



The Hidden Gem

April, 2023

Town & Country Garden Club of Libertyville celebrates 71 years of serving the greater Libertyville area with civic plantings, scholarship awards, local charitable donations and our Hidden Gems Garden Walk.

THIS MONTH:

- Rhubarb
- Spring Training
- Starting Seeds
- Upcoming Events

Happy Spring! Town & Country Garden Club resumed meeting, starting 2023 with a presentation on gardening in small spaces. How enjoyable to return to our fellowship and learning, and to get outside for some hands-on gardening.

Inside the house, my guests will soon share a bedroom with an extended grow table. I can't wait to seed flats for zinnia, baby basil, and an exotic tomato variety bought under the hypnotic influence of poetic seed catalog descriptions.



I've saved an old, broken-zipped, Lands End parka for my chilly April garden ventures. I plant cool weather crops - lettuce, turnips, spinach and onions. I prep the other beds, removing non-composted leaf mulch, digging winter weeds, and keeping my eye out for that first flush of spring weed. By the end of the month, I like to plant some potatoes - who doesn't like new potatoes with a summer meal?

Looking for garden inspiration? Mark the calendar for Saturday, June 24th and get your tickets for the Hidden Gems Garden Walk. We hope to see you there!



Ann Baker, Town & Country Garden Club

April Tips

Rhubarb

Queen of the Spring Garden

Many of us enjoy growing this easy spring treat, rhubarb. Heirloom plants are often shared across generations and families. Rhubarb is a perennial vegetable, with long stalks and big leaves. Only the stalks are edible - the leaves contain large amounts of oxalic



acid and should not be eaten. The stalks, harvested in the spring, are celery-like in texture and sour tasting; when cooked with sugar - tart and delicious! Rhubarb is often prepared with strawberries, a sublime combination in a crumble, pie, or jam.

Rhubarb can be planted from seed, but matures to harvestable size much quicker from transplanted crowns. Dedicate a corner of your garden to the rhubarb - they will flourish for a good five years, and then you can divide and resettle them for continued produce. Plant the crown buds two inches below the surface. Rhubarb plants like good drainage and a dose of fertilizer in the spring and again in June.

A layer of organic mulch will help retain moisture and moderate soil temperature.

Harvest rhubarb by gently pulling the stalk from the plant base. Discard the leaf. Do not harvest from new plants, and only a few stems the second year. When they mature, the harvest extends to eight to ten weeks. Don't remove more than a third of the plant. If the plant flowers during the summer, remove the bloom.

For more information about Rhubarb, click here for the [Illinois Extension guide to Rhubarb care.](#)

Spring Training



Returning to the garden nurtures our spirits while challenging our bodies. We are engaging muscles that peacefully hibernated throughout the winter. Warming up and stretching can prevent injuries throughout the gardening season.

1. Take it slow! If you haven't maintained pushing, pulling, twisting, kneeling, bending, lifting, and gripping throughout the winter (who has??), then pace yourself during the early days of yard and bed clean up and prepping.
2. Try to rotate through tasks - intersperse movement with kneeling, lifting heavier objects throughout the day instead of transporting all at once.
3. Watch your back! Keep your body aligned during lifting, shoveling, and dragging objects. If planting pots, try finding a step or platform to fill them on to minimize awkward bending.
4. Stretch before working. Don't forget the wrists and ankles, which can take a beating with shoveling and using a trowel.

Planting Seeds Indoors



Restless and ready to get started this season? You don't need much to get a jump-start on your flowers and vegetables.

You need a container, a tray (to catch excess water), germinating soil mix, and your seeds. Time the seeding so that the plants will be about six weeks old in mid-May (check on the "last frost date" common for your area). Seed packets will give days to germination and optimal transplant age. Plant the seeds according to the depth indicated on the seed packet. Keep moist, but don't overwater. Lighting is the trickiest part of starting your seeds. While some plants do okay in a window with southern exposure, relying on natural light often results in leggy transplants. Fluorescent light and grow lights can be used to produce healthy seedlings. See this [EXTENSION article](#) on light for more information.

Upcoming Events



SAVE THE DATE!

June 24th

Five exceptional gardens

Meet the gardeners and be inspired by unique designs and specimens.

Nature themed artists exhibit and selling work at each site



Native Plant Sale

Lake County Forest Preserve

Saturday, May 20

9 AM - 3 PM

& Sunday May 21st

10 AM - 12 PM

Independence Grove

Libertyville Garden

Need space for vegetable or cutting bed? Consider renting a plot at Libertyville Garden, located between Technology Way and Winchester. Plot availability is limited - More information available [HERE](#)

GREEN LIVING FAIR

Saturday, April 15, 2023

10 am - 2 pm

University Center of Lake County, Grayslake

Exhibitors: Gardening, composting, solar energy,
conservation & more

Bring Bikes, Shoes, and Glasses for Recycling



For more information:
[Green Living Fair](#)

@gosustainableCLC



University of Illinois
Lake County Extension
Master Gardeners

PLANT SALE

Saturday, May 20, 2023

9 am - 2 pm



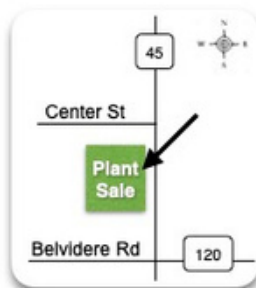
WE ARE OFFERING

A beautiful selection of **nursery grown plant varieties** not readily available in traditional garden centers. Supply is limited so come early—these plants will go quickly!

- Natives, Perennials, Pollinator-Friendly Plants
- Vegetables, Herbs
- Garden Treasures
- Gardening Advice from Master Gardeners

All proceeds support Extension projects and programming for volunteers, youth and adults

Rain or Shine Cash, Check, Charge



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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

- Call 847-223-8627
- www.extension.illinois.edu/lm
- Lake County Master Gardener:
University of Illinois Extension



University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this program, please contact our office at 847-223-8627. Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time for meeting your access needs.



FOR MORE VISIT: www.towncountrygardenclub.com