



THE GARDEN DIRT

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President's Column

A hhhhhh finally! The weather has cooled off. Now we can get out and garden ... Oh wait! It's September!

There is still time to enjoy our gardens. The Seven Sons tree is blooming and smells delicious! It is a great source for the bees. They are very interested in the late blooming nectar source.

Speaking of sources, I'd like to suggest the [Morton Arboretum](http://MortonArboretum.org) for research-based information, (mortonarb.org).

I had the wonderful opportunity to go there last year in the sweltering heat, 1,700 acres of trees and plants! (There are driving paths.) It is fabulous, but a little too far for a day trip. The arboretum has a fabulous [Plant Clinic](#) (for a charge). They also provide a [Plant Health Care Report](#) the Master Gardeners review. It also is a GREAT resource for all things gardening! Check it out!

I have been advised that the Dolly Spiering Center is back up and running.

—See President's Column, cont. on page 7

Birthdays:

10/9—Nancy Colby

10/13—Betty Sprovieri

10/26—George Weckbacher

10/27—Jill Monfre

10/30—Michelle Goldstein

October Program: "Drying Flowers" by Veronca Porter. Let's learn one of the easiest and most traditional methods of preserving flowers. Create long-lasting décor, preserve sentimental blooms, or simply use for crafts—the possibilities are endless!

October Hospitality: Mary Yott (lead), Nancy Colby, Stacy Vogt & Sharon Pendergast.

Yearbooks are in! Thank you to Trina for her great work! See her at the next meeting if you haven't received yours. Also let her know if your personal info needs changed.

CALENDAR

Sept. 23—Board Mtg., 6 p.m., Dolly Spiering Center

Sept. 26—Fall Cleanup, 9 a.m.-3, meet in Mini Park

Oct. 10—Regular Mtg., 1 p.m., Dolly Spiering Center, door opens 12:30 p.m.

Oct. 28—Board Mtg., 6 p.m., Dolly Spiering Center

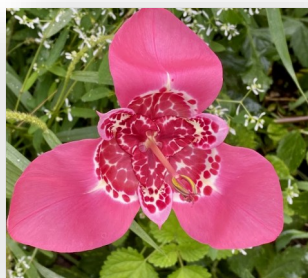
Antioch Garden Club is a member of Garden Club of Illinois, Inc.; Central Region Garden Club, District IX and National Garden Clubs, Inc. **Officers:** President-Holly Markwart Swehla, Vice President-Betty Sprovieri, Secretary-Chris Priller, Treasurer-Jennifer Wittenberg, *The Garden Dirt* is published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

A Visit to Claude Monet's Gardens

Editor's Note: I had the chance to go to Giverny, outside Paris, France, Sept. 2, 2026.

Although my pictures don't do it justice, I want to share a few of what was blooming (the famous water lilies were done).

I've never seen so many dahlias and zinnias! You can also tour his home. I posted more photos on our club member's only Facebook page as well. JL



AGC General Meeting Minutes Sept. 12, 2026

WELCOME: Holly Swehla, President

CALL TO ORDER: 1 p.m.



President led Pledge of Allegiance and Garden Clubs of Illinois Pledge was recited.

Program: Meeting was paused for program “*Fixing Climate Change in Your Backyard*” by Mike Novak. Mike spoke about all the things we can do to help save our plant and animal species and help, rather than deplete, natural resources. A handout with related websites and books was distributed. Holly and Betty thanked Mike for his very informative presentation.

Secretary’s Report: Chris Priller reported the board meeting minutes of 8-26-26 were written and approved by the executive board and are filed in the secretary’s book.

A Post Office Complaint (case #91144802) was filed with the Postmaster General regarding the condition of mail items received in May but postmarked December 2025. A complaint has been sent to the Antioch Post Office by USPS Complaint Division. Should there be any addition information Chris will be notified and will share with the club. Documents are filed in secretary’s book.

Correspondence: Chris reported above mail (from complaint Issue) has been given to the historian for our records. A 501C3 renewal form was received. Jennifer will check if this is the valid one we need to fill out and follow up as needed.

Treasurer’s Report: Jennifer Wittenberg reported a beginning bank balance of \$7,191.71 on the Aug. 31, 2026 statement. ending bank balance of 8-31-16 was \$6,904.36. Ending book balance of 8-31-26 was \$6,548.62. Report will be published in October’s Garden Dirt.

Standing Committee Reports

Audit: Norma Lucansky reported “all was in proper order and all documentation was found to be in order due to the excellent job Jennifer has done”. A copy of Norma’s report is filed with these minutes in the secretary’s book.

Bylaws: Judy Caldwell had no report.

Historian: Joyce Kufalk requested club members keep sending her pertinent articles and photos for our History Book. This book is kept at the Antioch Public Library. Members wishing to look over our history need to request viewing at the library.

Horticulture: George Weckbacher reminded the **ALL-MEMBER FALL CLEANUP** is scheduled for 9-26-26 between the hours of 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. There will be a culling of plants to make way for a native garden area. As an incentive, workers are welcome to take a plant or two home! George is hoping to get a member to photograph the gardens every two weeks to see the progression.

Hospitality: Betty thanked today’s host(esses) Norma, Dee & George for the delicious spread. October hostesses are Mary Y., Nancy C., Stacy V., and Sharon P.

—Minutes, continued on page 6

AGC Treasurer's Report

Respectively Submitted by Jennifer Wittenberg, Treasurer

Aug. 31, 2026

Beginning Bank Balance				\$ 7,191.71
Disbursements Cleared				
	Check #	Paid to	Committee	
5/25/2026	1385	Dawn Starry	May Hostess	\$25.00
8/26/2026	1381	Holly Swehla	Monarch Blackhow Bulbs	\$112.35
8/26/2026	1385	Holly Swehla	Monarch sign for along police staion fence line	\$150.00
			total	\$287.35
			balance	\$ 6,904.36
Deposits				
		From		
			total	\$ 6,904.36
ending bank balance 8/31/2026				
Disbursments Outstanding				
8/26/2026	1382	USPS	Po Box renewel 12 months	202.00
8/26/2026	1383	Jennifer Wittenberg	40 Stamps general fund	32.80
8/26/2026	1384	GCI District IX	annual dues	10.00
8/26/2026	1386	George Weckbacher	Hort. Committee hose and concrete	110.94
			Total	\$ 355.74
Ending Book	Balance 8/31/2026			Total \$ 6,548.62

News briefs update

- ◇ The **all-club fall cleanup** of our club gardens in Antioch will be Sept. 26, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Some plants are targeted to be dug up to make room for a native planting in the Mini Park. They will be offered to the workers who participate in the cleanup.
- ◇ **Photographer needed:** The Horticulture Committee is looking for someone to take photos of the club's gardens in town every two weeks. Contact Chair George Weckbacher for information.
- ◇ **Volunteer hours update** — Don't forget to submit your volunteer hours to Donna Rieter, jdrieter@sbcglobal.net. Working in the gardens in town, helping out other community organizations, working at home on club projects, participating in club activities—it all counts!
- ◇ **Historian Joyce Kufalk** needs more pictures from members to document our club's active involvement with the gardens and community events. The club history books are located in a lower level room at the Antioch library, where they can viewed (not checked out).

Social & Community Happenings by Chair Michelle Goldstein

Club enjoys Mike Nowak gardening & climate change presentation

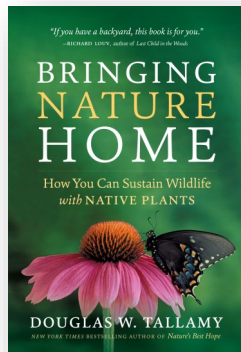
Happy New Year! I have to say, I'm excited to be back in our Garden Club routine! While our trusted old meeting spot was temporarily taken over by a family of raccoons, our group quickly rallied and moved our meeting to the Antioch Township Center. Nothing will get in our way!

We were fortunate to welcome the ever-popular Mike Nowak of "The Mike Nowak Show," who presented "Fixing Climate Change in Your Backyard (and Front Yard)."

We've all noticed the changing weather patterns in our area, and it's hard not to be concerned when we hear about increasingly dramatic weather events around the country. Mike brought the data

to life — scary as some of it may be — and shared practical things each of us can do right in our own yards to make a difference.

Mike's presentation was both thought-provoking and impactful, and it's one we won't soon forget. I'm even planning to pick up a copy of "Bringing Nature Home" by Douglas W. Tallamy, a book Mike recommended during his presentation.



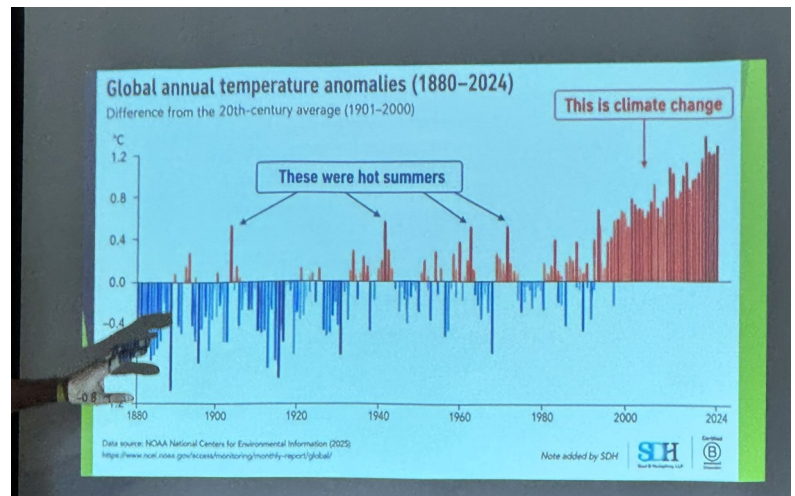
For an older online version of Mike's presentation, go to past presentations on the [Climate Action Evanston](#) website.

A big thank-you goes to our board for pulling together a last-minute pizza party. And, of course, Antioch Pizza never disappoints!

Mark your calendars! Our Fall Garden Cleanup Day will be held Sept. 26 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

We hope to see you there as we come together to spruce up our beautiful community spaces and get them ready for the season ahead.

See more about the cleanup in the Horticulture Committee Report on page 7!



– **September Minutes**, *continued from p. 3*

Membership: Nancy Zitkus reported today's attendance of five guests and 29 members. There was no raffle due to venue change. Nancy shared Betty Collins had a mild stroke. Dee has sent a card from the club but we're sure Betty would appreciate member's cards during her recovery. Address is in yearbook.

Nominating: Jane Buck installed Chris Priller in as Secretary for her second term. Jane presented Chris with a garden gnome, holding a Garden Club Records Book created by Wayne Buck. Thank you so much Jane and Wayne! It is also time for the Executive Board to start thinking of Nominating Committee Members for 2027.

Philanthropy/Arbor Day: Marilyn Hall - No report.

Programs: Betty Sprovieri thanked Mike Nowak again and reminded the club our October 10 program is "Drying Flowers."

Publicity: Michelle Goldstein will be sending out an email to all new members to see if they are interested in purchasing a T-shirt.

Scholarship: Jill Monfre reported the committee will be getting together to re-check the application and send out information to local schools.

Newsletter: Jayna Legg needs all reports, articles, etc. by Wednesday, 9-16-26.

Website: Stacy Vogt reported she and Lana are "tweaking" the website and keeping it updated.

Yearbook: Trina Jaworek has completed and distributed the 2026-2027 Yearbook. Thank you, Trina, for all your hard work! Great job! Should you need any personal information corrections, please notify Trina.

Facebook: Holly reported we are up to 584 Facebook followers.

Special Projects

(Note: Committees with no report are omitted)

Wreath Decorating: Mary Yott passed out a sign-up sheet for our Wreath Decorating morning. Date: 11-21-26. Mary will be bringing this sheet and additional information to the October meeting.

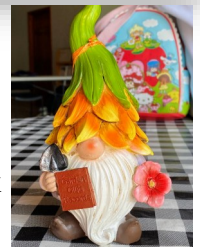
Ways & Means: Cris Crego will meet with Barb G. for more information to get this moving.

Plant Sale: Cindy Cartner is looking for someone to take over this project, or at least mentor with her this year. Please contact Cindy or Holly if interested.

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

New Business: Michelle will meet with Jim Moran to request continued garden club announcements in village newsletter. She will also request that the mayor continues to add us to his Facebook posts and email letters.

Meeting Adjourned at 3:39 p.m. *Respectfully submitted, Chris Priller, Sept. 13, 2026*



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

It is completely safe for us to return to. It's ready for us for our September 23rd board meeting, and our October 10 regular meeting. Thanks to all of us for being flexible when need be.

One last thing ... It's already time to think about the next group of members to step into leadership roles. (I know, right?!) Seems like just yesterday .. time for me to pick a member to be the chair of the nominating committee. Duties include canvassing each member as to their desire to serve as President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Be expecting us!

Bloom where you are planted!

—Holly Swehla, President



Horticulture Committee Report by Chair George Weckbacher

This Saturday, September 26th is the club's annual fall clean-up.

Yes, it is earlier than normal. The purpose for the early clean-up is that the Horticulture Committee has decided and is planning to remove excess plants from the Mini Park Garden. These excess plants will be given to club members who would like them early enough to plant in their gardens before winter sets in.

The following plants will be thinned to keep the gardens looking their best: Irises, Phlox, Red Columbine, Japanese Ferns, Purple Russian Sage., Solomon's Seal, and Virginia Blue Bells.

Because there will not be a frost before Saturday, the annuals will be left to be pulled out after the frost has hit. This includes in the Blue Star Memorial Garden.



The Horticulture Committee will purchase stepping stones and compost to put in the garden as needed. They will supply yard waste bags to put trimming of plants such as the Peonies, Irises, Hydrangea, Indigo Blues, and others.

We will work from 9 a.m. until no later than 3 p.m. Join us for a couple of hours—the earlier, the better. Bring gloves, trowels, spades, and

trimmers, and help us prepare the gardens for winter.

See you there!

Thanks, from the Horticulture Committee!



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ANTIOCH GARDEN CLUB

Jayna Legg, Editor

577 Plum Tree Lane

Antioch, Il 60002

