

COUNCIL OF ROCKFORD GARDENERS, INC.

Organized 3/21/1980

E-Issue V 9 Issue 1
Editor: Kathy Batzkall

JAN-FEB 2024



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

Well, winter is finally here. I think most of us were praying that it might just miss us this year. Unfortunately, it's here and seems to be for a while. Garden club meetings are a great way to overcome the winter blues. There isn't a better way to get one's mind off the winter weather than meeting at a green house, doing a garden related craft project or learning more about the birds and the bees. Hey, you know what I mean!

This year there are many fun and interesting activities planned both on the individual club level and with CRG as well. The Council has been busy working on several events for 2024. First, on March 4th is our Installation of Officers/Scholarship Luncheon which is open to ALL members (see details page 6). It would be nice to have everyone attend. We have some new fundraising ideas we will be trying out this year with more details to come. CRG will be sponsoring another private garden tour, and this year's featured garden will be a surprise treat for all to attend in June. Our Fall Frolic Gathering of Clubs event is reverting back to a rotation of individual clubs hosting, with Plantaholics taking the reins this September. These are just a few of the highlights of what's coming in 2024.

Finally, our award winning Newsletter Editor and Website Coordinator Kathy Batzkall is stepping aside. After years at the helm she has decided it's time to let someone else take on the task. Kathy has been a joy to work with and words can't describe how much we all have appreciated her amazing talents. With a heavy heart, I must announce this is her last CRG Newsletter.

Taking over for Kathy Batzkall will be new Plantaholics member Jamie Flanary. We are all grateful for Jamie stepping up to the challenge. When I asked him if he'd be willing to take over for Kathy, I didn't have the courage to tell him it's a lifetime appointment... Surprise!

In closing, please remember:

"God made winter days so gardeners could get some housework done."

- Anonymous

Arch Smith: racs71@yahoo.com, 815-501-1640

JAN-FEB
2024

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SUBMIT questions or
comments to:

CRGnews815@gmail.com



CRG GARDEN CLUB ACTIVITIES

Potpourri Garden Club

December 12th Christmas party at Thunder Bay Restaurant



Front row: Sandi Erickson, Vicki Woodhouse, Cindy Remson, Becky Berggren.

Second row: Arch Smith, Deb Bieschke, Mary Jo Hull, Mary Lou Hiemenz, Sheri Henson, Linda Baker, Cathy Stewart, Lynn Franzene Lynde, Sharon Ackerman, Jodi Hade, Sherry Seaver.

We played games, chatted and got to know our three new members—and of course had lunch. Everyone brought hats, gloves, scarfs, socks that will be donated to Miss Carly's. Our new member Sheri Henson brought Christmas cookies for dessert!



Sharon Ackerman and Linda Baker



Beautiful plant, watering pitcher and welcome sign donated by The Council of Rockford Gardeners to the new **Habitat for Humanity** homeowner, Tiffany. Thanks to Diane Donze for purchasing the items. They were a nice addition to the home dedication.



Many thanks to Susan Buzzard for hosting this fun porch pot event for **Seedlings!** Susan generously provided an abundance of greenery and decorative items, as well as a delicious assortment of food.



CRG GARDEN CLUB ACTIVITIES

Plantaholics and Friends Holiday Event

Plantaholics had a progressive Christmas party in December. Such beautiful decorations. Thank you to Andrew and Chad (and Brita), Arch and Charlie, Margorie and Paul, Patrice and John, and all their helpers and pets!!



Photos by Andrew Quintanilla and Cindy Rittenhouse



Plantaholics' four host homes provided a welcome launch to the holidays. Three local charities were identified to sponsor: Miss Carly's, Shelter Care Ministries and Carpenters Place. Our members were very generous providing much needed socks, hats, snacks and toiletries. An SUV filled with much needed donations were delivered.

CRG GARDEN CLUB ACTIVITIES

Plantaholics and Friends Holiday Event continued...



Photos by Andrew Quintanilla and Cindy Rittenhouse

HOW PLANTS COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER WHEN IN DANGER

Pat Belezza, Wildflower member and Horticulture Co-chair

I read this article in the Washington Post written by Kasha Patel and found it fascinating.

Here are excerpts:

Real trees on our Earth can communicate and warn each other of danger—and a new study explains how. The study found injured plants emit certain chemical compounds, which can infiltrate a healthy plant's inner tissues and activate defenses from within its cells. A better understanding of this mechanism could allow scientists and farmers to help fortify plants against insect attacks or drought long before they happen. The study marks the first time researchers have been able to “visualize plant-to-plant communications,” said Masatsugu Toyota, senior author of the study, which was published in *Nature Communications*.

The idea of “talking” trees started to take root in the 1980s. Two ecologists placed hundreds of caterpillars and webworms on the branches of willow and alder trees to observe how the trees would respond. They found the attacked trees began producing chemicals that made their leaves unappetizing and indigestible to deter insects. But even more curious, the scientists discovered healthy trees of the same species, located 30 or 40 meters away and with no root connections to the damaged trees, also put up the same chemical defenses to prepare against an insect invasion.

Another pair of scientists around that time found similar results when studying damaged sugar maple and poplar trees. These early research teams realized that the trees sent chemical signals to one another through the air, known today as a plant eavesdropping. Over the past four decades, scientists have observed this cell-to-cell communication in more than 30 plant species, including lima bean, tobacco, tomato, sagebrush and flowering plants in the mustard family. Past research shows plants communicate with their surroundings by emitting chemicals known as volatile organic compounds, which we can smell. Plants can produce an array of these compounds for different purposes. Some are

used to attract pollinators or as defense against predators. One class of these compounds is emitted when a plant is injured: green leafy volatiles. These are emitted by pretty much every green plant with leaves, and are produced when a plant experiences physical damage. An example of this compound is the smell released from fresh-cut grass.

In the new study, researchers manually crushed leaves and placed caterpillars on mustard or tomato plants to trigger the emission of various green leafy volatiles. Then, they spread individual fumes to healthy plants to see if the plants would react. They found signaling first increased in guard cells forming the plant's leaf pore, showing the compounds are absorbed into the plant's inner tissues. The signaling is like a switch to turn on the defense responses from the plant. After signaling increased, the team found the plant increased the production of certain gene expressions for protection. For example, the plant may start producing certain proteins to inhibit insects from munching on them, giving the insects diarrhea.

The study has planted many seeds for future research. In response to insect attacks, plants can also produce specific responses based on the species of the herbivore feeding on it. An impressive behavior that scientists are further studying.

“If that plant can mount an adaptive response ...this is the definition of intelligence,” Kessler said. “If you understand these kinds of things and how plants do it, it gets you onto a level that questions how we understand the world”.



GARDEN CLUB NEWS

Designs by Arch Smith

WANTED

For March Newsletter



Your best garden
related vacation
photo

CRG'S

Installation of Officers Scholarship Luncheon

March 4th 11:30 am



All members are invited
RSVP BY Feb 29
Alice Moczynski
alice.moczynski@comcast.net

ATTENTION everyone



Our Sunshine Chair Cindy
Rittenhouse has a new number

815-977-2090

Native Plant Seeds Ideal for Winter Sowing

Written by Dr. Liessa Bowen, epicgardening.com

You don't need to wait until spring to start gardening. There are plenty of seeds that you can sow in the winter months for new growth starting in the spring. It isn't too late, or too early, to sow many native plant seeds during the coldest months of winter.

Some suggested plants: black eyed Susan, hysop, purple cone flower, wild bergamot, butterfly milkweed, little bluestem grass.

JANUARY 8, 2024 COUNCIL MEETING REPORT

Balance as of December 1, 2023 \$8,371.33
Receipts: None 00.00
..... \$8,371.33
Disbursements
Midway Village donation..... (\$525.00)
Ending Balance as of December 31, 2023 \$7,846.33

TREASURER'S REPORT

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

Committee Reports

Awards – Arch Smith reported for **Elaine Parrovecchio** saying that we do have a scholarship recipient.

Civic and Conservation – Arch Smith reported for **Diane Donze** who said Habitat got two homes done. One dedication was on January 7, and the second dedication will be on January 13. Diane purchased a house plant, a watering can, a 'welcome' plaque, and a greeting card.

Programs – Arch Smith reported that on Tuesday, June 11, 2024, at 1:00 P.M. and 5:30 P.M. CRG members will tour the Maura and Jamie Flanary's garden. The Council is considering having this be a fundraiser.

Publicity – Susan Schumacher sent an email with information about the Valentine's table decorations for River Bluff Nursing Home: Members are asked to donate containers and artificial greenery and meet at Susan Buzzard's home to make arrangements on February 5, time TBD. (There is no February Council meeting.) Susan Buzzard said we should bring scissors, and red ribbon.

Garden Walk – Arch Smith reported that he is trying to work with Andrew Quintanilla to add an art show to the Garden Walk on July 10, 2024. Loves Park has a student art show on benches around the city. Arch also reported that he already has five or six gardens for the 2025 Garden Walk. Lori Walsh is working on the donation containers and designing a new sign for in front of the houses on the Garden Walk.

Horticulture – Pat Bellezza had no report.

Hospitality – Alice Moczynski reported CRG does not have a February or August meeting. Our next meeting will be on Monday, March 4, 2024, for the installation lunch at Tavern on Clark. Bev Larson is our new Hospitality chairman.

Newsletter – Kathy Batzkall reported that she met with Jamie Flanary to give him some pointers on working on the newsletter. Kathy gave him a disc with artwork and previous newsletter to view in the original Publisher software. A letter from District 1 will be in the March newsletter.

Parliamentarian – No report.

Sunshine – Arch Smith reported that **Cindy Rittenhouse** sent 1) a card to Mary Wulff on the death of her husband and 2) a card to Wes Carlson on the death of his wife Ginny – but the card was returned. Please contact Cindy at her new cell number 815-977-2090 if a card should be sent to a member.

Arch then passed around a sample of our new Council of Rockford Gardeners cards. Some will be blank inside and some will say "thinking of you". On the back they will say "created by the Council of Rockford Gardeners".

Ways & Means – Arch Smith will go back to talk with Jessica Salisbury at Village Green regarding the fundraiser (taking pictures of children or pets with the Easter Bunny). Arch also ordered a pumpkin costume to do another fundraiser in the fall, and he will order a Christmas one later also.

Website – Kathy Batzkall reported that she talked to the webmaster in New York and she told him that **Jamie Flanary** will be taking over. So, the webmaster is aware of the change. Kathy said that she needs the following as soon as possible: membership information, the calendar of events, and any donations made by each club. Kathy will email a list of what is needed to the club presidents. She still does not have a bill. The last bill was from 2022, but it should be about the same amount.

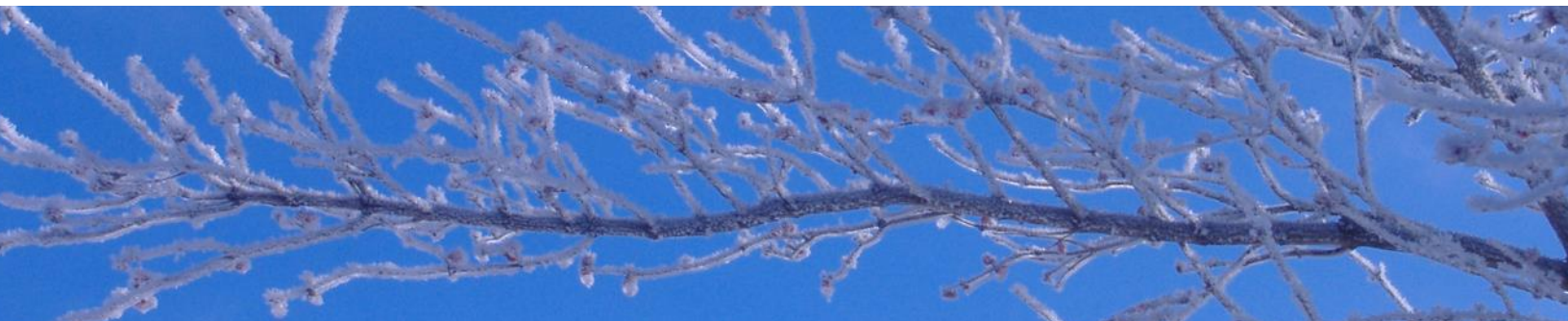
UNFINISHED BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Installation of officers meeting and scholarship award will take place Monday, March 4, at 11:30 a.m. at Tavern on Clark, 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

Luscious Landscaping **FREE** Zoom Webinar

Tuesday, January 30th, 2024. Register online

Join Lee Reich, PhD, to meet some of the best trees, shrubs, and vines for this purpose; plants that require little maintenance yet provide stunning flowers in spring, color in autumn, neat form in winter, and delicious fruit for your family.

Snowshoe Hike

Sunday, January 21st, 2024. 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Location: Clarcor Pavilion

**Registration: Please call Rocktown Adventures at 815-636-9066

NICHOLAS CONSERVATORY

1354 N. 2nd Street, Rockford, IL

<https://nicholasconservatory.com/>

In Full Bloom: Orchid Display

February 3– March 3, 10 am—3pm.



Save the Date for

Gardening

for Food, Flowers, & Fun

Saturday, March 9, 2024
9 am - Noon

Event Fee: \$20.00
Registration opens in January!

Presented by University of Illinois Extension and Winnebago County Master Gardeners at NIU Rockford, 8500 East State Street, Rockford.

NATURE AT THE CONFLUENCE

306 Dickop Street,

South Beloit, IL,

<https://natureattheconfluence.com/>

Registration is required for each event. See website.

Birding Club

February 2, 7:30 am - 9:00 am

This beginner-friendly bird outing will include an introduction to birding and guided stroll on our Rock River Birding & Hiking Trail, a one mile loop path. \$5.00.

Sunset Stroll

February 6, 13, 20, 27. 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Free

Winter Tree ID + Hot Cocoa Hike

February 10, 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Free, but registration required.

ILLINOIS SNOW SCULPTING COMPETITION

January 24-27, 2024

Sinnissippi Park, Rockford.

Teams from around the state will compete.

Free, however donations accepted.



Photos: Rockford
Park District