

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

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.



E-Issue V14 Issue 1

Editor: Karla Hardman

JANUARY 2026



FROM THE PRESIDENT'S

I hope all of you survived the busy holiday season. There is so much to do all crammed in to a few short weeks. CRG hosted its Annual Christmas gathering at the Machine Shed with about 30 guests. This was a last minute decision as other plans did not workout as planned.

Most of us were blessed to have spent Christmas with family or friends. Charlie and I hosted our entire family the Sunday after Christmas. We had a house full of relatives to share a late Christmas dinner with. And, YES believe it or not, I cooked without anyone suffering from food poisoning. Yes, there really are "Christmas Miracles"!

Charlie and I are leaving for our biannual trip to the Philippines. We have lots of things planned including visiting several beautiful gardens. It's fun to see what others grow and their different take on gardening.

Years ago we started a tropical garden around our vacation home. On each visit its fun to see how things have grown. Some of the various palms were like 5 or 6 feet tall when we originally planted them. But now most are nearly as tall as our 3 story house. My prized plant is our Red Lipstick Palm (*Cyrtostachys renda*) it was small when we planted it, but has grown and spread tremendously (see pictures). We visited a nursery years ago and saw this palm that I thought someone painted the trunk bright red. When I was visiting with the owner, he said, "no, that's just how they grow". Of course I had to have one. Ironically, after visiting with the owners, we found out that they were Charlie's relatives.

Many of Charlie's relatives also share a passion for gardening. One of his aunts is very involved in a garden club and shows her plants. Another aunt owns a large property where she has created a beautiful Christian themed garden. She has dozens of very large statues adorning her garden with a life size "stations of the cross" and a huge chapel. Her home is toward the back of her property. She opens it up to the public on weekends. See next page for my plant pictures.

ARCH'S VACATION HOME

JANUARY
2026

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Arch and Charlie's vacation home in the Philippines. These pictures are the plants he referred to in his "President's Message."



Hosta Propagation By Tissue Culture

Pat Belezza, Wildflower member and Horticulture Co-chair

The introduction of tissue culture to the commercial perennial industry has revolutionized the propagation of many plants, especially hostas. It has enabled wholesale nursery suppliers like Walter's Gardens in Michigan to rapidly reproduce clones of popular and extremely slow growing, valuable plants by the thousands. This process is generally in four stages: initiation, multiplication, rooting and growing on.

Stages 1-3 are completed in glass tubes in a sterile environment under strictly controlled temperature, humidity and light conditions. Stage 4 involves moving the tiny new plants into a greenhouse where they are carefully nurtured.

In stage 1, using hostas as an example, a small bud or piece of tissue is cut from the plant, peeled to a very small point, cleaned and disinfected. It is imperative to ensure any bacteria or fungi are eliminated as this could contaminate the entire tissue culture crop. A mixture of plant material, hormones and agar is prepared and placed in the bottom of a glass test tube. The tiny piece of cut plant is placed in the bottom of the test tube into the fertile agar mixture. The test tubes are set into racks in a sterile growing chamber with strict controls on temperature, light, and humidity. Employees entering the room must wear a sterile gown, gloves and shoe covers to prevent contamination. The plant pieces have no roots and need to absorb the sugar in the agar mix instead of performing photosynthesis.

Multiplication: As the tiny tissue grows and multiplies, it needs to be divided into smaller pieces and moved into more tubes every 4-6 weeks. Usually two plant hormones are used: cytokinin (encourages bud formation) and auxin (encourages root growth). At first more cytokinin is used in the mixture because the goal is to multiply buds over root growth. After several divisions the plantlets are switched to an agar mixture with a higher auxin level to encourage root formation. As soon as the plantlets have enough root mass, they are again divided and transplanted into cells obtaining a potting medium. The trays of cells are placed in a greenhouse and grown to a size that can be sold to a wholesale nursery that will grow them into retail size.

Even though TC is expensive, there are several reasons it makes economic and practical sense. 1) Plants can be produced that are exact clones of the original plant. 2) It can reproduce plants that are very difficult to reproduce using usual methods. 3) Speed: TC can rapidly reproduce expensive and high demand plants in a few months. 4) Because of the sterile, controlled environment, TC plants are disease free. 5) Hostas often mutate "sport" and TC encourages this. A new "sport" = a new plant variety.

*Information taken from the web and "PlantsGalore.com."

JANUARY 5, 2026 COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

TREASURER'S REPORT

Beginning Balance as of November 1, 2025: \$6,215.33
T-shirt sales (2) \$ 25.00
Total Receipts \$ 25.00
\$ 6,240.33

Disbursements:

Arch Smith - District 1 Fall Centerpieces \$ 43.10
Arch Smith - Flash Drives/2025 Garden Walk 31.27
Cindy Rittenhouse - Stamps 33.20

Total Disbursements: \$ 107.57

Ending Balance as of November 31, 2025: \$6,132.76

Beginning Balance as of December 1, 2025: \$6,132.76

Receipts 0.00

\$ 6,132.76

Disbursements: 0.00

Ending Balance as of December 31, 2025: \$ 6,132.76

Submitted by Mary Ann Miller, Treasurer

Committee Reports

Awards - Elaine Parrovecchio reported that she has contacted Kishwaukee College looking for a student for our scholarship, but she has heard nothing back from the lady who is in charge. Elaine also reported that in the last three years she has had to keep after her. This week Elaine will contact her again. Hopefully, Elaine will get a scholarship recipient, otherwise we can always use last year's student again.

Elaine next asked if the scholarship amount was still \$2,000, and Mary Ann Miller confirmed the \$2,000 amount.

Civic Conservation - Diane Donze - No report.

Programs - Arch reported our March 2nd meeting will be the Installation of Officers and Scholarship Lunch, at Tavern on Clark at 11:30am.

The CRG Christmas Party was held at the Machine Shed Restaurant in Rockford. Fewer than 30 members attended.

The Fall Frolic will be hosted by Seedlings this year at Klehm Arboretum.

Arch is working on the summer Garden Stroll.

Publicity - Susan Schumacher reported that CRG's Facebook page has 707 members. There were 73 posts/comments this past month, and there were 1,725 views the past month - that was down 17%.

Susan also reported that she contacted River Bluff Nursing Home about Valentine's Day centerpieces, and they could like the centerpieces. But they will only allow them to be up till Valentine's Day.

Susan suggested getting together on January 15th at 9:00am at her house to make the centerpieces. Susan has materials, but we can bring items and tools. She will provide breakfast.

Garden Walk - Arch Smith reported that he has six gardens, but one garden has postponed till next year, so there are only five. The lady will do it the following year. The gardens are spread out again this year. One is in Cherry Valley, another in Belvidere. The following year Dr. Jeffrey Behr wants to be on the Garden Walk. His father's art work is being moved to Dr. Behr's house.

We usually do not pay for the QR code as we get 50 free scans per month, but Arch does pay for unlimited scans for June and July just for the Garden Walk. This year he was able to pay for two months at once .

Horticulture - Pat Bellezza reported that she will do articles for March, April, May and June.

Hospitality - Bev Larson - No report.

Newsletter - Karla Hardman reported she would like the club memberships lists as soon as they are finalized, and suggested that in the Newsletter we welcome new members - but maybe not include names in case we forget a new member. Karla said everything is due by Friday to CRG News (crgnews815@gmail.com).

Parliamentarian - Sarah Britton reported that it was a little disorganized today but it will be better.

Sunshine - Cindy Rittenhouse - Arch said that Cindy reported that she sent a get well card to Lori Walsh for her knee surgery.

Please text or call Cindy (815-977-2090) if a card should be sent. (Cindy prefers a text message to email.)

Ways & Means - Lynne Franzene-Lynde Website - No report.

Website - Arch Smith reported that Andrew Quintanilla can put items on the website, but he cannot change the format.

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 may be required for events. See website.

Snowshoe Hike

Sunday, January 11th

10:00am – 12:00pm

Celebrate the natural wonders of winter with a fun and unique outing in a beautiful setting as we head out for a snowshoe hike. Have some fun in the snow, meet some new people, and learn the ins and outs of the fastest growing winter sport.

Adult with snowshoe rental: \$25.00

Registration is required. 815-636-9066

Guided Bird Hike

Wednesday, January 14th

8:30am – 10:00am

Free guided bird walk at Klehm with Winnebago

County Wildlife Biologist Liz. Bird identification, helpful birding technology, and nature journaling while the group searches for winter residents. Plan to hike 2-3 miles on mixed terrain (paved, grass, some incline/decline).

FREE - begin at the Visitors Center.

Snow Moon Tranquility Walk

Saturday, January 31

5:00pm – 6:30pm

Walk slowly through the forest in the deep quiet of a winter night. Let the spirit that dwells there envelop you and bring you peace, comfort and a renewed energy for life.

Wear footwear suitable for winter trail walking, dress appropriately for whatever the weather and bring hiking poles if you have them.

This is a silent, meditative experience.

Registration is required.

Rooted In Rockford: Art and Tree Science

Through May 31, 2026

9:00am - 4:00pm

A seasonal outdoor exhibit for 2025-2026 that blends tree science with artistic interpretation of the concept of “roots” both literally and figuratively, and will rely on

Illinois-based artists for the submission of sculptures or other artworks to comprise the exhibit itself, which will include educations/interpretive signs.

Adults: \$12/person

Seniors: \$10/person

NICHOLAS CONSERVATORY

1354 N. 2nd Street, Rockford, IL

<https://nicholasconservatory.com/>

Watercolors with Cindy Bear and Maggie Magnuson

Watercolor class, painting a successful watercolor is like putting puzzle pieces together. Each week will focus on the two pieces of the puzzle with painting projects to reinforce each piece.

Wednesday, January 21 - 10:00am - 2:00pm

Wednesday, January 28 - 10:00am - 2:00pm

Wednesday, February 4 - 10:00am - 2:00pm

Wednesday, February 11 - 10:00am - 2:00pm

Pre-registration Required

Non-Members \$120.00

NCG Members \$100.00

ANDERSON JAPANESE GARDENS

318 Spring Creek Road, Rockford

andersongardens.org

Tai Chi classes, beginner - Intermediate

Wednesday, 6:15pm - 7:30pm

Contact Craig Westland at rockfordtaichi@gmail.com for more information.

SEVERSON DELLS NATURE CENTER

8786 Montague, Rockford IL

seversondells.com

Woodland Wanderers

January 20th - 10:00am - 11:30am

Free community walk at Severson Dells
Nature Center

All ages. Registration is required.

WILD ONES

<http://wildonesrrvc.org/>

Monthly Zoom meetings, replayed on YouTube:

<http://wildonesrrvc.org/MonthlyMeetings.html>

GARDEN HINTS / TOPICS

BREAD IS BAD FOR ME
INSTEAD OF BREAD, FEED ME WITH HALVED
GRAPES, CRACKED CORN, BIRDSEED, OATS,
BARLEY, OR PUMPKIN SEEDS.



FYI

We are always looking for gardening hints, flower/plant information, helpful hints, tips, or any other information that you would like to share with our members.

PLEASE send it to Karla at crnews815@gmail.com.

All information is due before Friday of the first week of the month of a Newsletter publication.

Help our Feathered Friends

Please save your used paper towel tubes, toilet paper tubes and cardboard egg cartons. These make great toys for parrots living in a sanctuary, waiting to be adopted.



Feathered Friends Sanctuary & Rescue

1570 County Road A

Edgerton, WI 53534

www.feathered-friends.com

please contact Arch Smith 815-501-1640
for pick up arrangements

SUNSHINE

A member needs a card?



contact
Cindy Rittenhouse
by text
815-977-2090