



# The Hidden Gem

June, 2024

**Town & Country Garden Club of Libertyville celebrates 72 years of serving the greater Libertyville area with civic plantings, scholarship awards, local charitable donations and our Hidden Gems Garden Walk.**

It is Garden Walk season and it looks like we are set for a successful event! This year we will have five spectacular homes with nature themed artisans at each home. I know I say this every year, but this year we have a truly amazing variety of homes and gardens, from vegetable gardening to an example of the “New American” garden.

The Garden Walk is a key element of our club and our activities. The proceeds allow us to commit to our Civic plantings and projects, our scholarship and book donations among others. It also allows us to have an interesting year of programs and activities. It is the key event of the year for the club and your support is valued.

Members are required to work at one of the homes either the morning (9:30am-12:30pm) or afternoon (12:15 pm-3:15 pm) shift. If you haven't signed up, go to our website ([www.towncountrygardenclub.com](http://www.towncountrygardenclub.com)), click on Members Only and use the password in the yearbook. Go to Sign-ups and find the sign-up sheet for the Garden Walk.

And...Ann Baker will be hosting a Prosecco and Chips celebration at her home immediately after the Walk closes. All club members and our home hosts are invited, so be sure to stop by to help celebrate.

Sally Steele, President, TCGC

## THIS MONTH:

- Senior Hall of Fame
- Civic Plantings
- Blue Star Memorial renovation
- No Mow Grass
- Featured Perennial: Columbine
- Featured Native: Common Milkweed
- Gardening with Annuals
- Upcoming events



**Editors:**  
Ann Baker  
Laura Edwards  
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*"I must have flowers, always and always" Claude Monet*

# News and Notes

## Libertyville Senior Hall of Fame

Town & Country Garden Club Nominee Inducted:

### Mary Gay Kay

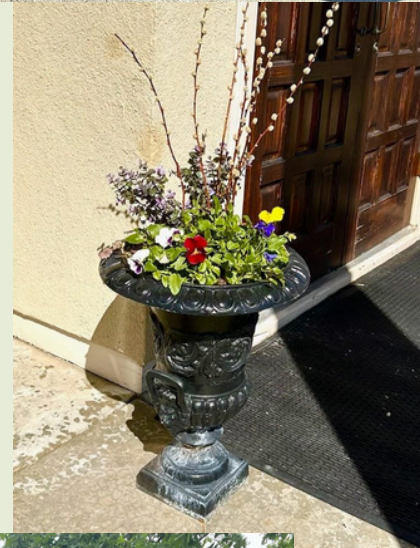
On May 2, 2024, Mary Gay Kay was inducted into the Libertyville Senior Hall of Fame. In Town & Country Garden Club of Libertyville, Mary Gay has held the offices of President, Past President, Programs chair (twice), Treasurer, and Garden Walk Chair for three years. Mary Gay led the initiative to establish of the Stephanie Green Memorial Scholarship for horticulture students. In addition, Mary Gay was on the School Board for 12 years, a PEO member for nine years, and actively participated in parent leadership throughout her children's school years. As her award introduction stated, "Mary Gay brings firm but kind leadership to organizations and always supports teamwork, earning deep respect from all involved. Her wit and desire to make an experience fun for everyone is one of her greatest gifts. Most simply, she is a kind, committed individual who inspires the many individuals and organizations she has joined.

Congratulations Mary Gay!



# Civic Plantings

Civic plantings once again add floral appeal to downtown Libertyville. Spring containers were adorned with pansies and seasonal decor, while the transition to creative summer pots is nearly complete. Evelyn Olson, Civic Chairperson, reports that the Senior Planting project at the Civic Center helped 35 seniors fill their container gardens, promising a summer season filled with cheer and color. The Butterfly Garden plants emerged for a second year of feeding and hosting butterflies and pollinators. Our traditional Memorial Wreath was placed at the renovated Blue Star Memorial.



# Blue Star Marker Restoration

The Town & Country Garden Club, in conjunction with the village of Libertyville, the VFW, the American Legion, and with planting help from members of Garden Club of Central Lake County, removed and replaced the landscaping around the Blue Star Marker in Cook Park. Libertyville's marker was installed in 2009. Since then, the garden has become more shaded, requiring a different design.

National Garden Clubs, Inc. fosters the miles and miles of Blue Star Memorial markers in America that serve as a living tribute to the men and women who serve in the Armed Forces. Since the program began over 70 years ago, more than 3,000 Blue Star markers have been dedicated across the country.

A team lead by Risé Barkhoff, TCGC 2nd Vice President, U.S. Navy Veteran, and Master Gardener, created a design and worked with the Village for permissions and support. The Club provided funding through proceeds from the Hidden Gems Garden Walk; the VFW and American Legion contributed to the renovation as well.

The Village of Libertyville, under the guidance of David Thornborough, Superintendent of Public Works, facilitated the procurement of materials, coordinated the planting day, and provided labor.

In addition to the Memorial Marker garden, TCGC members assisted in planting several other Cook Park beds with pollinator friendly shrubs and plants. Take a walk around the park to admire the very positive changes!



# No Mow Grass:

## As Featured at Hidden Gem Garden Walk Homes

Two of our Hidden Gems Garden Walk homes have swathes of No-Mow grass. The beds are striking, with a rhythmic, sculptural appearance. No-Mow is a native grass that uses less water and grows in mounds, It's a blend of fine fescues sold under a number of brand names and is essentially weed-free once the grass matures.



No-Mow Grass::

- Grows to form a dense sod
- Thrives in full sun to partial shade
- Does not require fertilization
- Needs minimal watering (only during extended dry periods)
- Resists most turf grasses diseases
- Biologically reduces weed growth
- Reduces lawn maintenance dramatically
- Serves as an ecological alternative to traditional high maintenance lawns.

No-Mow is more drought tolerant than Kentucky Bluegrass, making it an excellent alternative for cool, arid climates. While it is an extremely drought tolerant grass blend, No-Mow will not survive extended droughts. The optimal window for seeding No-Mow is between late August and October. Cool season grasses germinate well during the cooler weather of late summer and early fall, while most weeds germinate in spring and early summer.



Many gardeners love the look of a long stretch of green grass We've become aware of the negative ecological issues with traditional turf. However, few are inclined to replace all of turf with No-Mow. That doesn't rule out using it as our Walk gardeners demonstrate - in bold edging swathes and areas without a lot of foot traffic.

Information on No-Mow grass:

[What is No Mow Grass?](#)

[Homeowners Guide to No Mow Grass](#)

# Gardening with Annuals

by Laura Edwards, Illinois Master Gardener

The May 8th Garden Learning Series (U of I Extension Master Gardeners) addressed “Adding Color with Annuals”. Kim Hartman (Master Gardener, Landscape Designer, and Horticulture Educator) presented an informative talk about adding colorful annuals to your landscape. This presentation provided a good review of planning, planting, and caring for annual additions to your garden.

Kim emphasized using the color wheel to add complimentary colors to your design. Color can be soothing and add excitement. Silvers make a good transition while whites add depth at night. Landscapers divide the color wheel into four categories; primary, secondary, tertiary and neutral. Using color combinations adds interest to your design.



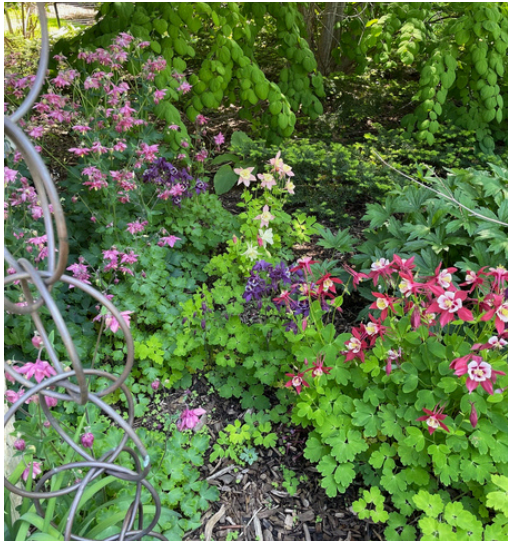
Kim provided some planting tips for annuals. When planting in ground, loosen the soil, add slow release fertilizer, butterfly the root ball and plant at container depth. Finish by lightly packing the removed soil around the new plant. Space the plants closely for mass color. Water the new planting gently and, once established, water weekly with a deep soaking. Container plantings will need to be watered more frequently. Water in the morning. Finally, fertilize your plants using a slow release fertilizer when planting. Continue fertilizing with a liquid fertilizer every month for in-ground plants and weekly for containers. Follow label directions for fertilizer.

Kim ended her presentation with an annual plant primer with plant examples from A to Z.

I thoroughly enjoyed this presentation. And though I have been planting annuals for many years, I found it helpful to review planting practices. I hope you have an opportunity to view the [Garden Learning Series Presentations](#) each month!



# Perennial of the Month: Columbine



Columbine (*Aquilegia*), with its multi-colored petals, blooms from spring through early summer. Though this perennial appears delicate, it's among the hardiest of native plants and is deer-resistant and pollinator-friendly. It is a perennial flower that blooms in the spring. There are more than 70 species of columbines, including native columbines that grow wild in mountain areas, along stream beds, and in temperate woodlands. Once started, columbine propagates for years and, although perennial, increases most rapidly by self-seeding. Columbine like dappled shade and are drought resistant when established.

Photo by Risé Barkhoff

Photo by Ann Baker



## Tips for Columbine Care:

- Columbines need light to flower, need partial shade.
- Plant where they can enjoy morning sun and cool afternoon shade
- Don't overfeed.
- Water evenly during the first year.
- Columbine do not like to be divided. Allow the plant to self seed after bloom - will be many volunteer plants.
- Foliage dies to ground in dormancy. Make sure plants are well mulched in winter.

# Native of the Month: Common Milkweed



Common milkweed has pink to purplish flowers with an attractive odor. It is tolerant of light shade but loves full sun. It can grow five feet tall under best conditions, shorter in gardens. Milkweeds contain various levels of cardiac glycoside compounds which render the plants toxic to most insects and animals. These chemicals, when absorbed by monarch butterfly larvae (whose sole source of food is milkweed foliage), make the larvae and adult butterflies toxic to birds and other predators. Over 450 insects are known to feed on some portion of the plant. Numerous insects are attracted to the nectar-laden flowers and it is not at all uncommon to see flies, beetles, ants, bees, wasps, and butterflies on the flowers at the same time.

For more information:

[Illinois Wildflower Database](#)

[US Forest Service](#)

# Conservation Corner

by Jennifer Sparrow

Spring – the time for getting out in our gardens – between the rain! And also time for clearing out our closets? Or is that a Fall chore for you? Regardless, here are some ideas of where you can drop off clothing or metal items:

**Rondout Iron & Metal, 13604 Rockland Rd.**

## Sims Metal: Items We Accept

They accept non-ferrous and ferrous metals. The payout is minor financially but it's great to know that it's not going to rusting in a dump. I've taken copper coils and pipes, garden wrought iron, stainless steel and construction scrap.

FYI: You and your car will get weighed going in and going out and you'll insert your ticket stub in cash machine in the front office.



**Lake County Division of Transportation,  
Winchester Road**

## Clothing and Textiles: Acceptable and Unacceptable Items

There are two bins in the back of the offices on Winchester for textiles. I drop off very used and stained textiles here. The new/gently/used clothes you can drop off at St. Vincent DePaul, Goodwill or similar places. Towels are in demand by local animal shelters. (Some churches host garage sales too.)



# Upcoming Events



June 29th

## Five exceptional gardens

Meet the gardeners and be inspired by unique designs and specimens. Native beds, vegetable gardens, large & small lots.

Nature themed artists exhibit and sell work at each site

Tickets on sale NOW online

In person June Thursdays at Libertyville Farmers' market

Find our table in Cook Park on the Milwaukee Avenue sidewalk. Cash/Check/Credit Card.

At Libertyville Village Hall starting June 3, cash or check

Session 5 - Edible landscaping  
Wednesday June 12th 2024  
Extension Master Gardeners

By combining trees, vegetables, herbs, edible flowers or small fruits and berries in aesthetically pleasing ways, edible landscapes can be just as attractive as ornamental ones. Learn how to eat your yard by creating a tasteful home landscape using edible plants. We will cover both simple suggestions to ease into integration and more ambitious designs.

REGISTER

June 23  
Arlington Heights Garden  
Club Garden Walk &  
Unique Boutique  
10 am - 4 pm  
Begins at Arlington Heights  
Historical Museum  
Campus  
110 W. Fremont Street  
Arlington Heights  
[ahgardenclub.com](http://ahgardenclub.com)

The Elawa Farm Garden  
Market is open on Fridays and  
Saturdays from 8 am – 1 pm  
and now on Sundays from 10  
am – 2 pm. Visit the link  
below for more info.

Garden Market

