



# The Hidden Gem

Winter, 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.**

## THIS MONTH:

- Civic Projects
- Membership Recognition
- December meeting photos
- Members out and about
- Cleaning Garden Tools
- Meet a member: Liz Leonard
- Perennial & Native of the month
- Conservation Corner
- Healthy Gardener
- Upcoming events

It's always so peaceful to see our garden put away for the winter. The one exception is our hydrangea which we don't cut back until spring and which gives us a lovely winterscape - a reminder that gardens really are four seasons.

As our year winds down, it's rewarding to think of all that we accomplished. The highlight of the year, for me, was the renewal of the Blue Star Marker garden and our collaboration with the VFW, American Legion, and the Village of Libertyville. Our continued commitment to our various civic projects and plantings has made us a well respected member of the community. And the Garden Walk success will enable us to expand our reach and spending starting in 2025. All in all a very successful year!

Most importantly, a sincere thank you for your ongoing support of and engagement with the club. I know I'm biased, but it really we are the best garden club! Happy holidays to you and your families. See you in March.

With warmest regards,  
*Sally Steele*



**Editors:**  
Ann Baker  
Laura Edwards  
Janet Lichtenberger

# Holiday Civic Plantings

Our Holiday Civic Team created beautiful arrangements to grace central downtown Libertyville during this happy season.



# Member Recognition

Photos by Laura Edwards, Paula Lubenow

Fourteen members were recognized at the December meeting for membership anniversaries. Congratulations to our members for their dedication and service to the Town & Country Garden Club of Libertyville.

20 years: Mary Gay Kay

10 years: Julie Eberspacher

1 year (\* indicates joined 2022): Carol Braunschweig, \*Jeanne Curtin, Lucille Dauria, Laura Edwards, \*Mary Ellin Innes, Janet Lichtenberger, Bea Mikal, \*Evelyn Olson, Therese Schaefer, \*Sharon Sill, Deb Smagacz, Jennifer Sparrow.



Mary Gay Kay - 20 years



Julie Eberspacher - 10 years

# December Meeting: Tablescapes, Kathy Rose

Photos by Laura Edwards and Jeanne Curtin



# Out and About Town

A trio of friends decided to use their skills honed in Garden Club classes and experiences to share some cheer at Lake Forest Place. It's great to see Mary Gay Kay, Anne Stranberg, and Beth Newell using their heart and talents to gift others in our community. The residents appreciated the gesture, and the ladies had fun working together.



Anne Stranberg



Mary Gay Kay



Mary Gay Kay



Beth Newell



Mary Gay Kay



# Cleaning Garden Tools

by Laura Edwards, Master Gardener

Fall is waning and winter is fast approaching. Now is a perfect time to clean and disinfect our tools. According to [J Weisenhorn](#), [N Hoidal](#) and [A Hultberg](#), [University of Minnesota Extension Educators](#), the following guidelines can be followed when cleaning your tools.

Dirty tools and pots can spread disease while cleaning and properly disinfecting tools and pots can reduce the spread of disease. Disinfecting is especially important when working with diseased plants or those susceptible to disease.



Bacteria, fungi and viruses cause diseases that kill plants. These pathogens can be transferred to other plants by bits of soil or plant materials stuck on tools or left in pots. These pathogens are microscopic and not seen. Cleaning and disinfecting the tools and pots are the only way to eradicate them.

The authors recommend cleaning the tools in the Fall, Spring, or anytime they have come into contact with a diseased plant.

The first step in the cleaning involves removing dirt and debris from the tool. To disinfect, you can use Lysol All Purpose Cleaner which has shown to eliminate bacteria, fungi, and viruses from the tools. Do not use Lysol on polished wood, painted surfaces or acrylic plastics. Do not dilute the Lysol. Dip the tool into the Lysol and let soak for two minutes. Let the tool air dry.

For large tools, you can use a 10% bleach solution and soak the tools in the bleach. Dispose of bleach by pouring down the sink. Do not mix the bleach with anything but water or laundry detergent, to prevent toxic gases from forming.

Another method involves the use of rubbing alcohol in concentrations of 70% or higher. This solution can be dipped, wiped, or sprayed on the tools.

Using Lysol Wipes to clean tools between plants, or everyday after use, is convenient.

Clean tools lead to healthy plants!



# Member of the Month: Liz Leonard

I grew up in Lincolnwood and went to Niles West High School. We had secondary homes in Oklahoma and Texas, and I often lived with my Aunt Gladys in Oklahoma for a few months while my parents were traveling on business. My parents weren't gardeners - my dad bought a lawnmower, used it once, and promptly hired a landscaper. Aunt Gladys, on the other hand, had pretty gardens filled with iris, lantana, and other flowers. She introduced me to gardening and I often worked in her garden and eventually moved divisions of my favorite Aunt Gladys plants to my home in Illinois.

When I started traveling in my early adulthood, I really got into gardens. I spent time in Britain and Europe and made visiting the famous area gardens a part of my travels. I found the Amsterdam Keukenhof Gardens to be especially inspirational. I also love English gardens filled with flowers that spill colors and textures throughout the beds.

I decided to move from Highland Park to Mettawa in order to have my horse on site. I lived there 30 years, and that's the property where I established my biggest gardens. I became a Master Gardener through the Extension at the Chicago Botanic Garden, and tried to develop as much knowledge and skill about my favorite plant - the Rose. I especially love the David Austin Roses, though they can be difficult to grow on shaded properties.

My gardening tip is to not mulch your roses until you've had a hard frost. Don't prune the roses until the spring and you can see what survived and what died back. Another tip I always give people is to not over-fertilize or over-water your lawn. Remember, your lawn is NOT the main feature of your garden!



# Perennial of the Month: David Austin Roses

According to the [David Austin website](#), David Austin has spent the last sixty years developing his award-winning English Roses. Combining the delicate charm and wonderful fragrances of the Old Roses with the wider color range and repeat-flowering nature of modern roses, they are hard to beat for sheer exuberance of flower and scent. As a group, they are renowned for their outstanding health, reliability and vigor. Their graceful, shrubby habits make them ideal for mixed borders, planting in large containers or creating any kind of rose garden. Many varieties can also be trained as climbers or used to create fragrant, floriferous hedges.



Fragrance: Strong fragrance  
Disease resistance: Improved disease resistance  
Repeat blooming: Repeat-flowering nature  
Growth: Full bushes with vigorous growth

# Native of the Month: Jack-in-the-Pulpit

Jack-in-the-Pulpit (*Arisaema triphyllum*)

Jack-in-the-Pulpit is common in woodlands and shaded areas. It is best seen in the late summer and fall when the bright red/orange seed heads stand out in the garden bed, but keep an eye out in the spring for their distinctive bloom.

Requires partial to full shade  
Medium soil moisture  
Deer and rabbit resistant  
Spreads by self seeding

For more information see:

**[Illinois Extension: Jack-in-the-Pulpit](#)**

**[Illinois Extension: Jack-in-the-Pulpit plant details](#)**





# Conservation Corner

by Jennifer Sparrow

## Water Conservation

In local middle schools, students are taught a variety of ways to decrease excessive water usage like turning of the water while brushing their teeth. Another suggestion is to get briefly wet in the shower but then turn off the flow while washing and shampooing hair.

When you are letting the water run until it's warm enough to use, why not use a wide bowl or basin, about five inches deep, to collect the cold water for watering plants or other home uses?

Rinsing or submerging your face with cold water can reduce overnight puffiness, improve circulation, reduce redness, and increase alertness. Start submerging as long as you can tolerate it - up to two minutes has been suggested as the ideal. You'll still need to wash your face in warm water to clean it. I've progressed to the point that now I'm starting my mornings with a long facial dip in cold water. Not sure what's going to happen when winter sets in, but I do start my days more energized than before! And, bonus, that slightly used water gets a final use in my raised beds.

## The Healthy Gardener: Frostbite



It's refreshing to wander around the sleeping garden on a sunny winter day, daydreaming of spring or planning for garden renovations. However, the cold can damage skin and tissue. This damage is called frostbite.

Most of the time frostbite can be prevented by taking precautions during cold weather.

- While going outside is invaluable for our mental health, avoid unnecessary exposure to especially cold temperatures.
- The earliest symptom of frostbite is a tingling sensation in toes and fingers.
- Wear appropriate clothing that protects your extremities, such as well-insulated boots and a thick pair of well-fitting socks.
- Mittens provide better protection against very cold weather than gloves.
- Use a warm, weatherproof hat that covers your ears – it's important to protect your head from the cold.
- Dress in multiple thin layers of warm, loose-fitting clothing – these act as insulation.

# Upcoming Events



June 28th, 2025

Mark your calendars!

Five exceptional gardens

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

Stay tuned for details!

## NGC Courses this winter

Courses DO NOT need to be completed in order.  
Click on Course to see registration info

Landscape Design III - 1/20=1/22, Louisville, OH (Virtual via zoom).

Environmental, Course 4 - 3/4 - 3/5, St. Louis, MO (Virtual via Zoom).

Gardening Course 2 - 2/10 - 2/12, New Smyrna Beach, FL (Virtual via zoom).

Sponsored by Wild Ones:

Tuesday, 1/10/25 Starting Native Plants  
from Seed 7:00 – 8:30 pm

Fremont Public Library

The experience of native seed starting is an enjoyable and rewarding experience but can be challenging too, until you know the tricks to sparking germination.

This is an in-person presentation.

Registration is required for both Zoom viewing and those wishing to attend in person.

To register Click [HERE](#).

Presented in partnership with Fremont Public Library

## SAVE THE DATE:

District IX Annual Meeting and Luncheon

March 11, 2025

10am-3pm

Cotillion Banquets, Palatine

From the Lake County Illinois Master Gardeners:

## Session 11 - Houseplant Propagation

**When:** Wednesday December 11th 2024

**Description:** Propagation is easy, fun, and addicting! This presentation will primarily focus on the various vegetative options to propagate your houseplants. We will cover tools, techniques, and methods to get you motivated to create new houseplants from your existing houseplants!

Click [HERE](#) to register