



THE GARDEN DIRT

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Website: [Antiochgardenclub.org](https://antiochgardenclub.org)

Facebook: [Antioch Garden Club-Antioch IL](https://www.facebook.com/AntiochGardenClub-AntiochIL)



President's Column

Beautiful warm sunny greetings! We had a fabulous day yesterday, Friday April 24, 2026 to celebrate Arbor Day. Our Horticulture Chair George Weckbacher and our Arbor Day Chair Jane Buck put on a wonderful presentation as the Whitespire birch tree looked on. We were honored to present a Tree City proclamation to our Mayor Scott Gartner.

The tree is gorgeous! It will need to be watered heavily for the first year of its life in its new zip code! Maintenance folks will be reminded as they do their week. George has arranged hoses in the Mini Park to accommodate this. The club is grateful to all involved. Jane made cookies for us, and they were delicious.

May is a busy month for the club. Our next meeting is May 9; our plant sale is May 16, and the spring planting is May 30. We changed the date of the spring planting to coincide with the village turning on the water supply.

—See *President's Column*, cont. on page 5

Birthdays:

5/16—Trina Jaworek

5/17—Patricia Hays

5/25—Dee Obrochta

May Program: "Improving Your Soil the Natural Way," by Ken Benson. Learn about basic soil structure, texture, compaction and amendments. Ken will cover soil pH, macro and micro elements along with mycorrhiza, green sand and compost for amendments.

May Hospitality: Dawn Stary, lead hostess, with Nancy Zitkus, Jane Buck and Jill Monfre.

May General Meeting—Location change! Meeting will be in the lower level of the Parks & Rec Building, (same as the December and April meeting location), 806 Holbek Drive, in town.

CALENDAR

May 9—General Mtg., 1 p.m., **Antioch Parks & Rec., 806 Holbek Dr.**, door opens 12:30 p.m.

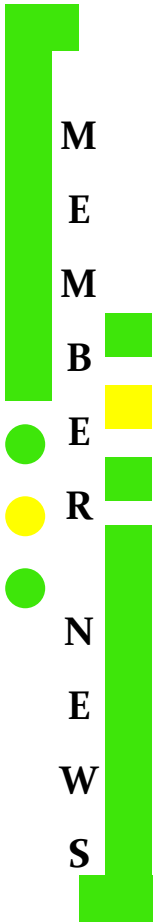
May 16—Annual Plant Sale, 10 a.m.-1 p.m., **Williams Park Pavilion, by the pool (Report by 8 a.m.)**

May 27—Board Mtg., 6 p.m., **Antioch Village Center**

May 30—Spring Planting, 9 a.m., **Mini Park, next to the Art Foundation, South side of Main St.**

June 13—General Mtg., 1 p.m., **Antioch Village Center, doors open 12:30 p.m.**

Antioch Garden Club is a member of Garden Club of Illinois, Inc.; Central Region Garden Club, District IX and National Garden Clubs, Inc. **Officers:** President-Holly Markwart Swehla, Co-Vice Presidents-Susan Ullrich & Betty Sprovieri, Secretary-Chris Priller, Treasurer-Jennifer Wittenberg, *The Garden Dirt* is published electronically nine times a year, emailed to members and posted online: <https://antiochgardenclub.org/>



Plant Sale Countdown!

Yikes, our plant sale on Sat., May 16, is right around the corner now. I have pots and trays for future sales, but please keep collecting them yourselves for future years. Bring your potted houseplants, herbs, veggies and perennials in containers wiped-clean. **EVERY POT NEEDS AN ID CRAFT STIX** labeled with info to include:

- ◇ Name of plant
- ◇ Sun requirements (full sun , part shade, shade)
- ◇ Flower color
- ◇ Write on only one side of the Craft Stix. We'll price on the opposite side.

Donate clean, gently-used planters and garden décor, no plastic pots, fake flowers, or broken tools, please.

IMPORTANT: If you suspect/know that your soil has jumping worms, **PLEASE do not** bring them to our sale! AGC cannot be the source of this invasive pest to our buyers.

Baked goods can be packaged in smaller lots, possibly in plastic deli boxes. Questions about the bake sale can be referred to Norma Lucansky, Cris Crego, or Dee Obrochta.

Park north of the Williams Park pavilion and deliver your plants/items to the northwest corner of the pavilion. The south entrance will be for the public to line up. **Deliver plants from 8-9:30 a.m., no later please.** Much work needs to be accomplished before the 10 a.m. stampede. We'll need "all hands on deck!"

You can pick plants for yourselves. Bring a box or bin to store them north of the pavilion. Pay the cashier once the big rush subsides. (Pay full price if taken before noon, when ½ price takes effect.) Please don't walk past the public with purchases as they wait in line.

- We'll cover the picnic tables with tablecloths first. **WE NEED ABOUT SIX PEOPLE TO GET THIS DONE RIGHT AWAY!**
- ID signs will be attached to the tables (sun, hostas, groundcover, etc.)
- Plants will be priced and delivered to the proper tables
- Plant ID descriptions will be placed into pots
- A brief meeting/group photo takes place at 9:50 a.m.

I'll have green aprons available to wear. There will be a complimentary light lunch brought at noon. We clean up and head home around 1 p.m. **PLEASE bring your wagons/carts to help buyers with multi-pot purchases. **Wagon/carts are needed to transport plants**** from arrival to the proper tables and to buyers' cars.

A local beekeeper will be there to give 10% of his profits to our club, so please stock up on honey, lotions, and scented waxes. Tool sharpening will be available for garden tools also. Come enjoy the camaraderie, knowledge, and enthusiasm of your fellow gardeners.

Questions? Contact me: Cindy Cartner, chrysaliscindy@aol.com, 224-406-6615

"A Garden Is A Grand Teacher" Gertrude Jekyll

AGC General Meeting Minutes April 11, 2026

WELCOME: Holly Swehla, President

CALL TO ORDER: 1:05 p.m.



Pledge of Allegiance & Garden Clubs of Illinois Pledge were recited.

Meeting was paused for program, “*What is All the Buzz about Bees*” by Brian and Karen Thomson of Honey Lake Bee Company. Holly and Betty S. thanked them for a very informative program. Honey Lake also served some delicious samples, and members had an opportunity to purchase items.

Secretary’s Report: Chris P. reported the March 14 regular meeting minutes were approved by President Holly and are published in April issue of *The Garden Dirt*. Having no corrections, they will be filed. Trina J. volunteered to take the minutes in Chris P.’s absence in June.

Treasurer’s Report: Jennifer W. reported we have 42 paid members. Jennifer also reported the ending bank balance is \$6,069.61. The statement has been filed for audit.

Correspondence: Current mail included six scholarship applications. They were given to Jennifer W. The Heartland Bank Scholarship Fund Statement was also received and given to Jennifer. Additional mail included a Thank You note from Susan Ullrich and a Thank You note from St. Ignatius Episcopal Church. These were given to Joyce K., Historian, for the files.

Standing Committee Reports

Audit: Norma L. No report.

Bylaws: Judy C. The committee will have a report at the May meeting.

Historian: Joyce K. No report.

Horticulture: George W. reported Spring Clean Up went great and the gardens look wonderful. Thank you to all who came out to work! **REMINDER:** Check your sign-up week for your volunteer week. George also sent out an email reminder of the schedule, basic tools needed, and maintenance priorities. If you have any questions, please contact George. A total of 128 plants were dug out for the Plant Sale at clean up. Mini Park is ready for Arbor Day planting. Next Horticulture meeting: May 14, 11 a.m., Antioch Library. All are invited to attend.

Hospitality: Holly thanked this month’s hostesses for the delicious goodies provided. Thank you Trina J., Betty S., Joan V., and Chris P.

Membership: Cris C. reported there were 26 members and two guests (speakers) present.

Nominating: Jill Monfre reported the majority of positions have been filled. Executive Board remains the same: Holly, Betty S., Chris P., and Jennifer W. have agreed to remain in office for the next term. Committee chairs were announced and will be voted on at the May meeting and sworn in at the June meeting.

Philanthropy/Arbor Day: Jill announced we will be planting a tree at the Mini Park on Arbor Day, Friday, April 24, at 1 p.m. All members are encouraged to attend.

—Minutes, continued on page 7

Social & Community Happenings by Nancy Colby, Publicity

Welcome Dug-Less!

Last year, the club started a rock snake, born as the brainchild of Mary Yott. Doriss is her name and she has resided in the Mini Park for one year. The public was invited to paint and bring rocks to help her grow.



What a remarkable success! She is now beyond half the length of the Mini Park garden and looks great. We are so thankful the public has embraced her.

Sadly, Doriss was lonely. Even though she was embraced by the public, she longed for a friend. Welcome, Dug-Less! Dug-Less made his debut this spring. He also lives in the Mini Park, just across the walk from Doriss. They both seem incredibly happy now. The public has been invited to add to both Doriss and Dug-Less. Let's watch them both grow as they help to make the Mini Park garden an even happier place!

UPDATE: Dug-Less has now decided he can better serve the club by living at The Berm. So he has slithered off to The Berm with a smile on his face and a readiness to greet the public.

President's Column *(continued from p. 1)*

This year's weather has been challenging to say the least. Our area's fabulous recreational lakes are so great, but not so much when the spring rains flood our yards. Thoughts to all of you dealing with the problems associated with this.

An interesting thing about this spring - all my life, my Dad took us to the Wolf River in Oshkosh Wis. for the white bass run. It was ALWAYS Mother's Day weekend, when the lilacs were blooming. This year, 2026, the lilacs are blooming four weeks early! Four weeks! That is a LOT! YIKES! Stay-tuned for more crazy weather events.

Virginia bluebells are one of my favorite spring ephemerals. Have no fear, they are "native," so they are great to plant in your garden. They spread nicely over time. The Mini Park is loaded with them! The bees LOVE them. I'm sure we can arrange to share some with our members who need them in their garden. George may be willing to part with one or two.

Hopefully, we are all potting up our shared goodies from our gardens to sell at the plant sale!

Happy Gardening!

Yours Truly, **Holly Swehla, President**



Horticulture Committee Report by George Weckbacher

By now you should have seen the garden maintenance schedule, which was emailed to club members. The Horticulture Committee thanks you ahead of time for helping to maintain the club's gardens in the Village of Antioch!

New this year, please coordinate with the Horticulture Committee's lead assigned to the week that you are scheduled. (This name appears in the far left column on the schedule). They can tell you what may need to be done and supply waste bags. You can tell them what day or days and times you plan to be there.

There are still some openings left to sign up for. Let me know if you pick a week, and I will add your name to the schedule.

Antioch Garden Club 2026 Maintenance Guide for our Gardens

Basic tools needed:

- ⇒ Gloves
- ⇒ Trowel
- ⇒ Weed puller (dandelion popper)
- ⇒ Pruners
- ⇒ Trash bag or pail
- ⇒ Yard waste bags
- ⇒ Optional: rake, broom, grass clippers, kneeling or sitting aide
- ⇒ Bring a copy of your yearbook, as it has the garden layouts with plant locations depicted.

Maintenance Priorities:

- ⇒ SCHEDULE – **Work with the lead on your week.** If you can't do your turn – please swap with someone else.
- ⇒ WATER – Blue Star Memorial and all newly planted annuals or perennials in all gardens.
- ⇒ WEED – The entire beds from front to back edges.
- ⇒ DEADHEAD & PICK UP TRASH – All areas to encourage blooming & beauty.
- ⇒ RECYCLE BAGS – Plan ahead to get these before your scheduled week. They can be obtained at the AGC monthly meeting, or from Horticulture Committee members.

If unable to find a replacement, or you have any other issues, please notify the lead, George Weckbacher, 224-390-7403, or Holly Swehla, 847-899-6839.



Seven Son Flower Tree Garden, Antioch

– *April Minutes*, continued from p. 3

Programs: Betty S. reported the committee has received positive feedback on all programs so far. Susan U. and Betty will be meeting next week to plan out next year's programs.

Publicity: Nancy C. No report.

Scholarship: Jennifer reported we have 10 applicants. The committee will be meeting to choose a winner. Jennifer explained the process of advertising and selecting a winner. The money is given to the school; the school distributes the money to the student. The committee is hoping to get recipients to visit the club in future meetings.

Newsletter: Jayna L. has sent out the April Newsletter. DEADLINE for next issue is April 22.

Website: Stacy V. and Lana S. are planning to feature a *Garden of the Month*. Send photos and some information to Lana and Stacy if you wish to be featured.

Yearbook: Trina J. reports all is coming along. Any changes or additions should be sent to Trina as soon as possible. She hopes to have the *proof copy* available by June. If you need your photo taken, please see Trina at a meeting.

Facebook: Holly reported we now have 555 followers.

Special Projects Reports (Active)

Monarch Initiative: Barb G. Township Garden is doing well.

Dorisssssss - Mary Y. Dorisssss continues to grow! Dug-Less will be joining the her, located on Orchard Street where many people walk. His head and the sign are made up. Feel free to paint rocks to help Dug-Less grow!

Ways and Means: Cris C. No report.

Plant Sale: Cindy C. Cindy once again received a \$750 donation from Heartland Bank for the sale. MAY 16 is the date. SET UP is 8–10 a.m. All information is in the current edition of *The Garden Dirt*. Reminder: plants go to ½ price at noon. Any leftover plants are free at end of sale.

Carol Z. will man (woman) at membership table this year. Vendors include Wray the Sharpener, Peter Poli Honey, Heartland Bank. We are usually finished by 1:15. REMINDER: This is Cindy's last year as chair. If interested for 2027, you may want to shadow her. She has this down to a science! **THANKS Cindy!**

Old Business: We continue to collect socks and toiletries for Open Arms Mission.

New Business: An email poll was recently sent out by Holly regarding Lake County Pridefest, June 20. If you have not responded yet, please do so. Your vote is private. So far, 24 people have responded with 16 yays and 8 nays. (**NOTE: Please refer to News Briefs about this, page 4**)

Raffle: No report on monies made. **Meeting Adjourned:** 3:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Chris Priller, Secretary



Arbor Day Tree Planting *by Jane Buck*

The Arbor Day and Horticulture committees gathered with village and township officials to plant a Whitespire birch in the Mini Park on Arbor Day, April 24.

During a short program, Antioch Mayor Scott Gartner read the Arbor Day Proclamation. Horticulture Committee Chair George Weckbacher talked about the chosen tree. Antioch Garden Club President Holly Swehla, Arbor Day Chair Jane Buck, and municipal officials took turns shoveling dirt.

Antioch Trustee (and new club member) Jose Martinez, Assistant Village Administrator Jim Moran, and Antioch Township Supervisor Tom Shaughnessy also attended the event, along with many club members.

The tree is planted on the Southwest corner of the Mini Park, next to the parking lot. Signage by the tree identifies the species and variety. The tree planting was a joint effort between the Arbor Day and Horticulture committees. **More photos next page!**



Holly Swehla, George Weckbacher and Jane Buck stand by the sign.



Pictured left to right: Tom Shaughnessy, Scott Gartner, Jose Martinez, Jane Buck, George Weckbacher and Holly Swehla.

More Arbor Day Photos!



Tree Tractor



The new tree is in place in all its glory! Below, many club members came to the event.



Jane Buck made delicious tree cookies for the event.



Wayne digs a hole!

Proposed club bylaws revisions 2026-27 for May vote

ANTIOCH GARDEN CLUB

Article V: Duties of Officers

Section 1: Reads: The officers shall be President (s), Vice President (s), Secretary and Treasurer.

Proposal: The officers of the Club shall be President (s), Vice President (s), Secretary, and Treasurer. The officers may serve 2 consecutive terms upon re-election (a term consists of 2 years). No member shall be eligible for the presidency unless she (he) has served on the Board for at least one (1) year.

Rationale: Often times it takes a year or 2 to get the grasp of an elected office. Just when you feel you can govern most effectively, you have completed your term of office. The extended period of time gives the elected officer the opportunity to continue in his/her position if he/she desires. If the term of office cannot be completed, the president can make an appointment. In the case of the president not being able to complete his/her term, the Vice President would step in until the nominating committee can nominate a replacement.

Article VII: BOARD

Section 3: Reads: The control and management of the club shall be vested in the Board, subject to the Bylaws and policies voted by the Club. It shall approve expenditures and present recommendations to the Club.

ADD: All non-budgeted expenditures shall be voted on by the membership following consideration by the Board.

Article IX: Duties of Standing Committees:

Section 7: Nominating: Reads: Submit candidates for each officer position. Recruit chairpersons and committee members at election time.

Delete: and committee members.

To Read: Submit candidates for each officer position. Recruit chairpersons at election time.

Rationale: To be consistent with Article X: Elections- Section 2.

Bylaw Committee:

Judy Caldwell, Chairman

Lana Svitak

Jennifer Wittenberg

Nancy Zitkus, Past President and Parliamentary Advisor

THE GARDEN DIRT

ANTIOCH GARDEN CLUB

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May

