



THE GARDEN DIRT

Find out how to join and see more stories, photos, past newsletters, and much more:

Website: Antiochgardenclub.org

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



President's Column

Chilly greetings! We are on the upswing of daylight! YIPPEE! I suffer seasonal darkness disorder, so I'm feeling better. We have just started longer days. I love this!

We had a great board meeting on Wednesday, Jan. 28. We welcome ideas and suggestions for improvements to the club. Next regular meeting is Feb. 14. Should be a meeting full of love!

This year, America celebrates her 250th birthday. I expect that day to be July 4th. With that in mind, the Horticulture Committee has decided to plant our gardens with red, white and blue flowers. If we can't get good blue flowers, we plan to use blue ribbons. Please let us know if you have any ideas for great blue flowers.

George Weckbacher has made some changes to the maintenance schedule. The sign-up sheet will be available at the February meeting. The sooner you sign up, the sooner you get your desired dates.

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

Birthdays:

2/9—Nancy Zitkus

2/16—Cindy Cartner

2/20—June Miller

2/26—Stacy Vogt

Feb. Meeting: Animal Resistant Gardening by Mel Zaloudek. Successful strategies on minimizing your landscape losses through a combination of tactical plant selection, physical barriers and effective repellents.

February Hospitality & Raffle: Judy Caldwell, Hostess, with Trina Zimmer and Vicki Chapman.

Board meetings—you are invited! R.S.V.P. to Holly if you plan to attend. The executive board and committee chairs are expected to attend. The next one is Feb. 25 at the Antioch Village Center.

CALENDAR

Feb. 14—General Meeting, 1 p.m., Antioch Village Center, 817 Holbek Dr., doors open 12:30 p.m.

Feb. 25—Board Meeting, 6 p.m., Antioch Village Center

March 14—General Meeting, 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/>

AGC Photo Album—The Blanket Project

The club's 3rd annual no-sew fleece blanket project for Open Arms was a success! Thanks Mary Yott for organizing and shopping, and Nancy Colby for pre-cutting all the fleece! More photos can be found on the club's website and Facebook page.

If you can tie a knot, you can make a blanket! Pictured below, Chris Crego; top right, Norma Lucansky; and right middle, Marilyn Hall.



Twelve members gathered at the library to make tie blankets to donate. It went smoothly thanks to Nancy Colby, who again pre-cut the fabric beforehand! It was easy for members to quickly start knotting and create beautiful blankets.



Antioch Garden Club

Holiday Pajama Party!

There was no formal meeting in December. In lieu of a meeting we had a Pajama Party, complete with cookies, hot chocolate, and a special visit from Santa. This was held at Antioch Parks & Recreation Building, 806 Holbek. Prizes were given out for Best Costumes. Judy Caldwell took 1st place as an Abominable Snowperson. Mary Yott took 2nd as Hugh Hefner. We also had a White Elephant gift exchange, always fun!

No minutes were taken as the secretary was busy socializing and having fun. However, she made a few announcements. The November 8 meeting minutes were approved by President Holly. Having no corrections, they were published in the December *Garden Dirt*.

The secretary also reported on correspondence and distributed it to the proper people:

- Antioch Public Library Winter 2026 Issue (secretary's file)
- District 34 Community Newsletter Fall 2025 (recycled)
- Heartland Bank Scholarship Fund Statement (Jennifer Wittenberg)
- Lake County Forest Preserve Preservation Foundation Request (Holly Swehla)
- Christmas Card from Antioch Public Library (held for next meeting)
- Holiday Wreath Thank You from Open Arms Mission (held until next meeting)
- Home Depot Credit Application (shredded)

-Chris Priller, Secretary



Chris Crego shared special aster seeds that were propagated on her Grandfather's dairy farm by a Cornell University graduate student. He named the hardy aster he developed after her Grandfather Clifford Crego.



Judy Caldwell, dressed as an Abominable Snowperson, won 1st place in the costume contest.



Mary Yott, AKA Hugh Hefner, won 2nd place in the costume contest.

AGC Nov. 30 Treasurer's Report

Respectively Submitted by Jennifer Wittenberg, Treasurer

November 30th 2025				
Beginning Bank Balance				\$ 7,960.51
Disbursements Cleared				
	Check #	Paid to	Committee	
10/11/2025	1324	Dee Obrochta	Membership cards and postage	24.19
11/8/2025	1328	Kaleidascope Floral	November program	400
11/8/2025	1329	George Weckbacher	Horticulture top soil, leaf bags and compost	14.44
11/8/2025	1330	George Weckbacher	Horticulture labels, pots	19.6
11/8/2025	1331	Nancy Colby	Publicity festival of trees and Christmas parade	80
11/8/2025	1332	Nancy Colby	Publicity creation & printing of memorial book 30th anniversary	113.57
11/8/2025	1333	Cindy Cartner	Hospitality November head hostess	25
Total				\$ 676.80
Deposits				
		From		
11/20/2025		sweatshirt money George		24
11/20/2025		November raffle		102
Total				\$ 126.00
ending bank	Balance 11/30/2025			\$ 7,409.71
Disbursements Outstanding				
Total				\$ -
Ending Book	balance 11/30/2025			\$ 7,409.71

News briefs

- ◇ **SAVE THE DATE: Garden Clubs of Illinois 47th Annual District IX Meeting and Luncheon** is Tuesday, March 10. The theme is “Pollinators: Beyond the Bee.” Cost is \$60 per person. **R.S.V.P. by Saturday, Feb. 28.** Email questions/reservations - GardenClubSharon@gmail.com. (See *Garden Glories*, or Holly’s email about this.)
- ◇ **Volunteer Hours:** Remember to track hours you volunteer to the club and report them to Donna Rietter, jdrieter@sbcglobal.net. The hours are important because they represent the value the club adds to the community.
- ◇ **SAVE THE DATE: The 2026 University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener Seed Expo** will be 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., March 7, 2026, at the College of Lake County, Grayslake, Ill.



AGC December Treasurer's Report

December 31st 2025				
Beginning Bank Balance				\$ 7,409.71
Disbursements Cleared				
	Check #	Paid to	Committee	
12/13/2025	1334	Mary Yott	Special Projects blankets	338.27
12/13/2025	1335	Mary Yott	special projects Wreaths	672.76
12/13/2025	1336	Nancy Colby	public relations parade supplies	77.4
12/13/2025	1337	Dee Obrochta	membership postage	15.6
Total				\$ 1,104.03
Deposits				
		From		
Total				\$ -
ending bank	balance 12-31-2025			\$ 6,305.68
Disbursements Outstanding				
Total				\$ -
Ending Book	balance 12-31-2025			\$ 6,305.68

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

We are not doing spring planting until May 30, because the village does not turn on the underground water systems until they are quite certain they will not freeze.

This is an election year. Our nominating committee is canvassing the membership looking for folks to fill the various positions. I will be happy to continue being the president unless someone wants it. My feelings will not be hurt to step down.

At this time of year, it's always fun to think of the gardens waking up. While the ground is still frozen, enjoy the thoughts of warm, sunny days with beautiful flowers surrounding us.

Our very own Chris Priller has started her training to become a master gardener. Good luck Chris! We know you will make us proud. The knowledge gained in this program is phenomenal. I believe the NEXT class will be in two years. The cost is approximately \$350. And, it's pretty much done online, so you can learn at midnight in your jammies if you like. You would be amazed at how much you don't know. As always, bloom where you are planted! Hol



-Holly Markwart Swehla

Social & Community Happen-

Think Green!

If you don't have a club shirt and you've been green with envy, it's your lucky day!

We have a small inventory of both club shirts and sweatshirts in stock now offered at a discounted price. This limited inventory will be offered for \$10 per shirt or sweatshirt. If you want one of these shirts or sweatshirts (or one of each) please email, text or call Nancy Colby. You can pick your shirt up at the February meeting. If you want a shirt but won't be at the meeting, we can arrange to get it to you.



It's a great time to get a club shirt at this special price and show the green in the community.

AVAILABLE SIZES:

Shirts: 2 Small, 2 Medium, 1 XXL **Sweatshirts:** 2 Medium, 2 large, 1 XL

Top 10 gardening tasks to do while you wait for Spring

So, what to do while you wait, besides pouring over seed catalogs? Here are 10 things to consider to keep you busy until Spring.

1. **Evaluate.** What grew well last year? What didn't? What are you doing different this year?
2. **Start a gardening journal** to record your evaluation. Use it to plan new gardens.
3. **Start an indoor garden.** Try succulents, or microgreens, or grow herbs near a sunny window.
4. **Grow houseplants** if you don't already. Just make sure they aren't poisonous if you have pets.
5. It's maintenance time! **Clean and sharpen your tools.** You rely on them; maintain them.
6. When the snow melts, **build your garden structures.** Are you replacing raised beds? Trellises?
7. **Continue to compost.** Insulate your bin with leaves. Keep adding to it, even when it's frozen.
8. **Prune deciduous trees and shrubs.** Cut back spent perennial foliage. Leave seed heads for birds.
9. **Learn something new.** Attend a workshop. Read those books you have. Find a new blog to follow.
10. **Get creative.** Make plant markers. Build birdhouses or bee hotels. Make stepping stones with a kit.



Horticulture Committee Report by George Weckbacher

The Horticulture Committee is excited to share its latest updates and accomplishments as AGC continues to promote and foster a love for horticulture in the Antioch community. Our dedicated committee members have been working hard to advance AGC's mission.

Recent Projects and Achievements

The committee has several new initiatives. Among them is the planting of a birch tree in the Mini-Park Garden, designed to attract pollinators and be an anchor to the west end of the garden. J.U.L.I.E. and the Village of Antioch have approved the location, a multi-trunk White Birch tree has been sourced, and plans are being laid for an Arbor Day event to celebrate the planting.

In addition, the committee has planted crocus bulbs for early spring blossoming along the Main Street sidewalk in front of the Mini-Park Garden.

Upcoming Events - (mark your calendars and reserve the dates)

MARCH 28TH Spring Cleanup - During the Spring Cleanup, the committee will work with our AGC members to dig up and pot excess plants to be set aside for the plant sale. The committee is preparing to help with our annual plant sale, scheduled for May 16. This event will improve the gardens' appeal and add proceeds to the club's coffers.

MAY 30TH Spring Planting - AGC members will be planting annuals in the club's gardens. The 2026 color theme will be RED, WHITE, & BLUE to celebrate America's 250th anniversary.

APRIL 28TH (date TBD) ARBOR DAY - AGC is planning to have an event to plant the White Birch tree in the Mini-Park Garden. Stay-tuned!

Get Involved

We encourage and invite all AGC members to join the Horticulture Committee. You can be a part of the club committee that shapes the future of the AGC gardens.

Our next meeting will be 11 a.m., March 18th at the Antioch Library.

We hope to see you there!



ARBOR Day 2025

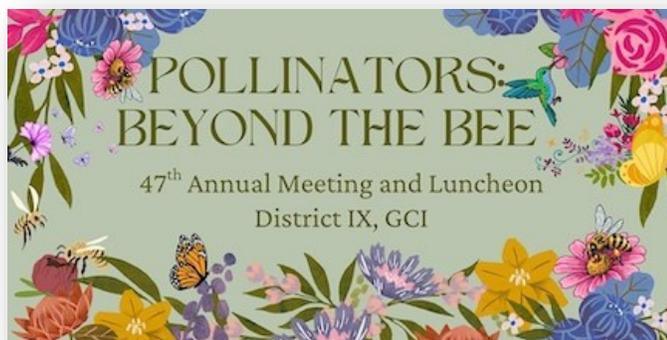
THE GARDEN DIRT

ANTIOCH GARDEN CLUB

Jayna Legg, Editor

577 Plum Tree Lane

Antioch, Il 60002



February