

The Hidden Gem

March, 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.

Spring is just around the corner and it can't come soon enough for me! If you are like me, you've been checking your garden and thinking about what you will be adding or changing. That's what I love about gardening, always something new and different to try!

I'm looking forward to getting back to the club. We have an exciting set of programs and activities this year ranging from learning about using native plants in your garden, fighting climate change and ideas for setting your holiday table. Trips include a tour of the Prairie Crossing community in Grayslake. Prairie Crossing is a widely acclaimed conservation community and a national example of how to plan communities to enhance the environment and support a better way of life. I'm sure it will be very inspirational.

Looking forward to a fun and interesting year!

Sally Steele, President, TCGC

"Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle."
Barbara Winkler

THIS MONTH:

- Meet a Member
- Cicadapocalypse
- Creating a dramatic entrance
- Healthy Gardener
- Upcoming Events



Editors:
Ann Baker
Laura Edwards
Janet Lichtenberger

News and Notes

Cicada-pocalypse



You've heard the news: According to the experts, 2024 will be an eventful year in our area with the emergence of two periodical cicada broods.

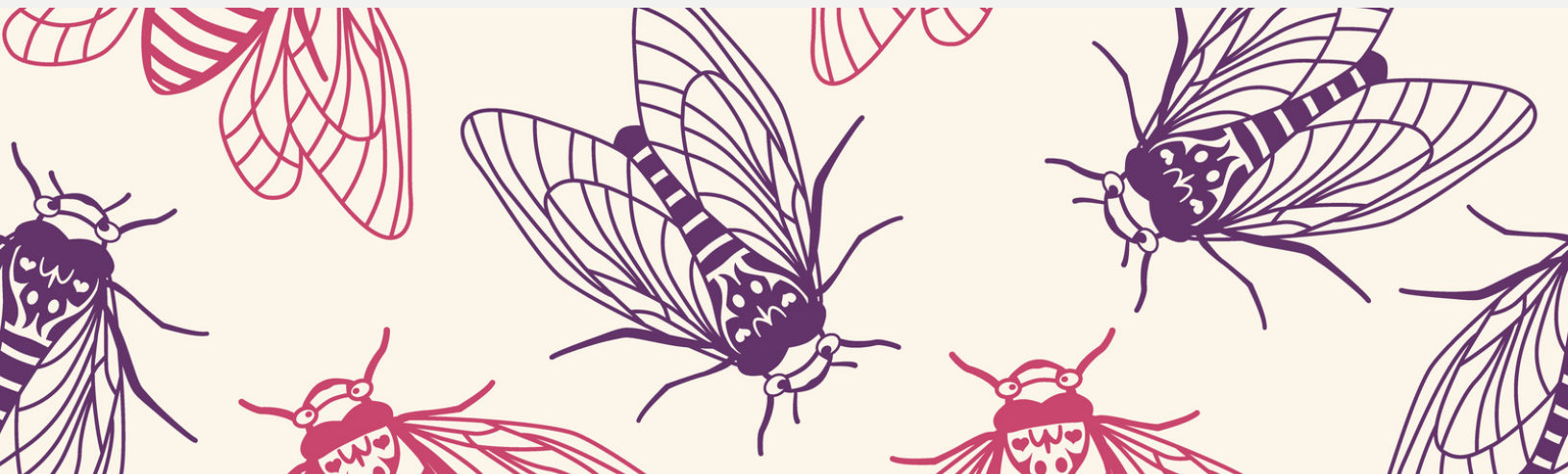


One is a 17-year brood, and the other is a 13-year brood. Co-emerging broods aren't that rare given that almost every year a different brood will emerge across the US. What is rare is that this only happens with Brood XIII and Brood XIX every 221 years.

According to Catherine Dana, a cicada expert, gardeners don't need to worry too much about plant damage with the cicada emergence. However, cicadas can damage young trees with egg-laying. Pesticides aren't recommended because they can't make a dent in the enormous numbers of cicadas and egg activity, plus the chemicals can kill beneficial insects. Experts recommend bagging young trees with netting to avoid damage. In uncovered trees, you'll notice "flagging," where the tips of branches die off when cicadas have laid their eggs.

On a positive note, cicadas don't bite or sting. The cicadas feed birds, fish, snakes, reptiles, insects and even mammals like raccoons, squirrels and foxes. Even if these animals eat their fill, there will be an abundance of cicadas that make it through the life cycle.

We will begin to see (and hear!) the cicada emergence mid-May, continuing through June.



Ready, Set, Seed!

By Laura Edwards, Master Gardener

The calendar is telling us that it is time to start some seeds for our vegetable garden! I've come across an easy way to start seeds in the house now for your vegetable garden.

You will need the following supplies:

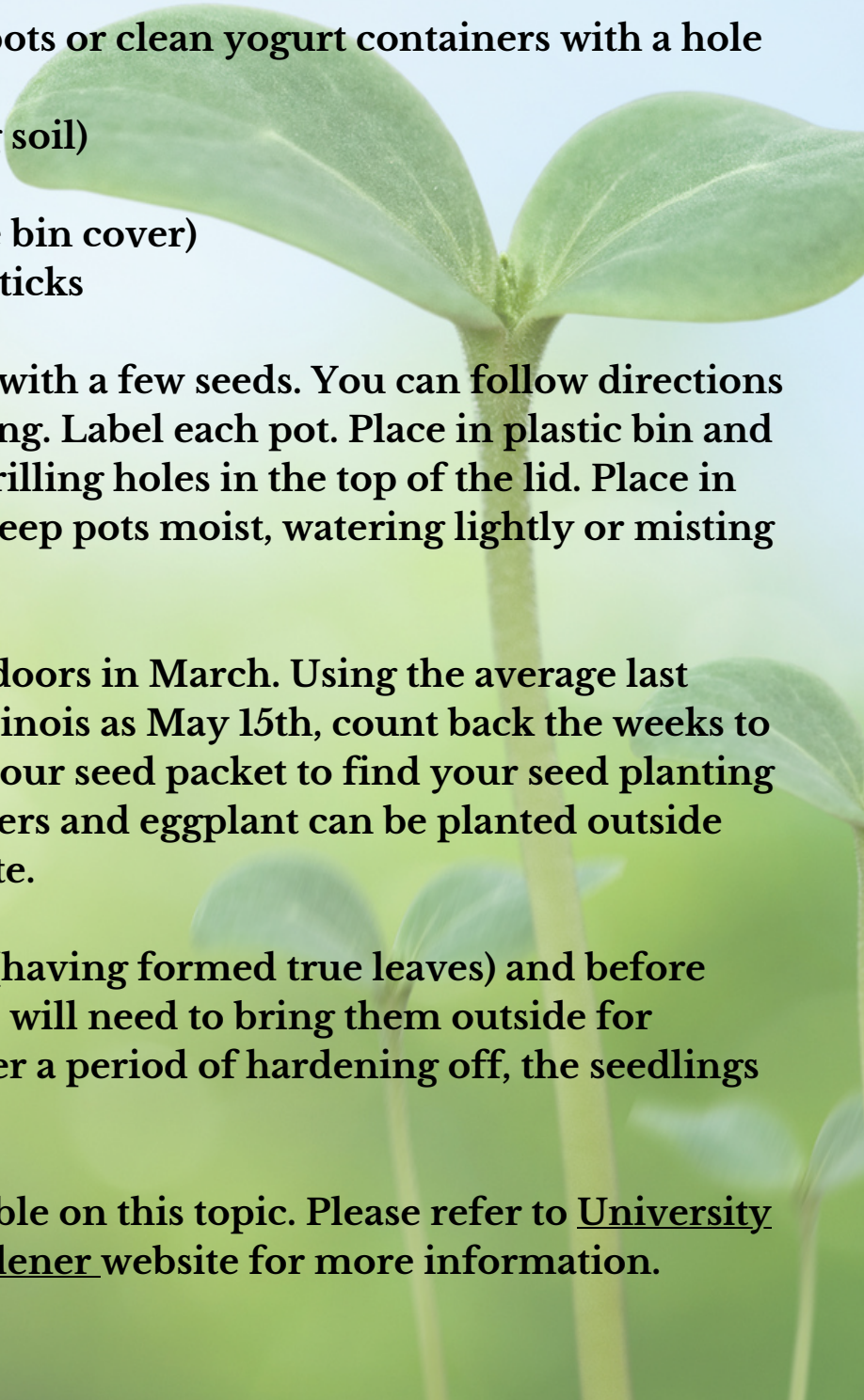
1. 32 quart plastic bin with a lid
2. Some clean 3.5 or 4.5 plastic pots or clean yogurt containers with a hole in the bottom
3. Seed starting mix (not potting soil)
4. Seeds
5. Small drill (to put holes in the bin cover)
6. Popsicle sticks or plant label sticks

Fill pots with soil and plant each with a few seeds. You can follow directions on seed packs for depth of planting. Label each pot. Place in plastic bin and water each pot. Attach lid after drilling holes in the top of the lid. Place in window with indirect sunlight. Keep pots moist, watering lightly or misting so that seeds are not disturbed.

You can plant vegetable seeds indoors in March. Using the average last average frost date in Northern Illinois as May 15th, count back the weeks to transplant that you will find on your seed packet to find your seed planting date. Tomatoes, pumpkins, peppers and eggplant can be planted outside two weeks after the final frost date.

Once your seeds are established (having formed true leaves) and before planting them in the garden, you will need to bring them outside for intervals to harden them off. After a period of hardening off, the seedlings can be planted in the garden.

There are many resources available on this topic. Please refer to [University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener](#) website for more information.



Meet a Member

Sue Hazelwood

Tell us about yourself: I've lived somewhat of a nomadic life - I grew up in Pennsylvania, went to school in Delaware and Oklahoma, worked in Texas, Colorado, and Minnesota before settling in Libertyville with my husband Ed. I started my career as a dietitian until I made a major career shift into marketing and worked in the pharmaceutical/nutrition industry for 30 years.

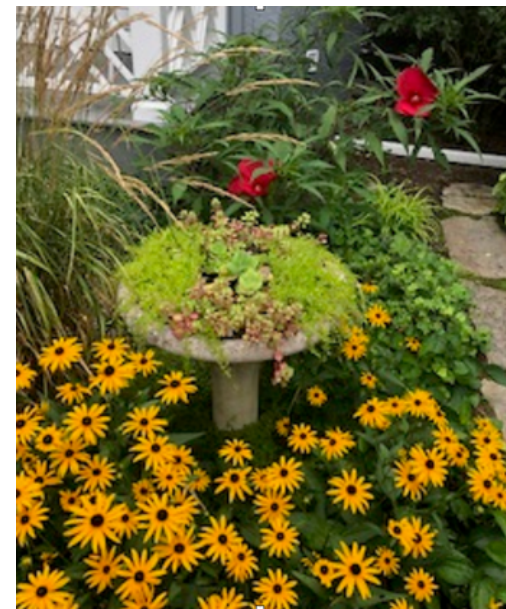
Who influenced your gardening? Minnesota! I didn't start gardening until I lived in Minnesota. Planting colorful flowers in the short growing season gave me hope through the cold, seemingly endless winters.



What do you love about gardening? The creativity – it's like painting with flowers!

Least favorite gardening activity? Garden clean-up in Spring – it's back breaking work.

Share a gardening tip: Right Plant, Right Place. We are all swayed by tempting plants, but choosing plants that are well suited to your yard's conditions can help plants thrive vs just survive.... and save you time, money and frustration. "We lost too many plants in our impatience to possess them, because we had not achieved the proper growing conditions." – Beth Chatto



What is your favorite perennial? California Poppy. It's not a perennial in Illinois, but it actively reseeds and comes back every year. The brilliant orange color and bluish-green foliage makes me happy!



Perennial of the Month

California Poppy

Known for their bright orange flowers, California Poppies are the state flower of California. They thrive in full sun. The flowers have four petals, and measure about 2.5 inches across. They range from yellow to orange in color. They thrive in poor soil, so no need to prepare a special bed for these beauties.

After sowing the seeds in late spring, make sure they have enough water and sunlight. Too much fertilizer will result in more foliage than blooms. They may go dormant in high heat, returning as the weather cools into fall. Make sure you remove spent blooms, but near the end of the season leave them so the patch reseeds for the following year.

For more information on growing California Poppies, see:

[Chalet nursery: Poppies](#)
[Missouri Botanical Garden](#)



Native of the Month

Butterfly Milkweed

Many of us include butterfly milkweed in our gardens as a host plant for the monarch butterfly. This is a beautiful showy wildflower with a long bloom period. It requires little to no maintenance, but grows best in well-drained, dry soil or it will succumb to diseases. During winter, they disappear completely, and are slow to return in the spring, which can leave the gardener wondering where the plant is and whether it will return. Be patient!



If you plan to have it as a host plant for the Monarchs, better to plant a grouping along with other milkweeds. As a special bonus, deer don't like to nibble!

For more information:
[Illinois Wildflower Database](#)
[Missouri Botanical Garden](#)

A Dramatic Entrance

Excerpts from *Helping Gardeners Create Curb Appeal* by Melinda Myers, *The National Gardener*

Adding a splash of color by painting a front door can welcome visitors and boost their mood whenever they enter. Select colors that complement the home's siding, architecture, and surrounding landscape. Dressing it up with a seasonal wreath or other door decoration adds a personal touch while giving family and friends something to look forward to with the change of seasons. Including a few containers at the front entrance is a quick way to bring life to new and existing landscapes.

Weeding garden beds can quickly improve garden plants' overall appearance and health. After weeding, spread a one to three inch layer of organic mulch like shredded leaves, evergreen needles, or woodchips over the soil surface.



Need to reinvigorate the garden beds? Remember to consider the right plant for the proper purpose and one that will fit the available space once it is mature. Consult your [Extension Service](#) and READ THE TAGs attached to the plants to appropriately consider sun and soil needs, as well as the size and form of the mature plant.

Garden Club Trivia

From the National Garden Clubs

Did you know?

The first known garden club in America was founded in 1891 by The Ladies Garden Club of Athens, Georgia. The Garden Club of America, established in 1913, was the first national federation of garden clubs, followed in 1929 by the National Council of State Garden Clubs, now National Garden Clubs, Inc. (NGC).

This organization now includes fifty state garden clubs and the National Capital Area, five thousand member garden clubs, and one hundred seventy-five thousand members. Additionally, NGC has sixty national affiliated organizations within the United States and nearly three hundred thirty international affiliated organizations. Their locations reach around the globe including: Canada, Mexico, South America, Bermuda, South Africa, Australia, and Japan.

The Healthy Gardener:

REST

Spring, summer, and fall can be hectic for gardeners. Planning, potting, seeding, weeding, tending, harvesting...the farther into the season, the greater the mental and physical fatigue.

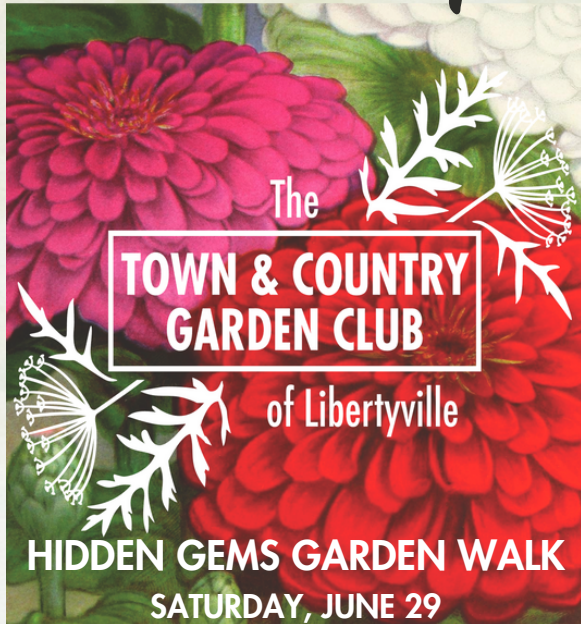
Winter is a great time to rest and, on pleasant days, walk and rest in our gardens.

We benefit from times of rest and good sleep. According to the National Institutes of Health, sleep helps prepare your brain to learn, remember, and create. Good sleep improves brain performance, mood, and health. The brain, blood vessels, immune system, and other body functions use sleep as a time for repair.

NIH tips for better sleep:

- Stick to a sleep schedule. Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day, even on the weekends.
- Get some exercise every day, but not close to bedtime.
- Go outside. Try to get natural sunlight for at least 30 minutes every day.
- Avoid nicotine and caffeine. Both are stimulants that keep you awake. Caffeine can take 6–8 hours to wear off completely.
- Don't take naps after mid-afternoon and keep naps short.
- Avoid alcohol and large meals before bedtime. Both can prevent deep, restorative sleep.
- Limit electronics before bed. Try reading a book, listening to soothing music, or another relaxing activity instead.
- Create a good sleeping environment. Keep the temperature cool if possible. Get rid of sound and light distractions. Make it dark. Silence your cell phone.
- Don't lie in bed awake. If you can't fall asleep after 20 minutes, get up and do a relaxing activity until you feel sleepy again.
- See your health care provider if nothing you try helps. They can determine if you need further testing. They can also help you learn new ways to manage stress.

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

University of Illinois
Extension Master Gardeners



PLANT SALE

Saturday, May 18, 2024
9 am to 2 pm

Featuring a beautiful selection of nursery grown plant varieties not readily available in garden centers. This year, we are increasing the number of plants available but **come early – these plants will go quickly!**

- Natives, New Cultivars of Perennials, Grasses, Pollinator-Friendly Plants
- Vegetables, Herbs
- Garden Treasures
- Garden Advice from Master Gardeners

**Rain or Shine
Cash, Check or Charge**

Extension Grounds:
100 South US Hwy 45
Grayslake, IL 60030
847-223-8627

All Proceeds Support Extension Projects for
Volunteers, Youth, Adults

Source for plant information: Missouri Botanic Garden Plant Finder, Chicago Botanic Garden Plant Finder, Midwest Groundcovers



Restoration and Reciprocity:
Healing Relationships with the
Natural World: Robin Wall
Kimmerer

Sponsored by Wild Ones
National

March 19th, 5 - 7 p.m. CST
Virtual (in-person, OshKosh, WI)

Click [HERE](#) for more
information

Maple Syrup Hikes: Lake Country Forest Preserves
March 3, 9, 17

Participants hike into the woods to view the sap collection in progress and then head over to the evaporator to learn how the sap becomes syrup. Everyone on the tour gets a taste of the final product.

Ryerson Woods is one of the few places in Lake County where conditions are right for maple syrup production, and where the trees grow to a diameter and height that allows for tapping. Syrup production only happens in late winter and early spring.

Early registration encouraged!

INFORMATION

