S. Main St, Rockford, IL

www.klehm.org | 815-965-8146 | info@klehm.org

Registration is required for each event. See website.

Fall Pumpkin Tower Board Painting

October 21st, 2023; 10AM – 12PM

Klehm Arboretum with The Urban Art Studio.

This is a beginner friendly painting on a 12x24" stained wood board.

Registration is required by Tuesday, October 17. Minimum 6 participants. \$50 per person.

Fall Color Walk & Tree Painting Workshop

Sunday, October 22, 2023; 10AM – 1PM

Art by Karla and Klehm's Sam Burbach team up for this workshop.

Take a walking tour of Klehm's beautiful fall colors to gain inspiration for your painting, and afterward, Art by Karla will walk you through the steps to paint a beautiful fall tree for your home!

\$37 per Klehm member; \$40 per non-member. Registration is required by Thursday, October 19.

Fall Colors Tranquility Walk

Friday, October 27th, 2023, 6 PM – 7 PM

Adults: \$10/person; Seniors Age 62+: \$8/person;

Klehm Members: \$4/person. Location: Clarcor Pavilion

Registration is required.

NICHOLAS CONSERVATORY

1354 N. 2nd Street, Rockford, IL

<https://nicholasconservatory.com/>

Cultivating Culture

Through November 5, 2023

See the conservatory through the eyes of seven local residents who represent different cultures. In the exhibition area you may follow the participants by reading more about how they relate to the plants through stories, recipes, and sounds.

Outdoor Walking Tour

October 26, 10:30am -12pm

Learn about native and exotic plants, sun or shade; history and fun facts. Pre-register for this free tour.

NATURE AT THE CONFLUENCE

306 Dickop Street,

South Beloit, IL,

<https://natureattheconfluence.com/>

Night of The Cryptid

October 31 @ 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm; \$10.00

Emerge from your lair for spooky snacks, bubbling beverages, and a roaring campfire. At 7:00pm, sasquatch enthusiast Ron Read will share his most intriguing stories and finds from the field, followed by a guided trail walk to search for signs of nocturnal creatures. Halloween costumes are optional but encouraged. This program is best suited for ages 13 and up. Please register in advance.

EarthWalk Group Reflection

November 3 @ 10:00 am - 11:00 am

FREE, but please register in advance.

To recognize Indigenous Peoples Heritage Month, we are bringing back the popular "EarthWalk Trail" for the month of November. We invite you to explore our prairie trail to find 15 EarthWalk stops where you'll be able to read and ponder our favorite quotes from "Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teaching of Plants" by Robin Wall Kimmerer.

ANDERSON JAPANESE GARDENS

318 Spring Creek Road, Rockford, Illinois

815-229-9390 | <https://andersongardens.org/>

MONTHLY LECTURE SERIES

Members – Free | Non-Members \$5 | Pre-Registration Required.

Beauty in Bronze: Carl Milles in America

Thursday, October 19, 2023; 7:00 PM Lecture

Gregory Wittkopp, Director, Cranbrook Center for Collections and Research Bloomfield Hills, Michigan will speak on sculptor, Carl Milles, who created the three angels at Anderson Japanese Gardens.

Introduction to Ikebana

Tuesday, October 17, 2023 | 3:00 PM | AND Saturday, November 11, 2023 | 12:00 PM | Visitors Center Gallery

Cost: \$40 Members | \$45 Non-Members per class. Includes flower materials. Space is limited and registration is required.