



The Hidden Gem

April, 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.**

I love this time of the year. Plants are just starting to peek out from the ground and I am thinking about what my garden “needs”. Every year I seem to think that I need to move and add things while being grateful for the plants that are coming back. For me, that’s the joy of gardening - the annual reconnection with my plants and the fun of changing things up.

We’re off to a great start with our programs and activities. For those who want to do a little extra, we have a couple opportunities. A favorite activity is Senior Planting. In May we work with the Libertyville Senior Center (in the Civic Center) and schedule a time where seniors can bring a pot and we plant it with annuals. It adds color and a taste of summer to their homes and the seniors are very grateful. It takes a hour or so; signup will be at the April meeting. We’ll also be looking for a few volunteers to help plant when we refresh the Blue Star Marker in Cook Park. Details will follow later.

Hope you are all enjoying this first taste of spring. See you soon.

Sally Steele, President, TCGC

*In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt.”
Margaret Atwood*

THIS MONTH:

- District IX annual meeting
- Nature’s Stormwater Manager
- Meet a member
- Perennial of the month: Iris
- Native of the month: Common Milkweed
- Working with garden chemicals
- Upcoming events



Editors:
Ann Baker
Laura Edwards
Janet Lichtenberger

News and Notes

District IX Annual meeting

Town & Country Garden Club won first place in the District for ongoing Civic Project for our Butterfly Garden, located in front of the Libertyville Civic Center.



Sally Steele, President (Third from left) and other winners in the Ongoing Civic Project category



From left to right, Risé Barkhoff, Sally Steele, Marlene Elkins, and Sharon Sill



From left to right, Margie Aldridge, Jennifer Rielly, and Laura LeVert.



From left to right, Paula Lubenow, Mary Martucci, Jennifer Rielly, and Laura LeVert.



Trees: Nature's Stormwater Managers

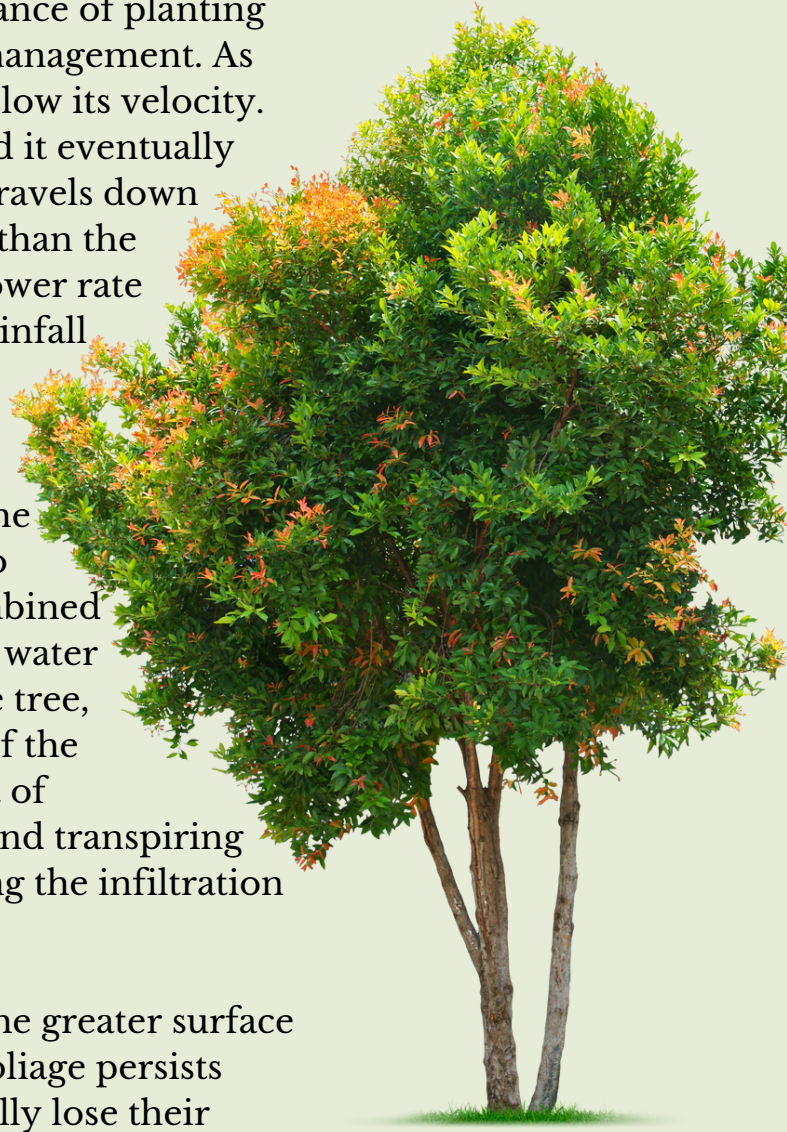
Excerpts from National Gardener, by Melinda Myers

Major storms and flooding have become more frequent in recent years. These weather extremes make planting trees more important than ever before. Many have long celebrated the connection between trees and the environment on Arbor Day, but their role in managing stormwater was generally overlooked. As gardening experts, you can share the importance of planting and caring for our trees as part of stormwater management. As rain falls onto a tree, the leaves and stems help slow its velocity. The leaf canopy captures some of that water and it eventually evaporates back into the atmosphere. The rest travels down the trunk and branches at a much slower speed than the rainwater that lands directly on the soil. This slower rate of travel allows the soil to absorb more of the rainfall so less of it runs off into the street.

Leaf litter, groundcover or mulch beneath the tree protects the soil from erosion and lessens the risk of compaction. These organic materials also help capture some of the stormwater. This, combined with the pathways created by their roots, allows water to infiltrate the soil. As the water passes over the tree, through leaves, stems, mulch and roots; many of the pollutants are removed. Trees lessen the impact of stormwater by intercepting rainfall, absorbing and transpiring moisture from the soil into the air and increasing the infiltration of water into the soil.

Evergreens intercept more water likely due to the greater surface area of the many leaves and needles. Plus, the foliage persists year-round, unlike deciduous trees that seasonally lose their leaves. Large mature trees, with expansive dense leaf canopies, intercept more rainfall than young and newly planted trees. One study found a typical medium-sized tree can divert or capture as much as 2380 gallons of rainfall each year. This means we need to not only plant new trees but also take care of our existing trees to promote mature growth and longevity.

Trees are amazing structures that do much to improve our environment. Let us all look for opportunities to plant and tend trees throughout our community. Together we can make a difference now and for future generations.



Meet a Member: Rise Barkhoff



I joined the garden club after I retired. But I have been gardening since I was a child, growing up on a farm in Iowa. Summers were spent reading books and helping Mom in her huge garden which included rows of peas and corn that needed “putting by”. I garden now in raised beds, pots, and extensive perennial borders, raising herbs, vegetables and lots of flowers. I love how gardening holds my

interest. It’s never the same year to year and there’s always another new plant to try, or an old favorite that reminds me of family and friends.

A Gardening Tip: Work outside in the morning, stay out of the sun and wear sunscreen, hats, long sleeves- it doesn’t matter what you look like while you are creating beauty!

Favorite Plants: I love big old trees, especially the ones that bear scars from fights with weather, and still are things of beauty. But closer to the ground? I have quite a collection of irises, from the tiny early ones to the tall German bearded iris in lots of colors. I have old varieties as hand me downs from family, and new exciting ones that I can always find space for.



Perennial of the Month: Bearded Iris

Bearded Iris are one of the most beloved traditional flowers of the perennial garden. Bearded Irises are identified by thick, bushy “beards” on each of the falls (lower petals) of the blossoms. Originally, most were native to central and southern Europe. Tall and elegant, bearded irises come in an array of beautiful colors. The long sturdy stems make them easy to use in floral arrangements. They are a joy blooming in the spring garden. Another notable feature of bearded iris is that they are not favored by deer, squirrels, and bunnies.

To grow bearded iris, plant the rhizomes in late summer or fall. Iris rhizomes should be spaced 12-18” apart. Place just slightly below the surface of the soil, with evidence of prior year’s growth facing upward. Cover with no more than half an inch of soil. It is a common mistake to plant iris rhizomes too deep. Thoroughly soak the area with water. Roots will form in the fall, and the bulb will sprout and bloom in the Spring. The soil must be well drained, else the rhizomes are susceptible to rot. Irises need full to partial sun.

In the fall, cut back the leaves to 4-5 inches to prevent insect and disease problems the following season.

The American Iris Society has a wealth of information on irises. For more information, visit their website: [American Iris Society](http://www.americanirisociety.org)



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](http://www.illinoiswildflowers.com)
[US Forest Service](http://www.fs.fed.us)

The Healthy Gardener: Garden Chemical Protection

The gardening season is upon us, and we may feel the need to use chemical control for weeds or pests. What we use can impact our environment, groundwater, wildlife, pets, families, and self. Remember that many non-chemical controls exist - mulch to control weeds, plant diversity to increase predator insects, etc. Still need a chemical control?

Read the label

Follow the instructions

Protection:

1. Wear protective clothing and unlined rubber gloves. Rinse gloves off before removing them.
2. After finishing the work, wash exposed skin with soap and water.
3. If pesticide is spilled on clothing, remove it immediately and wash the exposed skin with soap and water. Launder the clothing separately from the family laundry before wearing it again.
4. Avoid inhaling sprays, dusts or vapors. If it does get inhaled, move away from the application area and get fresh air. Spray on low wind days away from self and others.
5. If chemical swallowed follow directions on label for emergency treatment. If chemical gets into eyes, flush for 10-15 minutes and follow label directions for medical intervention.

In his [Green Speak](#) blog, Christopher Enroth of the Illinois extension warns readers to not trust internet advice on making home pesticides. It isn't necessarily safe even if made of all organic ingredients. "One of the most toxic substances, nicotine, can be considered organic, yet there are pages on the internet explaining how to make nicotine-based pesticides."

Enroth urges us to follow pesticide label directions. "Pesticide labels are there to ensure the proper use of the product which protects you, your family, your neighbors and the environment." Want advice about what pesticide is best for a problem - contact your local extension.

Gardening for Wildlife



From our parent organization, National Garden Clubs

As garden club members we should be aiming to practice sustainability in our personal landscapes. Habitats are being lost to development and we can hold the key to preserving them for future generations. As development pushes natural habitats further and further back, we can encourage wildlife to co-exist with us in our own landscapes. Biodiversity is a key to successful wildlife habitat. You get to choose the wildlife you want to encourage. It may be only birds, small mammals, and insects. You can provide food, water, cover and places for animals and insects to raise their young. Work to reduce areas of lawn. Make conscious choices when choosing plants for your garden. Look for plants that are native and keep away from invasive species. Good plant choices provide fruit and seeds for native wildlife. Native trees make good choices. Keep a clean water source such as a small fountain or birdbath, or if you have enough property, build a pond. Provide a wood pile or leave a dead tree. You can register YOUR GARDEN as a National Garden Club Certified Wildlife Habitat. You will receive a certificate and may purchase a plaque to display in your garden. Click [HERE](#) for more information and to apply



National Garden Club Schools

Brenda Moore, the new President of National Garden Clubs, has encouraged state garden clubs to convert their school sessions to online via zoom, in order to increase availability to all members. NGC offers Environmental, Gardening, Landscape Design, and Flower Show schools. To read more about the schools, go to [Our Schools](#). Dates and locations of the school sessions are listed under the specific school's landing page:

[Environmental Sessions](#)

[Gardening School Sessions](#)

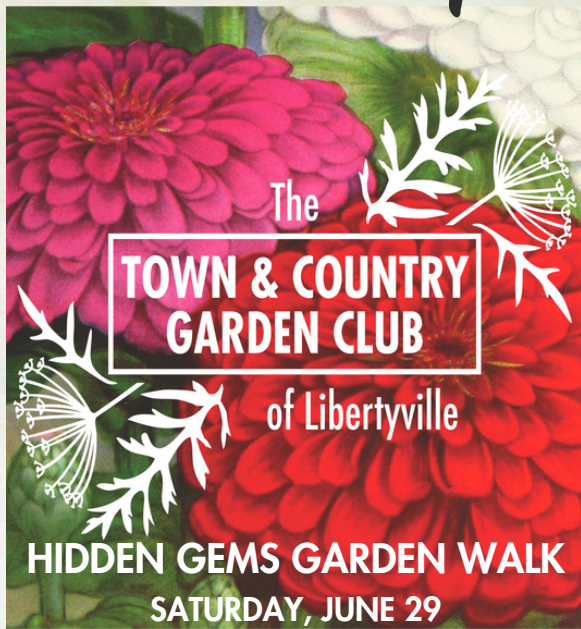
[Landscape Design School Sessions](#)

[Flower Show School Sessions](#)

Questions? Member Ann Baker has taken sessions in Environment and Landscape Design and can answer questions about the nature and content of these courses.



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



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

2024 GARDEN LEARNING SERIES

Free

University of Illinois Extension, SWALCO, and
Lake County Forest Preserves
present the
2024 Garden Learning Series

- ◆ Programs held second Wednesday of the month
- ◆ 6:00 – 7:30 pm via Zoom

2024 PROGRAMS

February 14	Seed Starting
March 13	Vegetable Gardening
April 10	Landscaping with Native Plants
May 8	Adding Colors with Annuals
June 12	Edible Landscaping
July 10	Northern Illinois Trees
August 14	Composting
September 11	Soil Health Checkup
October 9	Healthy Hedges-Buckthorn Management
November 13	Native Plants from Seeds

To register and details:
<https://go.illinois.edu/2024GardenLearningSeries>



For information contact the Master Gardener program at the University of Illinois Extension Lake County:
uemg-lake@illinois.edu
847-223-8627



Lake County Forest Preserves



University of Illinois Extension provides equal opportunities in programs and employment. If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in an Extension program, please contact our office at 847-223-8627.

Spring Compost

Giveback/Giveaway

Wednesday, May 8, 2024

11:00 am to 3:00 pm

University of Illinois Extension 100 US 45, Grayslake, IL



[Click HERE](#) for more details